

# Hello Trees Resource Sheet

## What to look for outdoors in Summer

### Hazelnuts



Anyone like chocolate spread on their toast?

One brand of chocolate spread is called Nutella.



Why do you think there is 'nut' in Nutella when it is a chocolate spread?

Yes, there are nuts in Nutella: hazelnuts,

and now is the time to look for hazelnuts.



Hazelnuts grow on hazel trees.

There used to be a hazel tree in our town park, but the Council must have cut it down.

Perhaps park keepers thought it was growing at such an angle that it might fall on someone.

It is certainly unusual to see a hazel tree growing on its own.

Most hazel trees in Britain are to be found in hedges.



In Winter we saw their catkins dangling in the wind around the edges of parks and fields and roadsides.

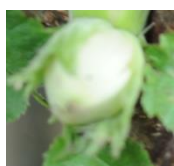


Now in Summer, hazel hedges are covered in leaves and, from afar, look like many other green hedges.

What clues should we look for to identify a hazel?



Hazel leaves are  
alternate (not opposite each other) along the twig;  
about as big as the palm of a 5-year-old's hand;  
floppy and squashy;  
unusually wide – almost round;  
heart-shaped at the base;  
pointed at the tip;  
tiny pointed zigzags around the edge;  
hairs around the edge and along veins underneath.



We can see the hazelnuts forming, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs, threes or fours.

Each nut is in a soft silky white case with a pair of frilly leaves on either side.



So now is the time to look for hazelnuts: see them, feel them, smell them.

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Why now? 'The nuts don't look ripe!' I hear you cry.

They certainly don't look like the brown hazel nuts we buy at Christmas.

Now is the time because, before you know it, the nuts will have disappeared.

The hazel nuts in our hedge disappeared while they were in a soft silky white case.



Where do you think they went?



Much later, I went to reopen a bag of compost I had opened some months before.



Imagine my surprise when I found loads of hazel nuts amongst the compost.

A bird or small mammal must have collected the nuts while they were still growing on the hedge and buried them in the soft compost.



Was it a squirrel? But we seldom see squirrels where we live.

Could it have been a mouse? We do see mice scurrying across paths.

Dormice are sometimes called hazel dormice and love hazel nuts. They have adaptations that make it easy for them to climb along even the most delicate twigs of trees. Download the [Hello Trees Dormouse discovery sheet](#). However, dormice are rare in Britain.

There is a website that gives us ways to tell [how to look for wildlife feeding signs](#), tells of some of the species that like to eat hazelnuts and the tell-tale signs they leave:

**Squirrels** tend to split the nuts neatly in half.

**Common dormice** leave a smooth, round hole in the side of the nut, with tooth marks running around the inside of the hole.

**Wood mice** leave tooth marks on the surface of the nut and across the edge of the hole. The hole may be either circular or ragged in shape.

**Bank voles** create a round hole with tooth marks across the edge, but not on the surface of the nut.

**Great spotted woodpeckers** break nuts into pieces or leave large, irregular holes.

**Woodpeckers and nuthatches** also jam hazelnuts into crevices in tree bark, so they can hammer them more easily.



Now we can keep a look out for hazelnuts or hazelnut shells in tree crevices, near hedges or where little mammals might be living.



By the way, on Nutella jars are pictures of hazelnuts next to a yellow flower and green leaf. The leaf has no point and the flower is nothing like either a male hazel catkin or tiny female hazel flower. See the Hello Trees discovery sheet [Hazel Catkins](#).



[Let me know](#) if you work out why they are there.