

SPRING

in the Alt Pirineu
Natural Park

Play along with the
seasons!



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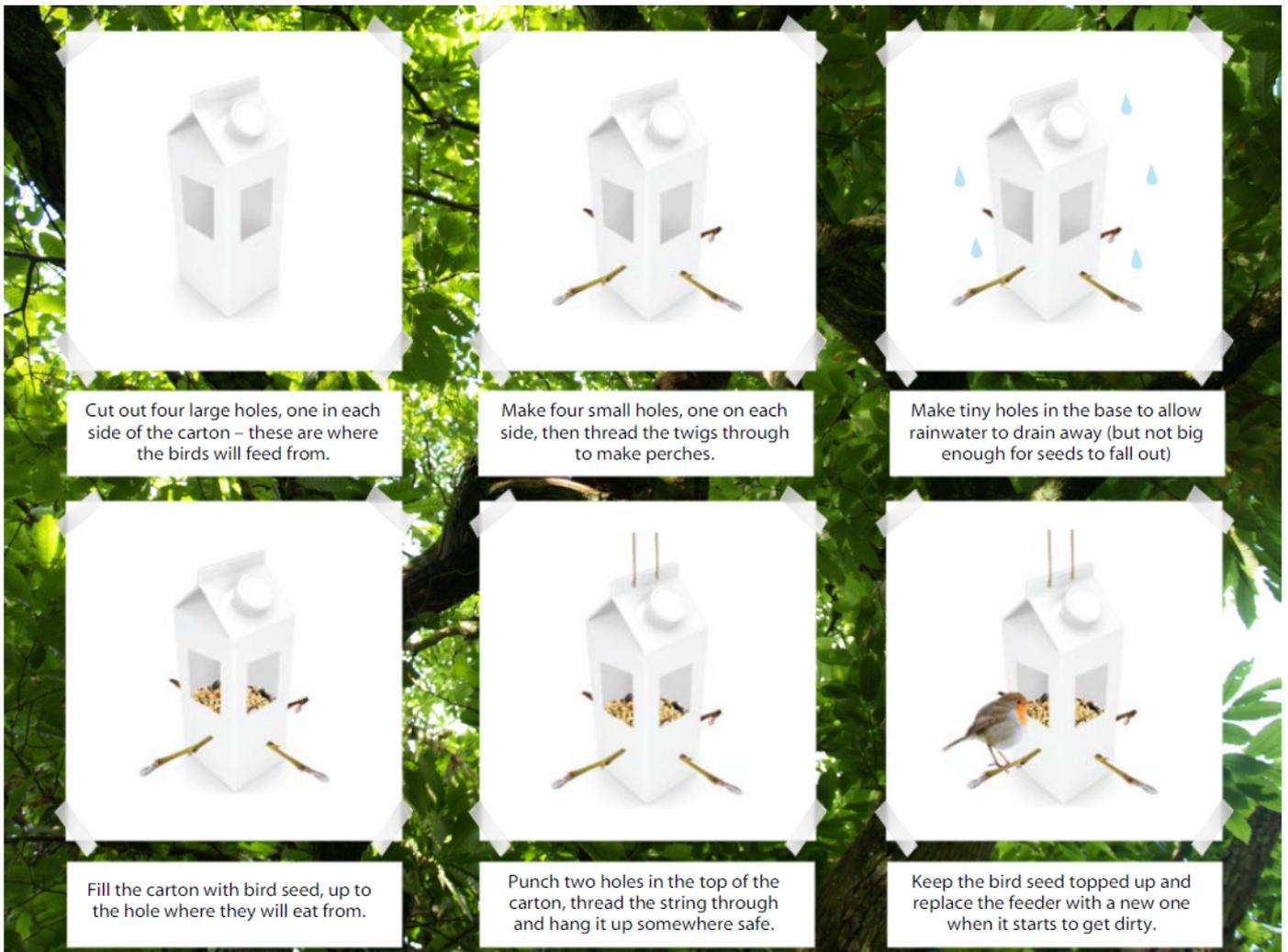
NEQUA
ANIMACIÓ I TALLERS

A new challenge!

Spring is the season when birds make the nests in which they lay and incubate their eggs, and where they rear their young. This is a very busy time of the year for the parent birds, who have to hunt for the insects, grubs, caterpillars, seed and fruits they need to feed their hungry young ones.

Here's a great way to make a fantastic bird feeder out of an old milk or juice carton! You will need:

- ✓ A clean, dry carton
- ✓ Two sticks
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ String
- ✓ Bird food
- ✓



Once you start feeding birds, you should keep it up and always make sure there is food available. You see the birds get used to going to the same place every day to eat and they might go hungry without it.

Look carefully at the picture. In the mountains: have you seen any of these animals?



The Spring Symphony

Spring is a season full of sounds that you can learn to identify. For this exercise find a quiet place where you can be alone. Once you are settled, breathing slowly, close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Is that a woodpecker hammering at a dead tree for grubs, or to make its nesthole bigger? Other birds singing? How many different songs? Bumble bees buzzing? Squirrels scuffling in fallen leaves? Water rushing in the river? Wind in the tops of the trees? The first plops of rain falling? Now open your eyes and look around you to find where these sounds are coming from, and the creatures and the features of the landscape that are making them. Make a list of all the sounds you can hear, and others you can imagine, like what the ants might be saying to one another as they go about their business.

Pick a playmate and between you see how many nature sounds you can imitate, with whistles, cheeps, screeches, knocks, popping of cheeks ... whatever you like.

