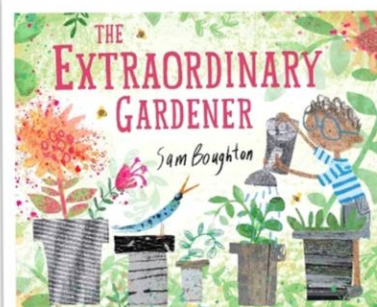
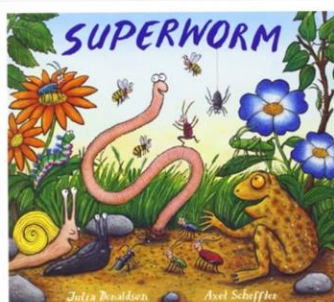
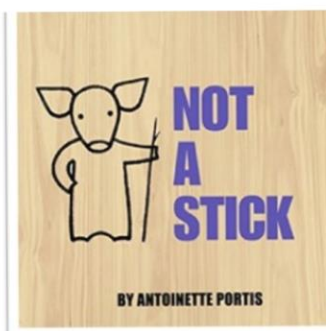
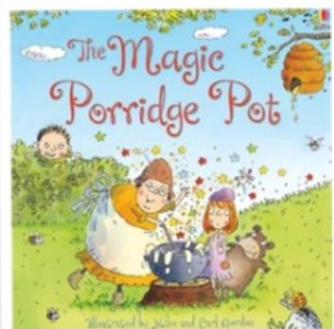




# Books and Activities to Share Outdoors



[www.leaf.eco/education](http://www.leaf.eco/education)  
[education@leaf.eco](mailto:education@leaf.eco)



@leaf\_education



FarmingAndCountrysideEducation



# Tidy



**Pete the badger likes everything to be neat and tidy at all times, but what starts as the collecting of one fallen leaf escalates quickly and ends with the destruction of the forest! Will Pete realise the error of his ways and set things right?**

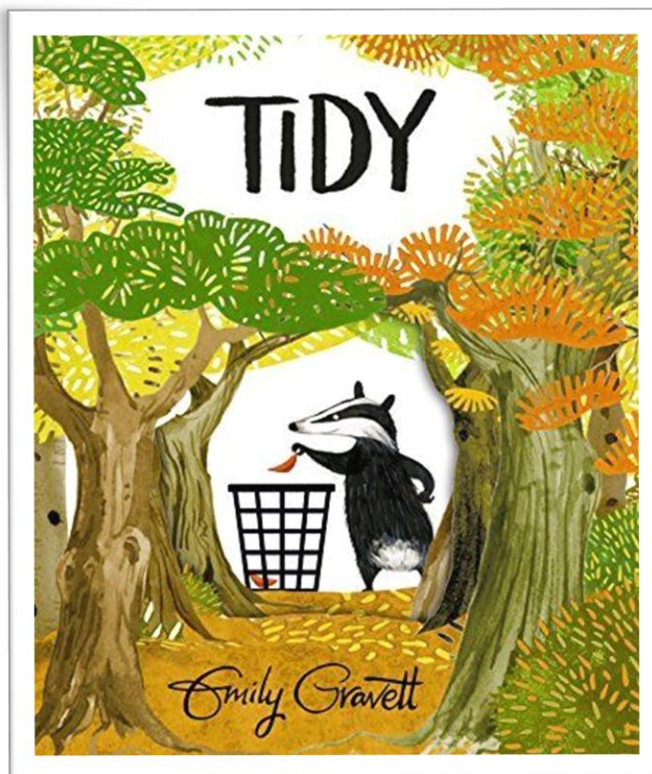
**Author:** Emily Gravett

**Illustrated by:** Emily Gravett

**Publisher:** Two Hoots

## What might we learn?

- Language – develop children's vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature



## What should we do?



**Litter Pick.** Badger might have gone too far but is there anything around us that does need a tidy? Collecting litter is a great way to improve the local environment! *Discuss that some things are natural, and some are man-made.*

**Create a leaf or a log pile.** Maybe someone near you is a little like Pete and clears away any dead leaves and wood. Create a special area where these are piled and left undisturbed. *Discuss how dead wood and leaves are an important habitat (home) for many creatures like beetles and worms.*

