

## Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together

### Wild Woodland Wellbeing Course

Bucksaw – well before two weeks ago I have never heard of a bucksaw let alone made one!

During a recent bushcraft course for veterans, one of the participants showed the TEaM staff how to make a bucksaw. The bucksaw is a manual hand tool made out of green wood for the frame with a removable blade. The saw is held together in tension by the frame. It is a basic version of a bowsaw with an H shaped frame, portable and ideal for sawing wood.

I was delighted to be shown how to make a bucksaw. It was another skill to add to my 'tool' and skills kit!

I was reflecting on how spending time making this basic saw helped my wellbeing. Firstly I was connecting with the veterans and colleague. We were sharing stories, skills and knowledge on various topics. Also I was connecting generally with nature by my surroundings in the woodland and specifically with the hazel that I was using. I was being active in making this saw by cutting the various pieces of wood I needed. I took notice of how amazingly the saw was held together by the tension created by winding the paracord at the top of the two pieces of wood. I certainly learnt a new skill during that session, meaning that I can give by showing others how to make one in the future.

This was one of the best bushcraft sessions I had because of the opportunity to learn from one of the participants. This is what it's all about, learning and sharing with one another. It certainly lifted my spirits despite the rain that day.

During this bushcraft course we have been trying our hands at making charcloth using a piece of copper piping; setting up a wild camp with a hammock and tarp; using a rocket stove to boil a Kelly kettle; willow weaving and using various natural tinder to light a spark.

If you enjoy the outdoors and would like to learn new skills then why not join us on one of the bushcraft courses we currently have coming up in June and July.

We are offering FREE Wild Woodland Wellbeing Courses for Armed Forces Veterans. As well as FREE 8-week bushcraft course in partnership with the Recovery and Wellbeing Academy for adults living in Coventry and Warwickshire.

See this issue's 'What's on' page for further details and do get in touch if you are interested in any of these courses.

We look forward to sharing our skills with you and letting the soothing power of nature improve your wellbeing.

Take care, Man Lan



You can also follow TEaM on social media for a Daily Dose of Nature...



The Environment and Me



theenvironmentandme



TheEnviroandMe

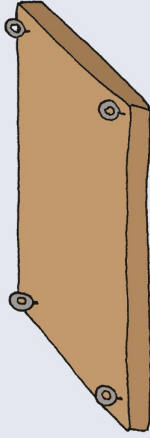
# Make a butterfly feeding table



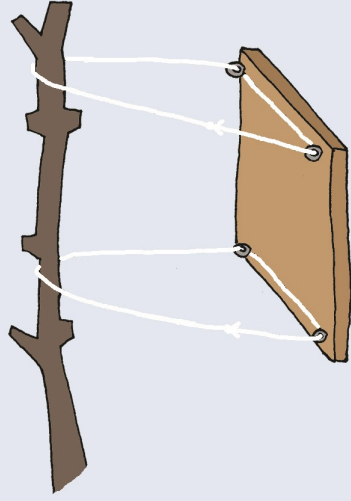
## You will need

- Four metal screw eyes
- 30cm square piece of plywood
- String
- Jam jar lids
- Sugar solution (sugar dissolved in hot water – use when cool)
- Coloured card
- Scissors

- 1 Screw the metal eyes into the four corners of the plywood.

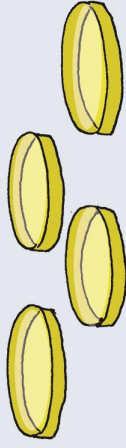


- 2 Thread a one-metre piece of string through two of the eyes and over a tree branch before securing with a knot. Repeat for the other side of the table.

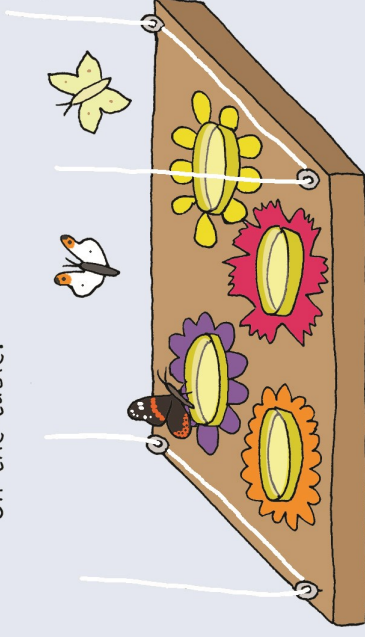


Make sure the table isn't hanging at an angle.

