

For adults and children in the garden

Leaf games

Natural England wants to give a million children the chance to discover the outdoors. The natural world is a fascinating place to explore and our natural habitats together with the creatures and plants that live there can provide endless sources of fun. From your own back yard to the wilds of our national nature reserves, now is the time to make the most of the outdoors and go wild!

Together with Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield (www.goingwild.net), authors of Nature's Playground, Go Wild and Make it Wild (www.franceslincoln.com), we've produced these fantastic activity sheets to give you plenty of ideas of what you can get up to, what are you waiting for?



Who can resist swishing through crispy sweet-scented autumn leaves and kicking them up in the air during a walk in the woods? Dry leaves are great for a variety of games as well as many creative activities - so when the leaves fall from the trees in your garden don't rake them up and put them in the compost bin until you've made the most of their play potential.

What you need

- A rake,
- A rug or tarpaulin,
- Some dry weather – wet mushy leaves just aren't as much fun as light, dry crispy leaves!

Playing leaf games

How would you like to lie on a soft bed of leaves, surrounded by sweet earthy scents? Or perhaps you would prefer hurling armfuls of leaves in the air and at your friends! Whether you like boisterous noisy games or quiet contemplative games, there will be something here for everyone. »



- Rake and carry leaves into a huge pile – the bigger the pile the more fun the game will be! Use the rug or tarpaulin to help carry leaves.
- Let each child have a go at throwing him or herself into the huge leaf pile, disappearing beneath a thick leafy blanket.
- Alternatively, someone can lie on top of the pile then wait in anticipation while the others empty a rug full of crispy leaves all over them. Let them lie there quietly for a while under their autumn blanket before bursting out in a leafy explosion.
- Or just try throwing armfuls of leaves at each other for a wild and crazy autumn game.
- For a quieter game, encourage everyone to choose just two different leaves that they feel are special in some way. Look carefully at each leaf – what makes it unique and identifiable? Perhaps it has been nibbled, or perhaps it is multicoloured or an interesting shape. Collect the special leaves together then spread them out on the ground – can everyone find their own leaves?
- When you have finished playing with the leaves, don't tidy them all away into the compost bin – make some leaf mounds in quiet corners of the garden as hiding places for hibernating creatures such as hedgehogs and frogs.
- Leaf games can be exciting and wild – just keep an eye out for the smaller children,
- Watch out for sticks and stones hidden amongst the leaves.



Safety tips

- Children using rakes should be well supervised,
- Leaf games can be exciting and wild – just keep an eye out for the smaller children,
- Watch out for sticks and stones hidden amongst the leaves.



Disclaimer: Please note, anyone taking part in these activities do so entirely at their own risk. Natural England together with the authors and publishers of these activities do not accept any legal responsibility for any harm, injury, damage, loss or prosecution resulting from the activities described.