**Go animal spotting.** Pete's wood is full of his friends. How many can you count and name? Go animal spotting in your outdoor space and see how many animals you can find. *Discuss the different habitats animals live in. Are there more in 'tidy' places?*





# The Magic Porridge Pot



**Hannah is always hungry until she is given a magic porridge pot. But what happens when the pot falls into the wrong hands?**

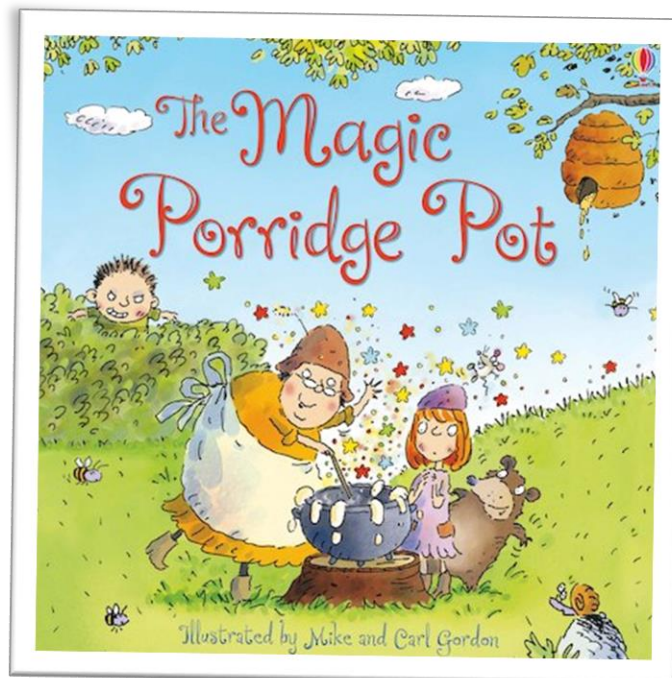
**Author:** Rosie Dickins

**Illustrated by:** Mike and Carl Gordon

**Publisher:** Usborne Books

## What might we learn?

- Where our food comes from
- About plants and seeds
- Imaginative play – speech and language



## What should we do?

**Cook some porridge.** Why not cook some porridge over a campfire? Simple and quick to make, children could try a range of different toppings and help to prepare fruit. *Discuss where each of the ingredients comes from.*

**Roll some oats.** Can you roll your own oats? Whole oats can be bought from health food shops. Children could attempt to roll some oats using natural materials (logs or stones) and fill bird feeders with the results. Compare their rolled oats to the shop-bought porridge oats. *Discuss how the oats are seeds from oat plants.*

**Fill a magical pot.** What would you put in a magical pot? Tell children that you'd like their help to fill your magical pot. Let them explore the natural environment and bring back an item. They explain what their object's magic power is as they place it in the pot: "This acorn can make you invisible."

**Construct a Mud Kitchen.** Can children make and serve their own messy, muddy porridge? This story provides a brilliant stimulus for some amazing messy play.



# Super worm

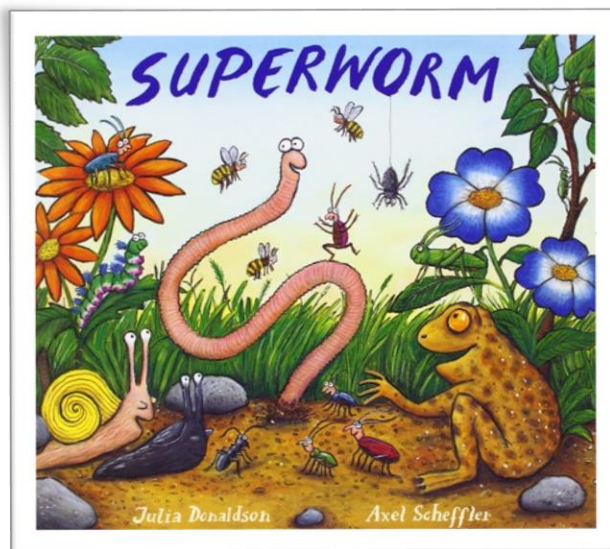


**Watch him wiggle! See him squirm! Hip, hip, hooray for SUPERWORM! He can fish Beetle out of a well, and rescue Toad from a road. But who will come to Superworm's rescue, when he's captured by a wicked Wizard Lizard?**

**Author:** Julia Donaldson

**Illustrated by:** Axel Scheffler

**Publisher:** Alison Green Books



## What might we learn?

- Fine motor skills
- Language – develop children's vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature

## What should we do?



**Charm some worms.** Can you find your very own Superworms? Pushing a garden fork into the ground and jiggling it back and forth will encourage worms to the surface. The fork could also be struck with short sticks to create vibrations. You could even try your own class worm charming dance. *Discuss what worms do, how they feed, and how to handle them gently.*



**Make a wormery.** Can we make a home for our Superworm? Wormeries can be made by layering soil/compost and sand in a drink bottle. Place some worms and organic material on the top. Over time the worms will mix the layers. Remember to keep the wormeries in a shaded area and add a little water to keep them damp. *Discuss how worms help keep the soil healthy.*

**Make a magic wand.** Wizard Lizard's magic flower was eaten. If he promises to be good, should we make him a new one? Use some freshly cut wood, potato peelers and craft materials to create a magic wand.



# Hooray for Birds!



**From the rooster's morning crow to the owl's night-time hoots - the cheeps and tweets of many bright and beautifully illustrated birds will have children eager to join in!**

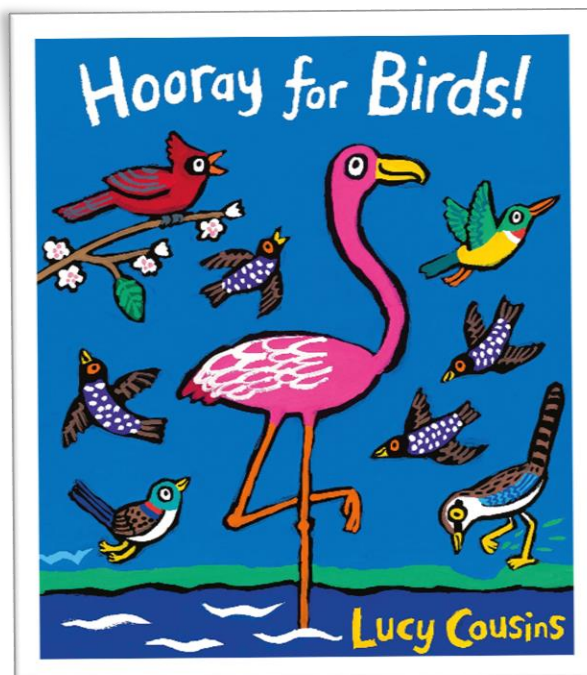
**Author:** Lucy Cousins

**Illustrated by:** Lucy Cousins

**Publisher:** Candlewick Press

## What might we learn?

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Language – developing children's vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature



## What should we do?

**Scratch, peck, flap and fly.** Can we all be birds? The book is full of actions and sounds. Can the children recreate some of these? You could develop class actions to accompany the reading or spend time watching real birds and then walking squawking pecking and flapping just like them. *Discuss some of the names of common birds that you might see every day.*



**Make a colourful bird decoration.** Can we make a beautiful bird decoration? Use wood cookies to create colourful birds! You could hang these in trees and go on a bird hunt!

**Make a cosy nest.** Can we make a place for our noisy birds to lay an egg? Ask the children to build a giant bird's nest on the floor. They need to find big sticks to make the shape, smaller sticks to fill in the gaps and soft materials to line the nest. *Discuss birds' life cycles and why they build nests.*