- 3 Pour sugar solution into jam jar lids and carefully place them on the table.



- 4 The butterflies will be attracted by the sugar solution, but try making your table more appealing by cutting flower shapes from coloured card and placing them under the lids on the table.



Do the butterflies prefer different colours or shapes?

## IS IT AN ANTLER, HORN OR TUSK?

We have all heard of antlers, horns and tusks but what are the differences and which animals have which? Antlers and horns are often confused yet in reality are very different. The key differences are that antlers are branching in shape whilst horns are not, antlers are shed annually whilst horns are permanent and that antlers have a living core supplying blood to the antler whilst horns contain a bony core surrounded by a keratinous sheath.

**Antlers:** Antlers grow on animals belonging to the Cervidae family which includes deer, caribou, elk and moose (in all cases other than Caribou it is only the males which develop antlers). Although varied in their shape antlers develop in the same way, in response to hormone production and/or lengthening daylight hours. The antlers grow from pedicels, which are bony structures situated on the front of the skull and are synchronised with the onset of the mating season. Antlers in the early stages of development are rich in water and protein and are covered by a velvety skin which carries blood vessels and nerves.



Shiras Moose from Wyoming USA (image by Mike R Jackson)

Towards the end of the growing stage the outer surfaces of the antlers become more bony and compact whilst their inner core becomes coarse with spongy bone and marrow. It is at this time that the animal will begin rubbing its antlers in vegetation in order to shed the velvet cover and give the antlers a brownish polished appearance. Once fully grown the impressive antlers are used during the mating season to attract females (deer often decorate their antlers with vegetation) and spar with other males for dominance. In winter the hormone levels in the animals decrease as a result of which the calcium content of the pedicel decreases and the root of the structure becomes weak causing the antlers to drop off, only for the whole process to start again the following year.

**Horns:** In contrast with antlers, horns are permanent structures (un-branched) which continue to grow throughout the animal's life and have a hard, bony core surrounded by a keratinous sleeve. In addition, horns can be found on both males and females and are used not only as visual indications of a strong animal (animals with bigger, more impressive horns are more attractive to females) but also by males fighting for access to females for mating and as a form of defence.

Animals with horns include all members of the Bovidae family which includes all cloven-hoofed animals such as buffalo, sheep, goats and gazelle etc plus other animals such as rhino. Rhino horns differ to most animal's horns in that they have no core or sheath but are made up of a multitude of horny fibres similar to thick hair and not unlike our finger nails.

In some animals, horns have become so developed that they are of huge size and/or complex shape. For example, the male Pyrenean Ibex has horns which curl back on themselves whilst the Ankole cattle of the Watusi people in Africa have huge, long, broad and heavy horns.



Pyrenean Ibex (image from Wildlifehubs.com)



Ankole Cattle belonging to the Watusi tribe in Africa (image from ourbreathingplanet.com)

## IS IT AN ANTLER, HORN OR TUSK? (continued ...)

**Tusks:** The big difference between antler and horns and tusks is that tusks are in fact modified teeth! An elephant's tusks are elongated incisors (similar to our front teeth) with about a third of the tusk hidden from view in the elephant's upper jaw where the tusk is made up of a pulp cavity of blood, tissue and nerves. The visible part of the tusk is made of dentine covered with enamel. The elephant uses its tusks to show females that it is strong and healthy for mating, for fighting rival males, as a form of defence against predators and also for digging the ground in search of food, water and/or minerals.

Another animal with tusks is the wild boar or 'Feral-hog'. A Feral hog's tusks develop from canine teeth and can form on both the upper and lower jaws. These are extremely powerful animals that use their tusks for unearthing food and fighting off any predators. Indeed, the hog's tusks make it dangerous to other animals (including humans!).

In the marine environment, tusks can be seen on both Walrus and Narwhal. In male elephant seals it is the upper canines which have become elongated serving as weapons in mating fights between rival males and sometimes as anchors on the ground or ice which can help the seal lift itself out of the water.

Perhaps the most exotic of marine animals with tusks is the Narwhal (mythologised as 'the unicorns of the sea'). These whales have only 2 teeth, one of which has become extended, spiralled and in fact turned inside out (being softer on the outside and getting harder towards the middle)! In addition, to growing up to 9 feet long, the surface of the narwhal tusk is incredibly sensitive containing up to 10 million nerve endings per tusk. This can make the tusk very sensitive to temperature (much like when we bite into an ice cream) We can only guess at why such a temperature-sensitive tooth has developed in an animal that lives in frigid waters?

