

# In the garden

Children find minibeasts fascinating and this brightly-coloured poster will encourage them to search for their favourite creatures among the vegetation, as well as talk about protecting the environment for all living things

## Activities across the curriculum

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Encourage the children to look at the poster and make links with their own experiences. Introduce live minibeasts, such as worms and snails, and demonstrate how to handle them very gently. (Be sensitive to those who have fears of certain creatures.) Always return the creatures to their habitat after observation. Emphasise the importance of washing hands after touching the minibeasts.
- Invite the children to look closely at the poster and decide which of the creatures they would most like to be. Would they like to fly among the treetops, burrow through dark, sticky soil or eat juicy leaves? Encourage them to draw what they might look like and help them to write a sentence underneath.

### Communication and Language Literacy

- Create cards showing the names of the minibeasts on the poster. Invite the children to choose one, read it and find that creature on the poster. Encourage them to focus on initial letter sounds for more complex words.
- Ask groups of four children to each choose a different minibeast from the poster and find out more about that creature using non-fiction books, such as *Minibeasts* by Lynn-Higgins Cooper (Franklin Watts). Gather the children together as a large group to share the information.

### Mathematics

- Draw the children's attention to the coloured plant pots lying on the ground on the poster. What colour are they? If the children were creating a pattern what colour would they put next – blue or yellow? Provide bricks in two contrasting colours for the children to create their patterns.
- Make a list of the different minibeasts on the poster. Attach it to a clipboard and go on a minibeast hunt around your outdoor area with the children. Create a tally of the minibeasts seen?

Back at the setting analyse the results and ask questions such as 'Which creature was seen the most/least?', 'Were there more of each creature on the poster or on the hunt?'

### Understanding the World

- Visit [resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk](http://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk) for an interactive version of the poster. Encourage the children to spot the minibeasts as they go around the garden.
- Introduce the word 'camouflage'. Explain that the caterpillar and grasshopper cannot be seen easily because they are the same colour as the vegetation, and worms and ants are a similar colour to the ground. Which creatures are brightly coloured?



### How to use the poster

Create a low, interactive display featuring the poster as a centrepiece. Print labels for the different minibeasts and fasten these around the poster, with coloured wool or ribbon linking each label and image. In the remaining space, display the children's artwork and minibeast photographs, along with captions. Underneath the display, arrange a table with plastic minibeasts, magnifying glasses and books.

Alternatively, laminate the poster to hang outdoors, or hang it in different indoor play areas to stimulate ideas and discussion, for example, for investigation, small-world play or creativity.

### Physical Development

- Invite the children to talk about how the minibeasts on the poster move. Play some appropriate music and let the children pretend to 'fly', 'glide', 'ripple' or 'scuttle'.
- Using the poster for ideas, create a play environment for minibeasts in a Tuff spot or builder's tray, using soil or compost and small plants. Introduce small-world minibeasts and encourage the children to make up scenarios about them.

### Expressive Arts and Design

- Discuss the environment shown on the poster. Why are minibeasts attracted to brightly-coloured flowers, fresh green grass and rich brown soil? Invite the children to create an image of a perfect minibeast environment using paint and collage techniques of their choice.
- Look at the poster and ask the children what sounds they might hear if they visited such an environment. Let them use musical instruments and everyday objects to recreate their suggestions, for example, flapping fabric for butterflies' wings or fingernails tapping on wood for scuttling ants.

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