

SUMMER

in the Alt Pirineu
Natural Park
Play along with the
seasons!



Explora el Parc
Parc Natural
de l'Alt Pirineu

Summer is the time of the year when many wild fruits ripen. If you go out into the countryside you will be sure to find fruits that are good to eat, such as blackberries, that usually grow low enough for you to pick them and eat them, there and then, on the spot.

Here are some things you might like to know about blackberries.

- ★ Blackberries grow on sprawling bushes with thorny branches that we call brambles.
- ★ You find brambles growing on the edges of paths, under trees in woods, and in neglected corners of gardens, especially where there is rich soil, such as on an old dungheap, for example.
- ★ The brambles flower at the beginning of the summer. Once the open flowers are pollinated by bees or other insects, they close up, lose their petals, and turn into hard, green mini-berries.



- ★ As the summer comes to an end the fattened berries start to ripen, and turn first reddish, then purple, then black.
- ★ When they are completely black they are soft and ready to eat, and this is the moment to go with a bucket or a basket to collect as many as you can.



Why insects and other creatures do what they do?

Have you ever asked yourself why bees buzz like they do, or why ants carry leaves and other materials from place to place?



When you watch a bee visiting a flower to gather pollen and nectar, wait and then follow it as it makes its way from flower to flower, through a garden or a field. Be on the look out for obstacles you might trip over, because a bee can react many times faster than you and might give you a fright if you startle it.

If you find a troop of ants all marching in one direction or another, follow them back and forth to find out where they are going and what they are doing. You will see that they are mostly carrying material back to the ant heap or the ant nest and carrying their rubbish away from it, communicating with one another all the while by means of their antennae and their scent organs.



Making up human-sized models of tiny creatures

If you are a member of an exploration party, why not divide yourselves up into small groups and create your own blown-up models of small creatures, using your own bodies to make the shapes. You could be an insect with six legs, or a spider with eight, or a centipede with up to a hundred

Secrets of the dandelion or piss-the-bed!

Do you know why dandelions are called piss-the-beds? It's because it is an edible plant (the flowers can be eaten in salads) which has diuretic properties. In other words, it makes you want to pee. So if you do try them, be sure not to have too many!



Look for a place where lots of dandelions are growing and pluck one of them to see how the cut stem bleeds a sort of white sap, which is the same sap that it is in the roots, if you were to dig them up and break them.



You can use this white sap as a secret ink! Try it yourself using the stem of the flower to make a drawing on a piece of paper. You'll find it quite difficult to see the drawing at first, but if you let the paper dry you will be amazed at how clear the drawing becomes before your very eyes!¹

¹Just be careful in handling dandelions because the sap can occasionally be irritating to sensitive skins, and can also stain clothes the same way it makes marks on paper.

On the hunt for blackberries!

Look for a bramble bush. How many blackberries can you count on it, from different perspectives?

Are there any flowers left on the bush, or are they all turning into fruit?

Are the brambles growing on an abandoned site in the town or city, in hedges out in the country, or in somebody's field or garden?

Draw a bramble bush here



Make a drawing of a leaf



Have you found blackberries of more than one colour? Yes / No

What percentages do you think there are of the following colours on the berries?

Green

Orange

Red

Purple

Black

Sketch and paint blackberries at different stages of ripening here:





