

The Fall Nature Walk Kit

A printable companion to Fall Nature Walk With Kids

Print this kit and keep it in the car or by the door. It gives you the twelve-item hunt sheet, a blank version for building your own route, picture cards for the toddler version, the age guide, the variation tick-sheet, the sorting project instructions, a finds log, a four-week rhythm planner and a ten-second pre-departure check. Nothing here repeats the article.

The Twelve-Item Hunt Sheet

One sheet per child. Tick the box when it is found, and let the child do the ticking.

Found	What to look for	Where to look
	A leaf with three colours on it	Anywhere under trees
	An acorn or an oak leaf	Under oak trees, along the path edge
	A pinecone	Under conifers, in the grass margin
	Something red	Shrubs, berries, rose hips, a bright leaf
	Something that is not a leaf	Stones, twigs, feathers, seed pods
	A seed you can shake	Grasses, ash keys, poppy heads, dry pods
	The smoothest stone you can find	Path edges, stream beds, gravel
	Bark you can rub	Any tree trunk at child height
	A feather	Grass margins, under hedges, along fences
	Something an animal made or left	Chewed leaves, a nibbled cone, a hole in a trunk
	The biggest leaf you can carry	Beneath maples, sycamores and horse chestnuts
	Something the wind moved	Anywhere at all

Write the list for the ground you actually have. If your route has no oaks, take the acorn hunt off and swap in what is really there.

Build Your Own Route

Walk the route once on your own first, then fill this in. Ten minutes of scouting is what turns a list of hopes into a list of certainties.

Route name and where it starts

The boundary we will say out loud

What is here in quantity (acorns, cones, maples, stones)

What is NOT here, so it comes off the list

The natural turning-back point

Anything to avoid (road side, water, private land)

Picture Cards for the Toddler Version

Cut these out and thread them on a ring. A two-year-old cannot read a list, but they can match a picture. Six cards is plenty.

A big leaf	The first find, and the easiest. Start here so the first win arrives in seconds.
A pinecone	Available almost all autumn, so every child gets one and nobody is left out.
Something red	A colour hunt works before a child can read anything at all.
A smooth stone	A superlative task. They will test stone after stone, which buys you a lot of walking.
A stick	The most underrated find on any walk. Let them keep it.

Something that makes a noise

A dry seed pod, a crunchy leaf, a rustling grass head.

The Age Guide

Age	What to give them	What to ask for	Time out
Under 2	A single basket, no list	Nothing. They pick up and put down.	20 – 30 min
2 to 3	Basket plus one colour	"Can you find a red one?"	30 – 45 min
4 to 5	Basket plus the full list	One item at a time, let them tick it	45 – 60 min
6 to 8	List plus magnifying glass	Count, compare, choose the best	60 – 90 min
9 to 12	List plus notebook and pencil	One drawing, one thing not on the list	90 min +
Mixed ages	Same list, two difficulty levels	Older child assists the younger	Set by the youngest

Variation Tick-Sheet

Change one rule, not the place. Tick one off each week so the same route keeps feeling new.

- Colour walk — everyone picks one colour and collects only that
- Size walk — the smallest thing you can see, then the biggest
- Sound walk — five sounds in ten minutes, no collecting at all
- Texture walk — something rough, smooth, soft, prickly, wet
- Torchlight walk — the same route after dark, one torch each
- Rain walk — waterproofs, wellies, and what the rain brought out
- Backwards walk — the route in reverse, everything looks unfamiliar
- Photograph walk — nothing collected, one photo of each find

Weather Plan

Condition	Verdict	Adjustment
Bright sun, still air	Best possible	Go mid-morning for the low light through the leaves
Overcast, dry	Excellent, underrated	Go whenever suits — flat light, richer colours
Light drizzle	Go anyway	Waterproofs, wellies, no paper. Add "what the rain brought out"

Condition	Verdict	Adjustment
Heavy rain	Postpone	Wet paper and cold hands end it early. Walk tomorrow
Windy, cold	Shorten it	Halve the list to six items and stay near shelter
After first hard frost	Go now	Leaf fall accelerates fast. Usually the best day of the season

What to Do With Everything You Bring Home

Bring home	What to do	How long it lasts
Leaves, fresh	Press flat between newspaper under books for a week, then glue to card	Years, pressed
Acorns and conifers	Brief soak in dilute vinegar, then dry thoroughly	Months, dry
Pinecones	Twenty minutes in a low oven to close them and drive out anything inside	Months
Feathers	Photograph and return to the garden. Do not keep indoors	Do not keep
Berries and fungi	Photograph only. Leave outside	Do not keep
Stones and shells	Wash, dry, keep in a jar	Indefinitely

Three Sorting Projects

1. A colour row — arrange pressed leaves from yellow to brown on a strip of card. Ten minutes, and it teaches more about autumn than a worksheet.
2. A jar of the season — one clear jar, filled in layers with what you found, sealed and dated. Next year's jar beside it is the whole point.
3. A tray of drawings — one drawing per walk, dated, on the same size card every time. By November you have a small book.

Finds Log

One line per walk. Note the date and the one thing anyone noticed — that is the part you will actually read again.

Date	Where we walked	The best find	The one thing we noticed

Four-Week Rhythm Planner

Week	Walk	The one change	Done
Week 1	The nearest familiar route	Nothing — establish the boundary and basket habits	
Week 2	The same route	Colour walk — everyone picks one colour	
Week 3	A new route	Full twelve-item list, magnifying glass and notebook	
Week 4	The same route after dark	Torchlight — or the buffer week if weather beat you	

Ten-Second Pre-Departure Check

- One basket per child — never one basket between two
- The boundary has been said out loud and repeated back
- Water and one small snack are in the bag
- A spare pair of socks is in the bag
- Every child has one layer more than the adult
- The magnifying glass is in the bag, not on the kitchen table
- Nothing found will be tasted, and every child knows it
- We will turn back while everyone still wants more

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