

A Walk on the Wild Side

The Woodland Trail

Welcome to Leeds Castle. This trail has been designed for you to use either as a quiz sheet as you walk through the Wood Garden or as a guide so you can answer the questions at a later time. Should you come on a day when the weather is inclement you will not need to do the walk to answer the questions, but we hope that you do find the opportunity to Walk on the Wild Side.

Once you have paid for your tickets walk through the Lych Gate and take the path to the right, no cheating at this point and hopping on the train!

There are many trees, plant and shrubs lining the path such as Hollies, Oaks, and Roses. These will all look different depending on the season, but look for the Guelder Rose on your left it has a leaf like the picture, which in the Autumn turns yellow/orange and finally red.



Holly



Oak Tree



Guelder Rose leaf



Guelder Rose

The berries are bright red and when it is grown and fully fruiting it may look like the picture above. This plant is very important to wildlife. Which types of animal do you think would like to eat these berries?

1. Answer:



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There are several animals in this area that have their homes here. Squirrels, badgers, foxes to name just three, but what are their homes called?

2. A squirrel's home is a

A badger's home is a

A fox's home is a

This photo of a Badger was taken by a night camera on the estate. Badgers are nocturnal, coming out to eat at night and sleeping through the day.



The Bridge

As you arrive at the bridge, look first to your right. You will see here a nest in the water. This nest is always here and has been used by both swans and geese. Beyond the nest to the left are the pens where we keep any poorly swans or geese and to the right is where we have a number of kingfishers, and they can often be seen flying along the stretch of waterway.



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Kingfishers eat small fish and aquatic insects. They must eat at least their own body weight in fish each day just to survive.

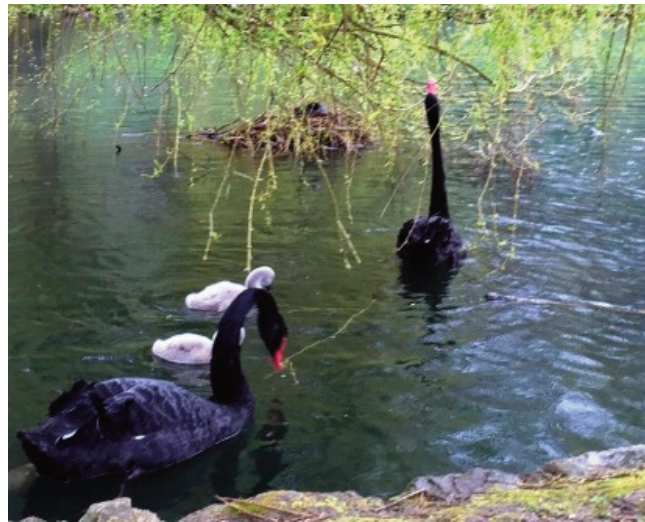


3. Can you name 2 fish that they might eat?

A).....

B).....

Looking to the left of the bridge you may see geese, ducks, swans and waterfowl. You can also see some of our lovely Weeping Willows. Swans eat the leaves of these trees and take the branches to build their nests with.



Walk on until you can see the black panelled bridge behind you and the Cascade waterfall in front of you.



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Coots and Moorhens nest for 8 months of the year and often do so under the bridge. Although they are closely related and both live in wetland habitats, they eat different foods.

Moorhen - Likes to eat water plants, seeds, fruit, grasses, insects, snails, worms and small fish.

Coot - Likes to eat vegetation, snails and insect larvae, often diving deep into the water to find them.

But which is which? Write the correct name underneath.



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Cedar Pond

There are over 400 species of Weeping Willow trees see if you can count how many there are here as you walk through. Willows are one of the fastest growing plants in the world. They can grow 3m each year. As well as providing food and shelter for the swans, geese and waterfowl, the weeping willow flowers are full of nectar that are loved by bees.



The bee pictured is a **Tree Bumblebee**, not native to England, and an invasive species. They arrived in England in 2001. Not all trees, plants, animals, insects and birds that we see in England are native to here, but have come from other countries.

4. Where do these bees they like to make their nests?

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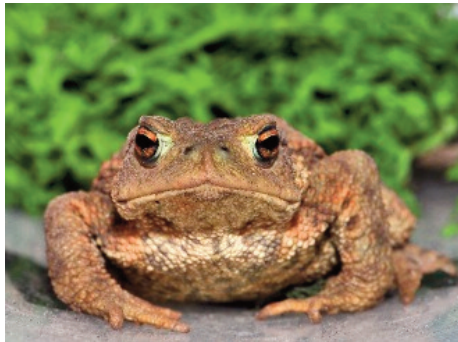
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As you walk on beside the stream, on your right you will see several Gunnera plants. Gunnera is one of the largest plants and fastest growing plants and will look very different depending on the time of year that you visit. The picture on the right shows it full grown with the strange spiky flowers at full size.



In the stream on the left you may find Mussels, Eels, Frogs, Toads, and even Grass snakes who like to swim sometimes!



Do you think the following characteristics belong to Frogs or Toads?
Place a tick in the correct box.