Although females can develop these tusks it is only the males which will use them in sparring with rivals (often referred to as 'fencing' or 'tusking'), however the tusk is not used for chewing food. Some females may develop a small tusk, however they almost always lose them as they grow older whereas the male tusks continue to grow throughout their lives. If a male loses a tusk the second remnant tooth may develop and take the original tusk's place. Finally, although primarily used by rival males for sparring it is also believed that males sometimes 'tusk' with each other in order to clean each other's tusk. Now that is cooperation!



Tusking Narwhal (image from OceanConservancy.com)

## From our readers ....

TEaM member Becky has sent us this wonderful poem:

As we close the gates for another week  
And walk home from the plot  
All our tools are put away  
Except the odd one we forgot

I lie in bed and I try to sleep  
And wonder what happens there  
The animals have their time alone  
In this garden that we share

The muntjacs and the foxes  
The rabbits and the mice  
All come looking for what we've left  
In the hope of something nice

The rats get busy gnawing through  
To snuggle inside our boots  
The owl looks out for predators  
To warn the others with his hoots

The foxes do their business  
Where they think we walk the most  
And the squirrels pinch the bird food  
By scrambling up the post

The newts that hide all day from us  
Come out and gather round  
Talking of our excitement  
On the day that they were found

The ducks that we now rarely see  
Invite all of their crew  
This all goes on when we're asleep  
If only that was true

As morning comes they leave the plot  
And rarely leave a clue  
But remember as you are digging  
They will all be watching you

As we arrive next morning  
I wonder how did that get there  
But now you know what happens  
In the allotment that we share

*We love hearing from our readers, so if you, like Becky, have been inspired by nature and would like to share something with us, please do get in touch.*

## Down on the Plot

This month the pond down on the plot is teeming with life. Recently the members have discovered newts swimming happily in the pond. So what are newts and which ones are in the pond?

Newts are semiaquatic amphibians that live partly in water and partly on land. There are three native species of newt in the UK: Smooth, Palmate and Great Crested. On the following page is an ID chart from [bbc.co.uk/blogs/natureuk](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/natureuk) by Paul Deane. It is a useful tool to help you identify your newts.

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) numbers have fallen over the last century due to pond loss. It is the largest of the three. Only the males have a jagged crest along their back with a white flash along the tail. After mating, each female lays about 200 eggs, all individually laid and wrapped inside the leaves of pond plants for protection. Great crested newt larvae have a fine filament at the tip of their tail and are covered in black spots. They feed on frog tadpoles and invertebrates. They hibernate underground, among tree roots and in old walls. They spend the spring breeding in ponds and then the rest of the time on land. Great crested newts are relatively long lived, apparently they can live up to 25 years!

The Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), also known as the common newt, is the most widespread newt species. Smooth newt larvae develop their front legs first then their back legs and breathe through external feathery gills. They feed on frog tadpoles, small crustaceans and insects. They hibernate from mid October and emerge in February or March. During the breeding season from February to June they tend to be found in ponds where they spawn. Spawn is laid as individual eggs and each wrapped in the leaves of pond plants by the female newt. Juvenile newts and adults leave the water in late summer. Smooth newts are nocturnal and tend to spend the day hiding under stones or logs.



Smooth newt (credit: David Longshaw)

The Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*) is the smallest of the three native newts. They are similar to smooth newts but do not have spots on their throats. They prefer shallow pools on acidic soils and are most likely to be found in upland areas, on heaths and moorlands. They have similar diets to the other two species of newts. They too take to the water to breed and then hibernate from November underground in damp soil, under logs and plant roots.

All newts are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The newts and their habitats are protected by law, making it an offence to: kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; and to possess, sell or trade. Because of their ongoing decline the great crested newts have extra special protection in UK and European law.

## Great Crested Newt



### COLOUR:

Black and dark brown body. Underside is bright yellow or orange with black spots that are unique to each individual.

### SIZE:

15cm. The largest newt.

### OTHER MARKINGS:

Body has a warty appearance.  
Males have a distinctive crest and tail flash in spring.  
Females have an orange stripe on their tail.

## Smooth Newt



### COLOUR:

Light brown with darker spots.  
Spotted bellies - with spots continuing under the throat.

### SIZE:

10cm. Smaller than the great crested.

