

Stay Wild At Home With

Wild things!

**Natural Christmas
Decorations**



Natural Christmas Decorations Activity Pack

Wild Things is proud to introduce our natural Christmas decoration Activity Pack. We will be using some natural materials to make Christmas decorations and giving step-by-step instructions along with some fun facts about the materials we have gathered.

Use our hashtag [#staywildathome](#) and share some pictures of the decorations you've made! You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for regular updates and more Stay Wild At Home adventures! If you enjoy this resource and would like to contribute to our work, you can [donate](#), [fundraise for us](#) or [support us as you shop](#).

What to gather and how!



The best places for materials are gardens, woods, verges and hedgerows. Before you set off make sure you have some secateurs or scissors and a bag to bring home your goodies. You need to make sure you have the permission of the landowner and that you forage responsibly, more information can be found at [Wild foods](#) and [Foraging guidelines](#)

What to collect? You're looking for, twigs, branches, evergreen foliage, berries, seed heads, colours, textures - anything that you think would look good really.



Evergreen foliage such as conifer, cypress, fir, pine, holly, mistletoe, and ivy.



Cones, berries and seeds such as pinecones holly berries, ivy berries, alder cones and larch cones



Branches, stems and twigs such as willow, hazel, birch.

We source our willow from a local business [Naturally useful](#)
Unless freshly cut willow does need to be soaked beforehand. If the stems are dried, you will need to soak them in water for a couple of days.

Some great additions that can be added are cinnamon stick dried oranges, apples and limes,

You could attempt to dry your own fruit!

What you need:

1. Oranges, lemons and limes
2. Oven or dehydrator
3. Sharp knife
4. Chopping board
5. Wire rack/baking tray

- Start at the stalk end of the fruit and cut into slices (the thinner they are the quicker they dry) about 0.5cm works well.
- Put the oven on the lowest setting
- Spread the fruit across the wire rack or a baking tray lined with baking paper in a single layer and not overlapping.
- Bake for 4hrs turning half way through. If they are not quite dry leave them a bit longer or allow to air dry.





Scots pine is one of the widest distributed woody plants in the world, spreading right around the northern hemisphere. It is a key species in the Boreal forest, of which the Caledonian Pine forest that once would have covered much of the Highlands is a part of.

It is an evergreen conifer, distinguished by its paired needles and orangey crown.

It is a keystone species in the pine forests where it grows, supporting a wide array of animals, fungi and other plants.

The shade from its crown supports blaeberry which covers the ground beneath, producing flowers and small blueberry like fruits.

Insects such as pine weevils, pine looper moths which are supported by the pines go on to be a food source for small birds such as crested tits, endemic within the UK to the Highland's pine forests. The Caledonian pine forests are home to the Capercaillie, which feed on the buds and shoot of the pine, along with the insects and understory species it supports.



Douglas Fir is an introduced species from America's Northwest coast to the UK in the 1800s. Unlike Scots pine its needles grow singularly, arranged around the twig. They are soft, with a pair of green-white stripes along the needle underside. Most distinctive are its cones, larger than that of other conifers, it has small bract – a papery protrusion that has the appearance of a mouse trying to wiggle its way beneath the scale of the cone.

While not a native species, it is able to support our wildlife – the cones providing a food source for red squirrels, and homes for pine martens.

They can grow to a very large size, and live for long time, the deadwood they produce is ideal shelter for birds and bats.

It is a widely grown species for use as Christmas trees too!



European Larch is not native to the UK, having been brought in from central Europe as a forestry crop, larch is now widespread in the country.

● Easily identifiable in the winter as it is deciduous, losing its needles unlike other conifers, where you see a golden yellow needed tree or one bare of needles it is likely a larch tree.

● It has small cones, which start their life as attractive purple flowers.

● These cones provide a food source to squirrels, and small birds like siskins and lesser redpolls.



Sitka Spruce is another common forestry crop, forming half of UK plantations, with smaller trees being used to make paper, with older trees being particularly suited for making guitar soundboards.

● Needles grow singularly, unlike pines pairs, from little woody stumps.

● Its cones are slender with papery scales.

● While not as valuable to wildlife as other conifers, much of its value comes from its timber.



Holly is a native species to the UK and across Europe, growing in woodland as well as hedgerows and scrub areas. Being evergreen, keeping its green leaves all year round, holly has long had significance to humans even before Christianity and its links to Christmas. It was seen to have power, able to repel lightning, worn at solstice festivals, and if hung above the door would keep evil way. With the arrival of Christianity these traditions were incorporated into the new festivals and stories that arrived with the religion in Britain.