5. A) Bulging Eyes Frog Toad
- B) Webbed Feet Frog Toad
- C) Dry, warty skin Frog Toad
6. Is it the frog or the toad that prefers a drier habitat and spends a longer time out of water?

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Look out for the Silver Birch with squirrel damage to its trunk as you continue your walk.

As you cross the little bridges that go over the streams look out for more of the aquatic creatures. This is a particularly good place to spot Mussels and Eels.

When you come to a suitable spot, stop for a moment, be very quiet and listen. What bird song can you hear? Birds that you may be able to hear are: Woodpeckers, Blackbirds, Thrushes, Robins, Pigeons, Jackdaws. The different types of wild birds we see at Leeds Castle is too long to list here, keep alert and see how many you spot today. We also have different species of Owls living here. Little Owls are small, shy and well camouflaged and tawny Owls are nocturnal so you won't see or hear either of them today.

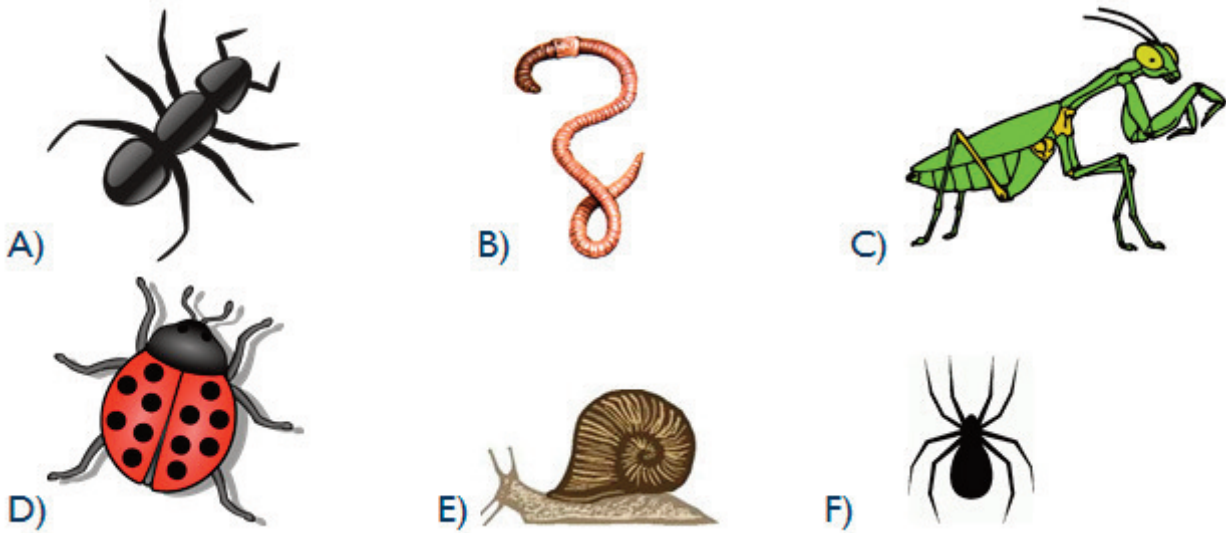


7. What does Nocturnal mean?.....

You may also like to take a moment to look for some minibeasts! Of course we mean insects, of which there are many different species throughout the gardens, all requiring different habitats.

Here are a few to look out for, can you name them?

8.



A).....

B).....

C).....

D).....

E).....

F).....

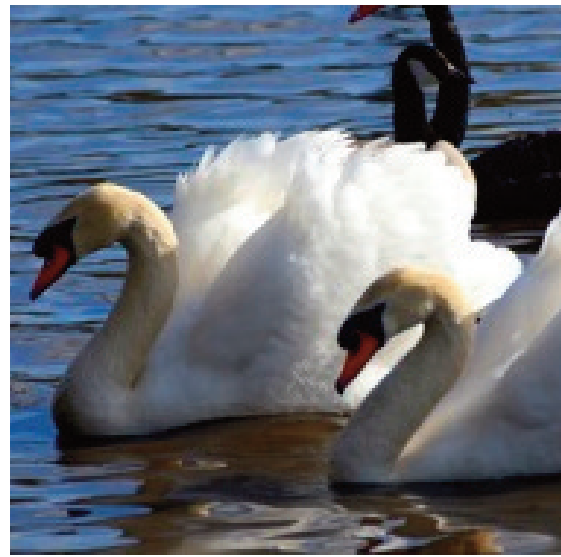


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As you walk up past the Castle Gatehouse, across the Causeway with the moat on your left and the Great Water on your right you may be able to spot some of our water fowl. We have Mute Swans, Whooper Swans, Black Swans, Great Crested Grebes, Barnacle Geese, Greylag Geese, Mallards, Shelducks and many more.



In the moat we have Pike, Carp, Bream, Trout and Terrapins.



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Across the Great Water at the far end opposite the Willow Maze a family of Roe Deer have been spotted in the woods

There are many types and species of wildlife here at Leeds Castle, including birds, waterfowl, insects, fish, trees, plants. Every day you will see something different in the grounds and the seasons bring different things for you to see.



We hope you have enjoyed your Walk on the Wild Side and that you will come again at a different time of year to see what else you can spot.