### OTHER MARKINGS:

Males develop a crest, but it is more rounded than the great crested. Some 'speckling' on face and shoulders but not as much as the palmate.

## Palmate Newt



### COLOUR:

Olive brown. Spotted bellies, but spots do not continue under throat.

### SIZE:

10cm. Smaller than the great crested.

### OTHER MARKINGS:

Females have pale nodules on feet.  
Males have webbed back feet and a filament at end of tail.  
More speckling along the face and shoulders compared to smooth newts.

# What's on ...

## Wild Woodland Wellbeing courses for veterans:

### COURSE 1

**Start Date:** Monday 7th June 2021

**Location:** Tallis Wood, Radford Semele (transport provided from Leamington if required)

**Time:** 10:30am - 3:30pm

**Then every Monday for 6 weeks after the first session**

### COURSE 2

**Start Date:** Wednesday 21 July 2021

**Location:** Cock Robin Wood, Rugby, CV22 6PP

**Time:** 10:45am to 3pm

**Then every Wednesday for 7 weeks after the first session**

No previous bushcraft experience is needed. We will provide all the tools and equipment. The groups are small, friendly and entirely made up of veterans. All activities are designed to be Covid-19 safe.

**If you are interested or just want to find out a bit more please contact  
Man-Lan Adams at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust:**

**Email: [man-lan.adams@wkwat.org.uk](mailto:man-lan.adams@wkwat.org.uk)**

**Mobile: 07469 118 922**

**Tel: 02476 302912**

## 8 Week Bushcraft course

We are excited to be offering our new 8-week bush-craft course in partnership with the Recovery and Wellbeing Academy. The course is being delivered in both Coventry and Warwickshire and is for adults who are experiencing anxiety, depression, isolation or just poor wellbeing.

This course offers the opportunity to escape into nature, meet warm and friendly people, and learn new skills in a relaxing natural setting. Sessions are structured around the 5 Ways to Wellbeing with activities including fire-lighting with just a spark, green-woodworking, charcoal making, willow weaving and more.

You can find out more and sign up for a course from the beginning of June 2021:

<https://www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/>

Or you can call: 024 7622 9988 or 0300 303 2626 to book onto a course



# WILD-WORDSEARCH

## Spring blooms

- Blackthorn
- Bluebell
- Buttercup
- Celandine
- Crab apple
- Cuckooflower
- Damson
- Forget-me-not
- Hawthorn
- Primrose
- Wild garlic
- Wild pear
- Wood anemone
- Wood sorrel

Credit: Amy Lewis

R	M	I	R	P	R	A	E	P	D	L	I	W	F	U
B	U	T	D	E	A	D	S	E	A	R	O	H	D	O
E	L	G	E	T	W	O	D	P	F	O	P	A	E	W
G	W	U	N	L	I	O	P	B	D	I	M	W	R	I
R	O	P	E	E	P	E	L	S	F	S	S	T	W	L
A	O	F	U	B	L	P	O	F	O	D	O	H	O	D
N	D	O	N	C	E	R	A	N	O	N	T	O	L	G
D	A	G	T	M	R	L	D	B	E	O	G	R	F	A
C	N	R	E	E	T	E	L	M	A	T	K	N	O	R
A	E	B	L	A	C	K	T	H	O	R	N	C	R	L
N	M	U	C	L	R	E	S	T	F	T	C	S	U	I
Y	O	D	K	B	G	H	O	L	U	H	W	T	K	C
O	N	L	O	R	H	E	R	O	O	B	L	A	M	I
N	E	S	O	R	M	I	R	P	R	E	A	P	H	T
C	R	F	G	I	C	E	L	A	N	D	I	N	E	D

**Challenge...** Find the two hidden words that hint at the next issue's theme!

"A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms."

Sensei Ogui

## Name It!

Can you identify the wildlife in these photos?

1



Man Lan Adams

2



Man Lan Adams

3



Erin Green

Issue 36 answers...

Name It!

1. Wasp gall
2. Female siskin
3. Apple blossom



1



2



3

Missing Links:

- Tree
- Bottle
- Chain
- Patch
- Space
- Play

## Missing Links...

Your task is to find the missing word that follows the first clue and precedes the second. For example, the answer to Rain-String could be 'Bow' giving Rainbow and Bowstring.

flower—luck

big—pond

garden—shell

wild—style

salt—battery

poppy—tray

Answers in the next issue!



**Stay safe**