● Not all holly trees will have berries however, uncommonly, holly is dioecious meaning it has male and female trees rather than every tree having both male and female reproductive parts.

● It provides dense cover to small birds and mammals, either for nesting or hibernation.

- Holly's flowers provide nectar for bees and other pollinating insects.
- Holly berries are a vital source of food for birds and small mammals when other food sources are scarce.



Ivy is another evergreen plant, but instead of supporting itself with a woody trunk, ivy instead climbs another tree to gain height. Ivy was once used as much as holly in Christmas wreaths but seem to have fallen from fashion. In some cases, it has been used to replace holly, with the brown seeds being painted red to look like holly! For those who enjoy a drink, the Roman god Bacchus, the god of agriculture and wine, wore a wreath of ivy and grapevine and those who wore ivy on their head would be prevented from getting drunk – though this seems like wishful thinking!

- The nectar of ivy flowers is important to many pollinating insects, in the autumn and winter when there are few other flowers about.
- The seeds are very calorie dense, having more energy per gram than chocolate!
- Ivy seeds are poisonous to humans, but they are a key food source to birds in the late winter.



Making a wreath

For this Activity you will need:

1. 3 strands of willow
2. A selection of natural decorations
3. Ribbon
4. Floristry wire

Instructions

- **Step 1.** Spend some time in the outdoors looking for your decorations and choose some of your favourites.
- **Step 2.** Select 3 pieces of willow, use thin and long willow stems for your wreath, no thicker than your little finger!
- **Step 3.** Twist the 3 willow stands together staggering the ends.
- **Step 4.** Once twisted gently bend the willow over your knee then form it into a rough circle.
- **Step 5.** Once you're happy with your circle either tuck the ends in to secure the circle or tie the ends up with some twine or string.
- **Step 6.** Start with the evergreen foliage and start to tuck it in the willow circle to get the coverage you want.
- **Step 7.** Use the floristry wire/twine/glue gun to attach your decorations such as pinecones, dried fruit berries, holly etc.
- **Step 8.** Tie a loop of ribbon through the wreath to hang it up.



Making a pinecone Father Christmas

For this Activity you will need:

1. Pinecone
2. Glue gun
3. Wooden balls/cotton craft balls
4. Black felt-tip Pen
5. Red Felt
6. Cotton wool
7. Glue
8. Scissors
9. Twine/string

Instructions

- Step 1. Begin by sticking the cotton/wooden ball to the bottom of the pinecone with the glue gun this will be Santa's head.
- Step 2. Cut a 20cm piece of twine/string, and cut a semicircle along with a 20cm by 1cm rectangle of red felt (templates on the templates on the last sheet)
- Step 3. Place the string on the felt at the point and secure with a small blob of glue.
- Step 4. Roll the felt into a cone shape and secure with glue to make Santa's hat.
- Step 5. Glue Santa's hat onto his head.
- Step 6. With your long rectangle wrap this around the bottom of Santa's head and secure with a blob of glue to make Santa's scarf.
- Step 7. Now draw 2 eyes and a nose on your Santa.
- Step 8. Find somewhere to hang your Santa up



Making a pinecone reindeer

For this Activity you will need:

1. Pinecone
2. Glue gun
3. Small red pompom
4. Small twigs (antler shaped)
5. Scissors
6. Brown card
7. Googly eyes
8. Twine/string

Instructions

- Step 1. Begin by sticking the pompom to the top of the cone this will be the nose.
- Step 2. Cut a 20cm piece of twine/string, and tie into a loop, wrap this into the bottom of the pinecone.
- Step 3. Place a blob of glue inside the scales where you wish to place the eyes and pop a googly eye on each bit of glue.
- Step 4. Cut ears out of brown card and stick with the antlers between the scales and secure with a blob of glue.
- Step 5. Find somewhere to hang your reindeer up



Making a pinecone elf

For this Activity you will need:

1. Pinecone
2. Glue gun
3. Wooden balls/cotton craft balls
4. Black felt-tip Pen
5. Green Felt
6. Glue
7. Scissors
8. Twine/string

Instructions

- **Step 1.** Begin by sticking the cotton/wooden ball to the bottom of the pinecone with the glue gun this will be Elf's head.
- **Step 2.** Cut a 20cm piece of twine/string, and cut a semicircle along with of green felt (templates on the templates on the last sheet)
- **Step 3.** Place the string on the felt at the point and secure with a small blob of glue.
- **Step 4.** Roll the felt into a cone shape and secure with glue to make the elf's hat.
- **Step 5.** Glue the elf's hat onto his head.
- **Step 6.** Now draw a face on your elf.
- **Step 7.** Find somewhere to hang your elf up



