

Twigs all look the same. Or do they?

What you need: Some different winter twigs that have lost their leaves and a pen or pencil.

Look carefully at your twig and answer these questions.

1. Is your twig curvy or straight?

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2. Can you spot any leaf buds? What colour are they?

.....

3. What shape are the buds? Are they rounded or pointed, long or short?

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4. How are the buds arranged? Are they found in pairs or not? Look at the drawings over the page for examples – elder buds are found in pairs, hawthorn buds are not.

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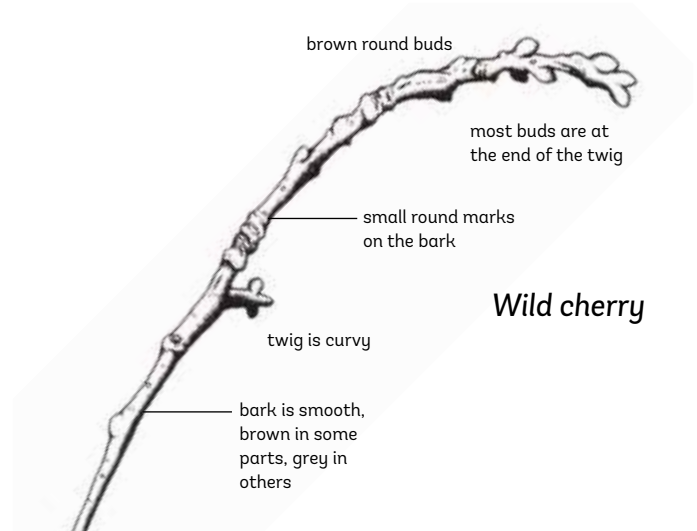
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5. What else do you notice about your twig? For example has it got thorns, or any remains of leaves or berries from last year on it? Are the buds sticky? Or can you see any green parts where the new leaves are starting to come out?

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Wild cherry

6. Using the twig ID sheet, can you work out what type of tree your twig has come from?

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Questions to try if you have time.

7. What does the bark feel like? Is it rough or smooth? How would you describe it?

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8. What colour is the bark? Look carefully – is it the same colour all over? Are there any marks on it? What do the marks look like?

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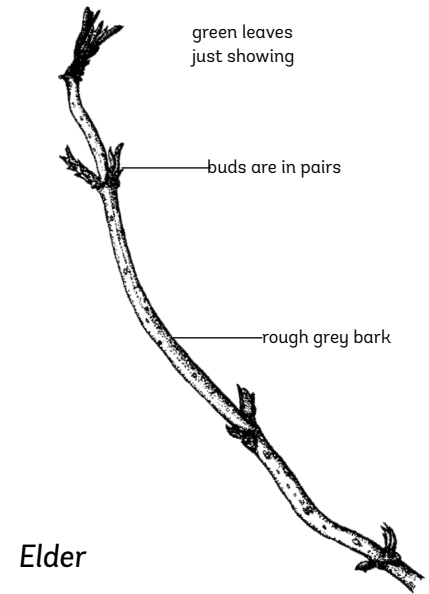
9. Look again at the buds (if you can see them easily and they are not too small). Do they look smooth all over, or are they made up of scales?

