Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer



Tree identification: beech



'Pupils should be taught to **identify and name** a variety of common wild and garden plants, including **deciduous and evergreen trees**.'

The National Curriculum Year 1 Science programme of study, Plants, Statutory requirements



So we had better get on with it!



Anyway, Summer is a brilliant time to get to grips with tree identification. Can you think why?



Remember, there are 6 clues to tree identification: far too many for all at once. In winter, we shall look 3 clues to tree identity: bark, branching and buds.

In Spring, Summer and Autumn, we focus on 3 other clues. They all have an 'f' sound:

- Leaf
- Flower
- Fruit



Put up the 3 middle fingers of your left (also an 'f' sound) hand – rather like the Scout and Guide Associations' salute - your middle finger, your biggest finger, reminds you of the most obvious clue to the tree's identity, the **leaf**; then the fingers on either side are the **flower** and the **fruit**.

In summer, the flowers are gone but the **leaves** and **fruit** are there and they are good clues:

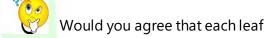
- they are there for many months,
- they are obvious,
- they are distinctive.



So there we have the answer to our query as to why Summer is a brilliant time to get to grips with tree identification?'

What words would you use to describe the leaves: their colour, size, shape ...?
Here is a photograph of a group of beech leaves next to the outline of a 5-year-old's hand.





- is dark green,
- is shiny,
- is much smaller than the hand,
- is egg-shaped ('ovoid'),
- has a point at its tip,
- has a short petiole?Anything else?

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Look for a beech tree in a park or churchyard.

Here is a photograph of one in a park.

It has the characteristic shape of a beech tree. Look for a tree with a similar shape.

I know we are only supposed to be considering leaves and fruit right now, but remember that tree shape – or 'branching' – is one of our 6 clues to tree identification.



How would you describe the shape?

I would say that mine is bell-shaped. Is yours?
Bell-Beech that's easy to remember!



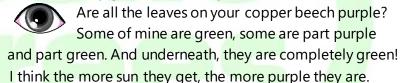
A mature beech tree



Leaves of a copper beech tree

Some beech trees have the same shape but purple leaves. These trees are called 'copper beech' trees.

In Spring, when they first come out, the leaves are a copper colour but they go purple. Have you found a copper beech?



Is that how it is on your copper beech tree?



Fruit is our other Big Clue to a tree's identity in summer - and autumn.



What do you think beech tree fruits look like?

Will they be hard or soft? Big or small? Smooth or rough? And what colour?



Clue: they are called 'beech nuts'.



Yes, they are hard, small, rough and brown.



Can you see any beech nuts on your tree?



Beech nuts: outer cases and inner seeds

Beech nut cases are covered with soft brown hooks. When the case opens we can see the seeds inside. See how neatly the seeds fit together in the case. Feel the shape of the seeds.

Feel the silky softness of the inside of the case.



For much more about beech trees, see Hello Trees book 'Bella Beech' to be found at the Hello Trees website – where there are lots of fun things to look for and do outdoors.

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