# Not a Stick



**A simple book about imagination. If it's not a stick, what could it be? A paintbrush, a horse, a fishing rod?**

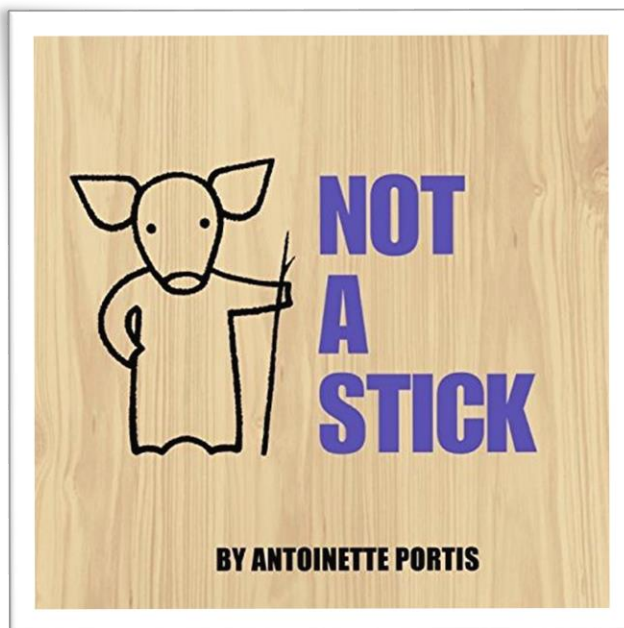
**Author:** Antoinette Portis

**Illustrated by:** Antoinette Portis

**Publisher:** Harper Collins Children's Books

## What might we learn?

- Imaginative play – speech and language
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Maths – discovering shape



## What should we do?

**Find your own 'Not a Stick'.** How imaginative can we be? Allow children to find a stick and then sit together in a circle. Take it in turns to enter the circle with their sticks saying "It's not a stick it's a..." What will they imagine? A trowel for a palaeontologist, a toothbrush or a vacuum cleaner? The possibilities are endless!

**Paint a picture.** Can we use sticks and natural materials to create a work of art? Explore materials, texture and colours by bringing the book's imagined stick paint brushes to life!



**Whittle a stick.** Can we create a useful object from a stick? Using a peeler to remove bark from a stick can be a satisfying activity in its own right, but why not make something useful? A dibber for planting seeds, a tent peg to put up a shelter or a pointed stick perfect for roasting marshmallows!

**It's not a stick. It's a triangle... square... pyramid!**

How many shapes can we discover? 2D and 3D shapes are just waiting to be discovered.





# The Little Red Hen



**The Little Red Hen works really hard all by herself to plant, grow and harvest some wheat and then makes some delicious bread - no thanks to the scatty cat, mucky duck, and big fat rat, who have refused to help her all along.**

**Author:** Ronne Randall

**Illustrated by:** Susan Batori

**Publisher:** Pat-a-Cake

## What might we learn?

- Where our food comes from
- About plants and seeds
- Imaginative play – speech and language

## What should we do?

**Plant seeds.** The Little Red Hen planted wheat; what other plants can we grow? It's possible to grow wheat but you could try beans, peas, or cress. Collect recycled materials like yogurt pots, and bottles that can be used as pots. *Discuss: what other foods are grown. Do farmers grow food like the little red hen?*

**Mill some wheat.** How do we make flour? Many children will have baked and will recognise flour but won't know where it comes from. Wheat grains can be bought (often in whole food shops) or local farmers may be happy to supply some. Coffee, salt and pepper grinders work well to mill a little flour. Or why not challenge the children to find flat stones and mill some flour by hand?



**Bake bread.** Will our bread be as delicious as the Little Red Hen's? Baking bread outdoors is great fun. There are a few options – a Dutch oven allows you to bake on a campfire in a very similar way to a conventional oven. Alternatively, campfire dampers (bread dough twisted around a stick) are a fun and hands-on option!



# Percy's Friend The Hedgehog

**Percy the Park Keeper is never happier than when he is out and about in the park with his animal friends. Life is never dull in the park when the hedgehog is about...**

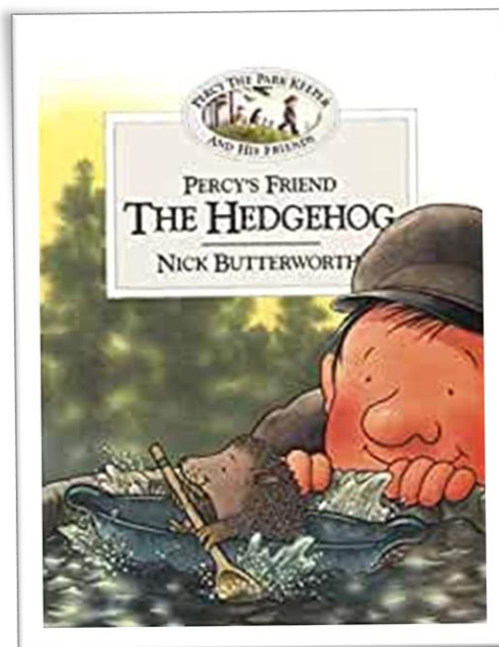
**Author:** Nick Butterworth

**Illustrated by:** Nick Butterworth

**Publisher:** Harper Collins Children's Books

## What might we learn?

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Language – developing children's vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature



## What should we do?

**Make a hedgehog friend.** What natural materials can we find to make a hedgehog friend? Conkers, clay, sticks and berries can all be used to create a cute hedgehog friend. Collecting the materials to craft the hogs could be the focus of a nature walk.