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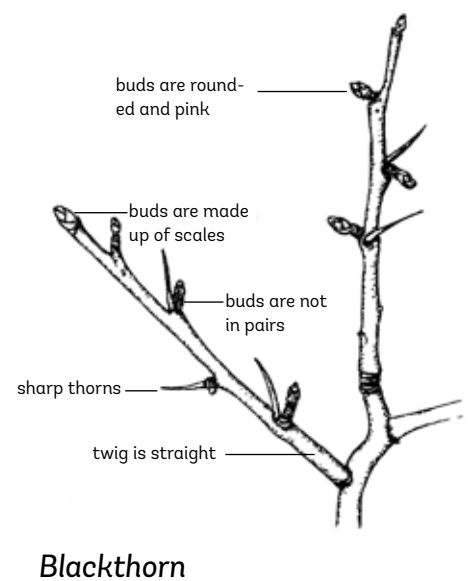
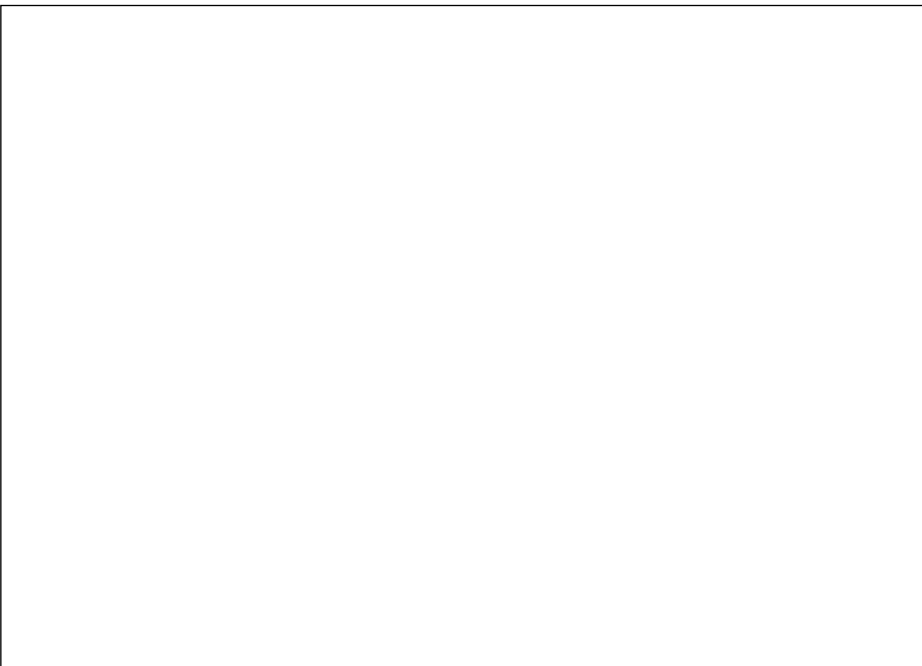
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Twigs all look the same. Or do they?

Make a careful drawing of your twig here and add labels to it.



Now choose another twig that looks very different from the first one. Draw it and add labels to show in what ways you think it is different.



Exploring a hedge?

What you need: A pen or pencil.

Hedges are usually made up of different kinds of shrubs. Shrubs are small bushy trees.

Choose a leaf from your hedge and answer the following questions:

1. What kind of shrub is the leaf from?

Use the leaf ID sheet or ask your teacher.

2. What kind of shape is the leaf?

Circle the closest picture below.

Simple
Roundish



Long or linear



Lobed



Compound
Made up of smaller leaves called 'leaflets'



3. What is the edge of the leaf like?

Circle the closest answer or write your own.

Smooth Hairy Jagged Prickly

My description:

4. What is the colour of the leaf like?

Circle the closest answer or write your own.

Light green Dark green

Yellow green Blue green

Brown green Yellow

Orange Brown

My description:

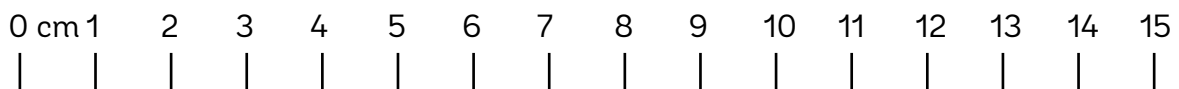
5. How long is the leaf from the tip to where it joins the stem?

Use the ruler on the edge of this worksheet to measure the leaf.

_____ cm

Can you find out more?

Choose one of the shrubs found in your hedge and find out more about it back at school. Find out where in the countryside it prefers to live, how tall it can grow, if it produces flowers or fruit, what animals rely on it for food and maybe some of its uses.