And when the rehearsals are over, you will be ready to present your own personal spring symphony, with full orchestra. And charm the birds out of the trees, as they say.



The Smells of Spring

You will need to bring some kind of a small container, like a clean yoghurt carton, for this activity. As you walk through the countryside look around you for all the natural things that have a smell. You can take small bits of these plants and flowers and rub them between your fingers or break them open. Bring them up to your nose and smell them. Put the ones you like into your container, and mix up the different smells of spring. If you stir the pot with a little stick you will find that the smells change. And if you dry your mixture, the smells will persist for a long time.

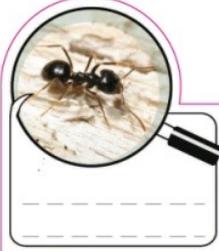
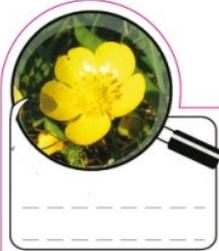
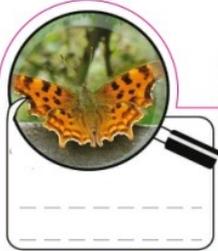
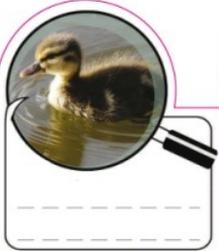
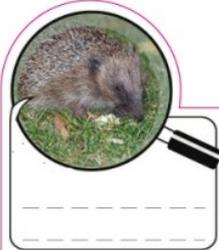
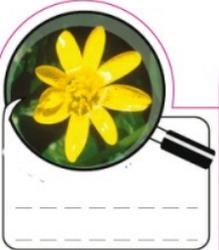
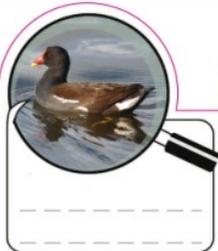
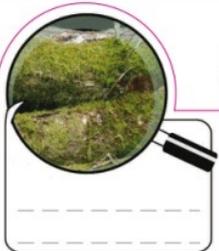
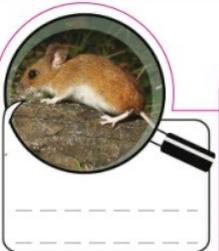
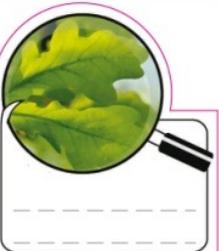
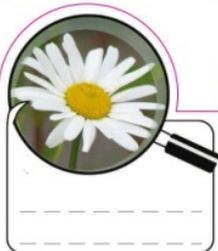
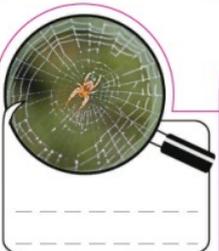
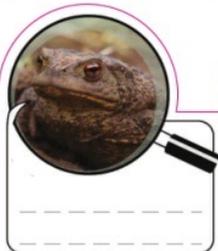
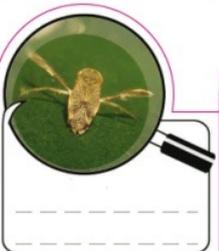
What creatures do you think live by their sense of smell? Bees? Badgers? Hedgehogs? Ladybirds? Blackbirds?

And what animals leave their scent to mark their territories? Foxes, bears, dogs, cats

As you will leave yours, for we humans leave our smells too, everywhere we go.



What have you observed? Write down your findings here:

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credits: Woodland Trust, Picture Library, iStock photos

Ants, ash tree flower, bat, bird's nest, blue tit, mountain avens, butterfly, duckling, fungi, hawthorn blossom, hedgehog, bee, ladybirds, marigold, lichen, molehill, waterhen, moss, mouse, new oak leaves, barn owl, oxeye daisy, shield bug, spider, squirrel, tadpoles, toad, wasps' nest, waterboatman, woodlouse.

¡Plant your own tree seeds! Here's how in seven easy steps:



Step 1. Take a yoghurt carton or some other plastic container and make lots of little holes in the bottom of it for drainage.

Step 2. Fill the pot to half-way up with soil, if you want to plant big seeds like chestnuts or walnuts, or nearly to the top if they are smaller, like sycamore or hawthorn. Place a few of these lights seeds on top and press them in, a few per pot.

Step 3. Cover the seeds with soil almost to the top of the pot. Press the soil down all round, but not too much, so that the soil can breathe.

Step 4. Keep the pots somewhere cool and fresh inside. Be sure to keep the soil nice and damp, but not too wet, so that the seeds won't rot.

Step 5. Over the next weeks you will be able to watch how the seeds germinate and send up their first shoots. This is the time to move the pots to somewhere where they will get more light.

Step 6. After thinning the seedlings in each pot to just one or two, you can let them grow to take up all the space available. Then you should move the plants into bigger pots, or find a place for them in the garden, if they are suitable, or bring them back to the places where you collected the seed.

Step 7. And the little seed you planted and cherished might grow into a long-lived giant of the forest!



See how your seeds grow!

Watch the potted seeds closely, how they are born, how they grow, the colours and numbers of the leaves, and note and draw the changes you observe here, with the date and any other information you wish to add:



IT'S SPRING!

When the almond
trees flower
and the fields are
green
and the flowers
bloom;
when the sky is
blue,
and the houses are
white;
when the swallows return,
and the butterflies take wing;
when love too comes back
and the sun warms us
and the boys and girls play ...
then it is **SPRING** ...



Images and ideas courtesy of www.naturedetectives.org.uk