

Pond Dipping EYFS

Activity How-To Guide

Story

If you are doing the 90 minute session, then start with a story in the classroom. 10 minutes should be spent on this activity.

Sit the children down in the classroom and you can narrate one of our digitised stories on the interactive screen or you can bring a book from school.

Pond Dipping

Walk to Hollow Pond, marked on the map

Introduction

Line the children up behind the wooden railing facing the pond, so that you can stand on a dipping platform in front of them and they can all see clearly for the demonstration.

Top tip: Subject to availability, you can request a volunteer from Surrey Wildlife Trust to help you get set up and started at the pond and to ensure safe practice is followed! Please let us know at the time of booking if you require this.

Equipment

You will be able to borrow the equipment required on the day from Surrey Wildlife Trust:

Each small group will need:

- 1 white tray
- 1 butter tub
- 2 spoons
- 1 magnifying glass
- 1 identification guide
- 1 net

Top tip: You can watch our demonstration video on the website to see how it works

Instructions

1. Ask everyone to check their hands for any open cuts, wounds or severe eczema. If anyone has cuts which haven't scabbed over yet, then they will need to take a glove to avoid any pond water getting into their wound AND KEEP IT ON UNTIL THEY WASH THEIR HANDS!
2. Point out the dipping platforms which are the square areas on the pond-side of each low wooden table. Only one child at a time is allowed on the dipping platform. The other children in the group must be on the path-side of the tables. This is because the nets are very long and it would be easy to accidentally knock someone in.
3. The first thing each group must do is fill up the white tray with pond water by carefully kneeling at the side of the platform and reaching down (it might be easiest for an adult to do this). The tray needs to be at least half-full. You can use the butter tub as a scoop to top it up if needed. Then half-fill the butter tub with water too.
4. Now you are ready to dip! Take the net and hold it firmly with two hands, gently disturb the bottom of the pond and then lift it off the bottom and sweep through the water (not the mud) in a figure of eight motion, turning it as you go so that the net stays open and filling.
5. Bring the net up and let the water drain out as you move your hands to the net end (easier to carry). Bring the net to the tray and turn it over, **push the net inside out and submerge it in the tray.** You will need to get your hands dirty! Carefully wash any animals caught into the water. Put the net out of the way on the platform so that it is not a trip hazard.
6. Those not dipping can use the spoons to carefully separate the creatures from the plants and place them into the small butter tub of water which will become your aquarium. Use the magnifying glass and ID sheet to identify each animal.

Top tip: Never pick up the creatures with your hands as it is easy to hurt the animals and some might defend themselves when scared. (None of the animals you will find are dangerous but some can give a nasty nip.)

7. If the water in the white tray is very dirty, then you can **gently** tip it out back into the pond and refresh the water in the tray (keeping your creatures in the aquarium).
8. Finish your demonstration with a recap: how many children on the dipping platform? One!

Important notes

1. Each group at a dipping platform will require an adult leader to supervise. The riskiest part of the platform is the wooden border around the edges – this can get very slippery on wet days so make sure no one stands on it.
2. If a group finds a newt, you may have a legally protected species – err on the side of caution and **assume all are protected and therefore can only be handled under licence. Therefore carefully observe it and return it to the pond.**

At the end of the activity

1. The creatures in the trays and the tubs need to be gently poured back into the water.
2. The nets, trays and tubs need checking carefully for creatures stuck to the sides and rinsed out so that all the animals are returned to their environment.
3. Stack all the equipment and bring it back to the centre and leave it outside the classroom for our volunteers to gather and clean.
4. Lean the nets against the side of the building so they can dry before being put away by our staff.
5. Ensure that all the children and adults now wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before moving on to the next activity or eating.

Plenary or Microscope Video

At the end of the session you have time to recap the children's learning. You can do this with your own activity/discussion or you can watch the 15 minute long pre-recorded microscope video on the interactive screen.

The video introduces the children to life in the pond, identification, life cycles and adaptations for breathing, feeding strategies and movement in the water.