Measuring your hedge?

What you need: A pen or pencil, and a long ruler or measuring tape.

Use this sheet to make a record of what you can see in and around your hedge today.

Today's date:

Today's weather:
.....

Wildlife I have seen nearby today:
.....
.....

Estimate the height of your hedge in centimetres: (If there is a lot of difference in the heights of the shrubs, estimate the height for both the shortest and the tallest shrub).

I estimate the height is cm OR

I estimate the tallest is cm

I estimate the shortest is cm

Measure the actual height of your hedge in centimetres: (If there is a lot of difference in the heights of the shrubs, measure both the shortest and the tallest shrub in the hedge).

Our hedge measures cm OR

The tallest shrub is cm

The shortest shrub is cm



Choose one of the types of shrub in the hedge

I've chosen (write its name below)

.....

How tall are all the shrubs in the hedge of this type? Measure each one and record here.

..... cm

..... cm

..... cm

..... cm

..... cm

Are the trees you measured different heights or the same height?

.....

Why do you think this is?

.....

How species-rich is your hedge?

Hedges are habitats

What you need: A pen or a pencil.

What is a habitat?

A habitat is a place where animals and plants live.

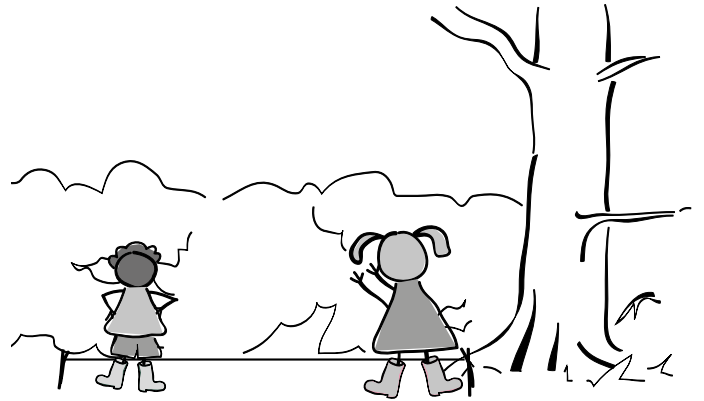
A hedge is a type of habitat.

What are the conditions of this hedge habitat?

Describe the hedge habitat. Is it dense, spiky, damp, shady? Try to use your own words.

What kind of animals do you think might live in a hedge that has been growing for many years? Name some here.

What animals can you find in and around this hedge today?



Why do you think they live here?

How species-rich is the hedge?

What you need: Two sticks and some sticky tape.

Hedges have been part of the countryside for hundreds of years. They were first planted to keep cattle and sheep enclosed in fields and stop them wandering away. Some of the very old hedges can still be found today.

Older hedges usually have a greater variety of shrubs in them because seeds from different species arrive and slowly become part of the hedge. Now turn over this page.

continued...

How species-rich is your hedge?

What you need: Two marker sticks (pieces of bamboo cane will be fine), a pen or pencil, some sticky tape and a tape measure (optional).

1. Put one of your sticks in the ground near the hedge.
2. Walk 40 long steps (or measure 30 metres with your tape measure) and put in the second stick.
3. Take a leaf from each different type of shrub you find along the hedge between the two sticks. Use the sticky tape to attach the leaves to the bottom of this sheet.
4. Count how many different leaves you have collected.

I found different leaves.

Tips: Only collect leaves from shrubs – these are plants with woody, not soft stems.

Count each kind of shrub once – check new leaves against the ones you have already stuck to the sheet.

Question

Can you think why having more species of shrub in a hedge is better for wildlife?

Clue: Would more species of shrub provide more or less food and shelter for creatures living in the hedge?

Stick your leaves here

Food chains

What you need: A pen or pencil.