Making twig Christmas trees

For this Activity you will need:

1. Twigs
2. Glue gun
3. Yellow pompom or gold star
4. Scissors/secateurs
5. Twine/string/wool

Instructions

- Step 1. Cut your twigs to a similar size and place them down in the shape of a triangle
- Step 2. Cut a small stick to be the base of the tree.
- Step 3. Place a blob of glue at the corners to secure the shape, once dried stick the base of the tree with a bit of glue.
- Step 4. Take your Twine/string/wool and start at the top of the tree, you can go horizontally or vertically or wrap the outside it's up to you.
- Step 5. Once you have wrapped tie a knot and secure with a bit of glue.
- Step 6. Tie a loop at the top of the tree if you wish to hang it.
- Step 7. You can decorate with pompoms or a star at the top.



Making wood cookie decorations

For this Activity you will need:

1. Wood cookies (small round slices of wood)
2. Felt pens/stampers
3. Natural materials
4. Twine/string/wool

Instructions

- Step 1. Get a wood cookie
- Step 2. Draw or stamp a Christmas picture or pattern
- Step 3. Maybe stick 2 together to make a snowman
- Step 4. Be creative, it's up to you!



Remember, it doesn't matter if your decorations look rustic or handmade – that's the beauty of natural decorations we hope you have had fun!

Winter wonderland checklist



Scots Pinecone



Holly



Usnea



Douglas fir cone



Ivy



Scots Pine



European larch



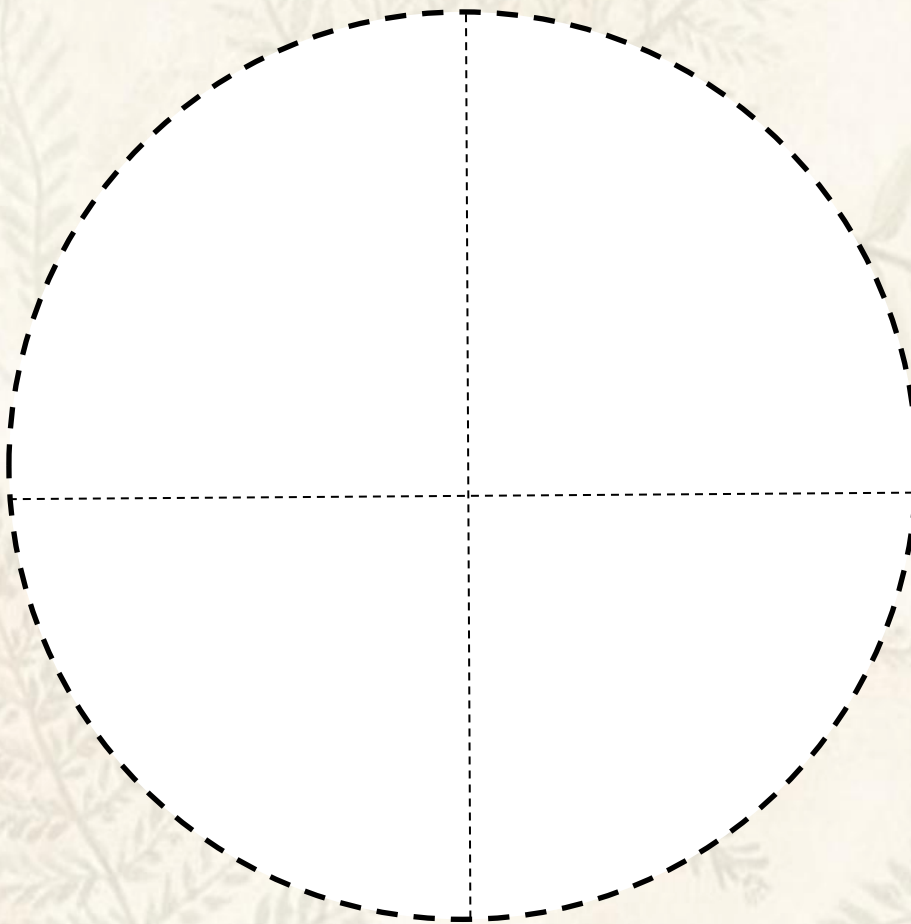
Robin



Red Squirrel



Templates



**Makes 4 hats
for Santa or elf**



Makes one Scarf

Please cut around the lines to make a template