Discover Hedgerows

This Activity is designed to introduce the students to the hedgerow habitat. Hedgerows are man made structures introduced as field boundaries. A Hedgerow is a linear strip of woodland. Irish hedgerows have only become a familiar feature of our landscape within the past 300 years. In many of our parks, they are the remanent field boundaries as the land was once agricultural fields and the land has been changed by people over the years.

They keep their structure by being maintained by park staff but if left uncut and unmanaged they would grow into tall trees and thicker vegetation.

Hedgerows are extremely important for wildlife as they act as wildlife corridors allowing animals and plants to move from one habitat to another. Wildlife depend on the presence of hedgerows for finding food, providing food, shelter and give them protection from predators such as larger mammals i.e. fox and birds of prey.

Some mammals will not travel in open fields as they would be open to predation and hence what they use hedgerows. Bats use hedgerows like our roads allowing them to move between their roosting sites and their feeding sites. If there is a gap in the hedge they will not pass.

Hedgerows are an important habitat for birds. two-thirds of Irish bird species live in hedgerows. Hedgerows provide birds with food, nesting sites and singing posts.

Insects and other invertebrates can be found in each layer of a hedgerow. Note the many cobwebs spun by spiders in the hedge. Like a woodland, hedgerows are made of three layers: herb, shrub and tree layers. (Information on Woodland Layers, available in Programme Cycle One, Teacher Instructions Activities 1 - 7)

Hedgerows are protected under the Wildlife Act, which makes it illegal to destroy vegetation grow (trimming) from the 1st March to 31st August. This is because this is nesting season for birds and it is to protect their nests from destruction.
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Hedgerows are an important place where wildlife such as badgers, fox, mice, rats, stoats, birds, invertebrates and insects live. They depend on the trees and plants to live. Bring a magnify glass and white container to collect any wildlife and so your see them.

Investigate the plants and animals of the hedgerows in your park. Record what you find.

Student Name: __________________

Programme Cycle Three

ACTIVITY

Herb Layer

1. _______________
2. _______________
3. _______________
4. _______________
5. _______________

Shrub Layer

1. _______________
2. _______________
3. _______________
4. _______________
5. _______________

Tree Layer

1. _______________
2. _______________
3. _______________
4. _______________
5. _______________