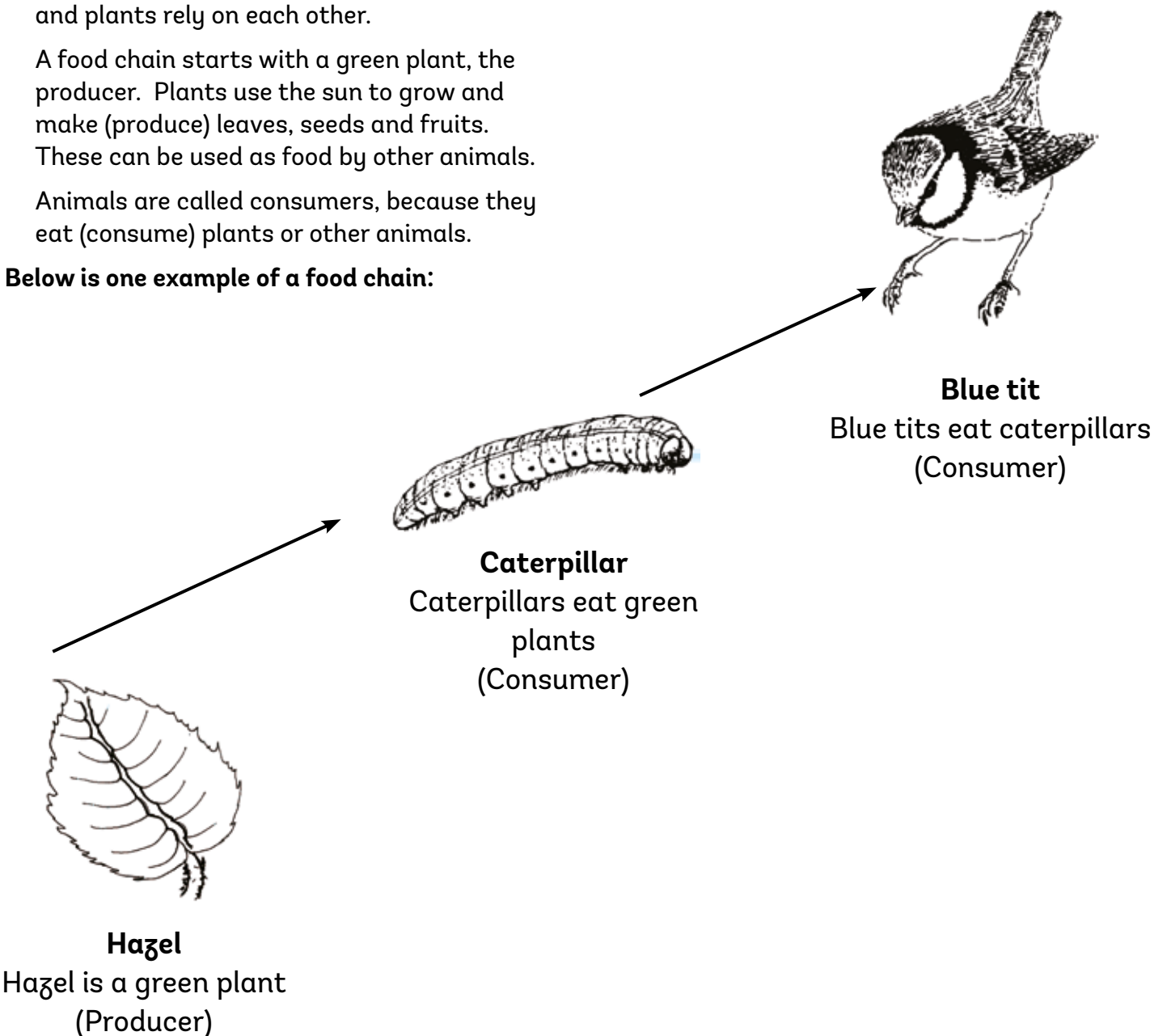
What is a food chain?

A food chain shows how different animals and plants rely on each other.

A food chain starts with a green plant, the producer. Plants use the sun to grow and make (produce) leaves, seeds and fruits. These can be used as food by other animals.