## Build a hedgehog house.

Can we build somewhere dry and safe for a hedgehog to spend the winter? A bug hotel with a

space on the lower levels would work perfectly and has the added advantage of attracting the hedgehog's favourite food!



**Hide a trail camera.** Can we spot any of Percy's other friends? Try setting a trail camera. Night time visitors will trigger the camera and it's very exciting to review the footage to see who has paid a visit!





# Anansi The Spider

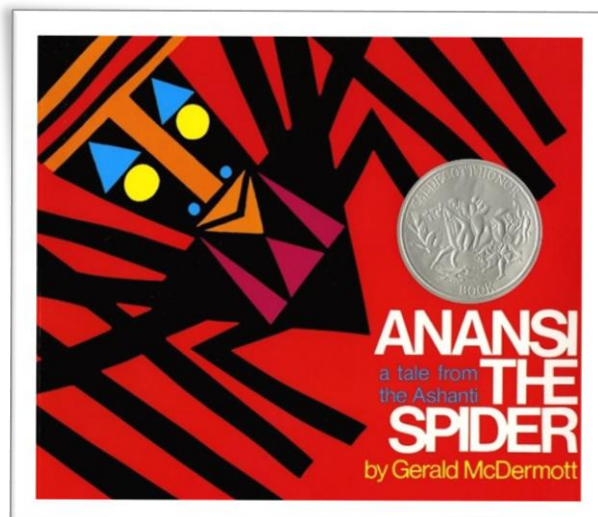
## A Tale From The Ashanti

**In this traditional Ashanti tale, Anansi sets out on a long, difficult journey. He is saved from terrible fates by his sons. But which of his sons should Anansi reward?**

**Author:** Gerald McDermott

**Illustrated by:** Gerald McDermott

**Publisher:** Macmillan



### What might we learn?

- Fine motor skills – knot tying
- Language – developing children's vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature

### What should we do?

**Find your own Anansi.** Do we need to be scared of spiders? Go on a spider hunt. Look under logs, in the long grass and up trees! Using a net, pooter or soft paintbrush collect these amazing animals for a closer look. *Discuss: Why are spiders important?*



**Build a web.** Can we catch a fly? Spiders don't need to tie knots but building a spider's web is a great way to practise our skills. Try everything from a tangle between two trees to a careful weaving between lashed sticks. A larger web might make a fun obstacle to navigate through.

### Explore colour and

**pattern.** Can we create colours and shapes like in the story of Anansi? The illustrations in this book are inspired by traditional

Ghanaian artwork. Maybe try creating natural dyes or exploring shape with chalks. Challenge the children to create artwork inspired by the book.





# Supertato

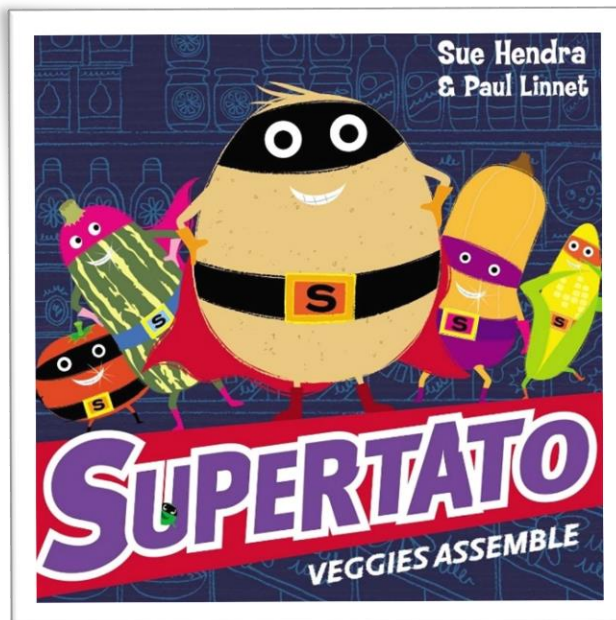
## Veggies Assemble

**The Evil Pea is back on the loose and there's anarchy in the supermarket aisles again! Can our superhero divert disaster? Or is he going to need backup? A fun way to introduce some extraordinary vegetables!**