Animals are called consumers, because they eat (consume) plants or other animals.

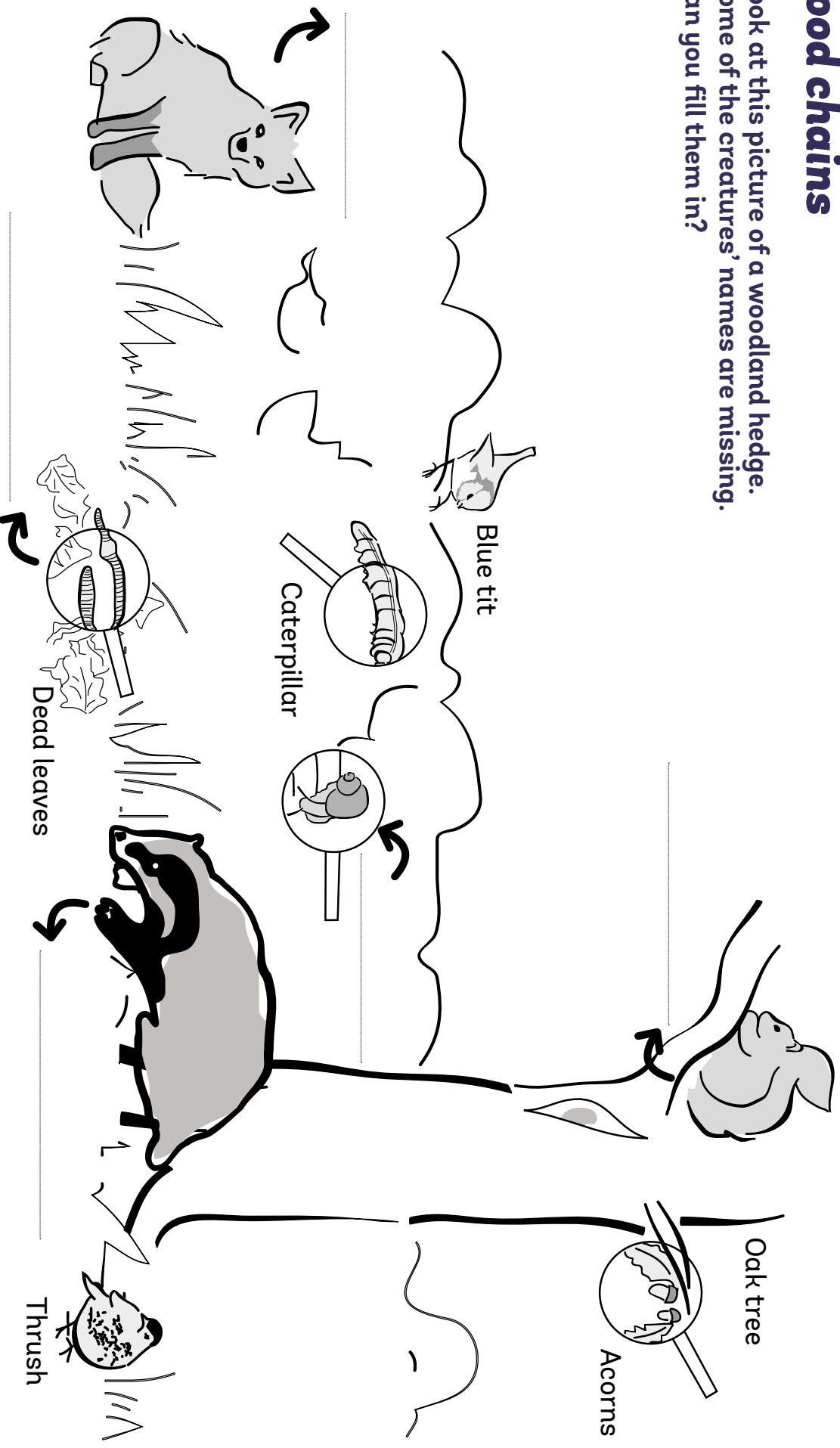
Below is one example of a food chain:





Food chains

Look at this picture of a woodland hedge.
Some of the creatures' names are missing.
Can you fill them in?



Food chains

Here is some more information about the plants and animals in the picture

Producers

Green plants

Dead leaves which fell off green plants

Acorns – from a large green plant (an oak tree)

Consumers that eat plants

Worms eat dead leaves

Snails and caterpillars eat green plants

Squirrels eat acorns

Consumers that eat other animals

Badgers eat worms

Blue tits eat caterpillars

Thrushes eat snails

Foxes eat thrushes and bluetits

Now use this information to fill in four food chains

Food chains

Green plants Caterpillar

Green plants Thrush

Dead leaves

Acorns _____ Fox

Question

Explain why you think plants are such an important part of food chains.

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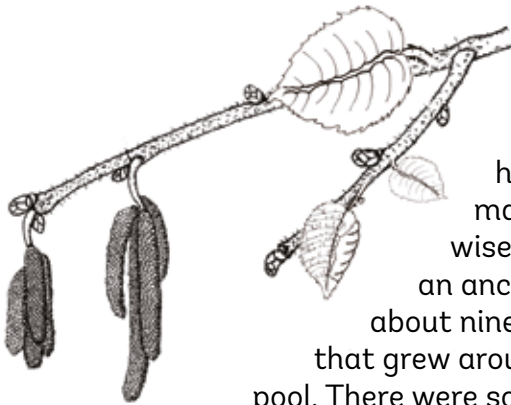
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Wild tales

What you need: A pen pen or pencil.

Read these folk stories about different common shrubs:

Hazel



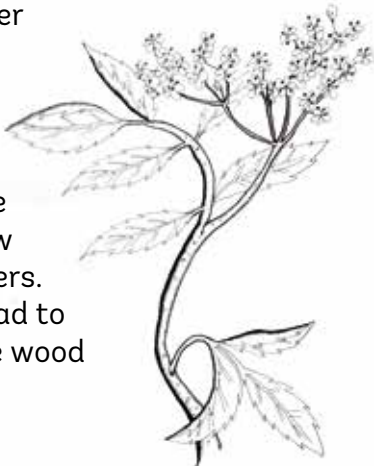
The Celtic people believed that eating hazelnuts made you wise. They had an ancient tale

about nine hazel trees that grew around a sacred pool. There were some salmon living in the pool and they ate the nuts that fell from the hazel tree and absorbed the wisdom from the nuts. The number of bright spots on the salmon's skin showed how many nuts they had eaten.

Elder

The elder tree was a symbol of sadness. Some people believed that the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified, was made from it. Maybe this was the reason why country people avoided using it.

People in Denmark believed a spirit called the Elder tree mother lived in elder branches. If furniture was made from the wood, the Elder tree mother would follow and haunt the owners. To avoid this, she had to be asked before the wood was cut.



Hawthorn

In the old days, when people celebrated May Day, instead of dancing around the maypole, they danced around a hawthorn tree. Hawthorn blossom is called 'may' and people used to gather garlands of may blossom.



If you've ever heard of the saying 'ne'er cast a clout till May is out' it means don't wear less layers of clothes until the may blossom is flowering.

Now make up your own folk story about a shrub of your choice. You may like to use one of these ideas.

1. Another name for hawthorn is the bread and cheese tree
2. Elder means 'fire tree'

Winter twig ID sheet



Ash



Field
maple



Birch



Alder



Elder



Hazel



Beech



Horse
chestnut



Rowan



Oak



Lime



Lilac



Hawthorn



Blackthorn



Larch



Sycamore



Dog rose



Elm

Leaf ID sheet



Alder



Ash



Beech



Birch



Elder



Field Maple



Hawthorn



Hazel



Holly



Horse Chestnut



Oak



Rowan



Sycamore