**Author:** Sue Hendra & Paul Linnet

**Illustrated by:** Sue Hendra & Paul Linnet

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster



### What might we learn?

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Language – developing children's vocabulary through discussion
- An awareness of food and where it comes from.

### What should we do?

**Cook some vegetable soup.** What do Supertato's friends taste like? You've met them in the book... now pop them in the pot! Vegetable soup is quick and easy to make and is a great way of introducing a whole range of amazing vegetables! Just add a range of diced vegetables (great for developing knife skills), some stock and seasoning to a large pot and simmer. Top tip: *Dicing vegetables into smaller chunks and using preheated water from a flask, will speed things up if the cooking time is limited.*

**Create a cress planter.** Does Supertato look better with hair? A potato is easily carved with a spoon; this is a great early tool use for little fingers. Decorate the potatoes, sprinkle on some cress seeds, water and before long Supertato will be sporting a funky new hairdo.



**Potato printing.** Can we create vegetable art? This classic activity is wonderful for exploring colour and pattern while becoming familiar with some of the skills needed to carve.



# Leaf Man

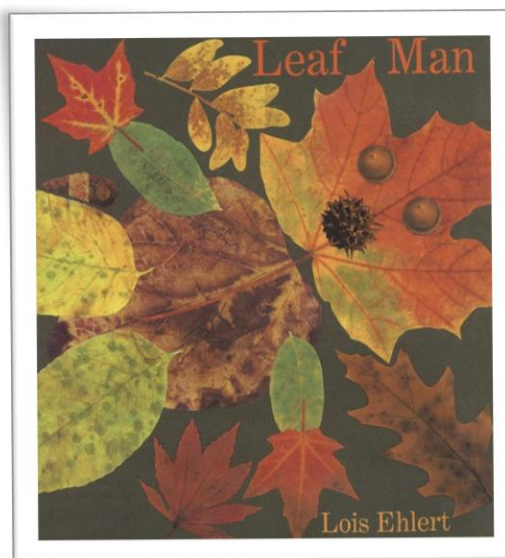


**The wind is gusting, and Leaf Man is on the move. Is he drifting east, over the marsh and ducks and geese? Or is he heading west, above the orchards, prairie meadows, and spotted cows?**

**Author:** Lois Ehlert

**Illustrated by:** Lois Ehlert

**Publisher:** Harcourt



## What might we learn?

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Language – developing children’s vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature – colour and plants and trees

## What should we do?

**Find your own Leaf Man.** Can we make a Leaf Man, with one leaf, two leaves...more? Googly eyes are a quick and fun way to transform an interesting leaf into a Leaf Man (or Lady). But children may wish to explore shape and colour, bringing together leaves and natural materials to create their own leaf people, animals, monsters or landscapes.

**Tree ID.** Can we use these leaves to identify the tree? Using a leaf/tree identification chart or key is a brilliant way to get children to look closely at the natural world.



## Leaf Bashing.

Which leaf is best for bashing? Placing a leaf onto a piece of material, covering it and then giving it a bash with a mallet can create some beautiful results.

# The Extraordinary Gardener



**Joe lives in an ordinary tower block. His world is rather grey. However, he spends his time imagining a wonderful world filled with exotic plants and unusual animals. One day Joe decides to plant a seed on his balcony...**

**Author:** Sam Boughton

**Illustrated by:** Sam Boughton

**Publisher:** Tate Publishing

## What might we learn?

- Fine and gross motor skills
- Language – developing children’s vocabulary through discussion
- Appreciation of nature – colour and plants

## What should we do?

**Plan a plot.** What should we grow? Research, discover, plan, prepare and create a garden! Anything goes and it will depend on the space you have available. It might be flowers in an old boot or a carefully tended school allotment. Just like Joe, you’ll need a wild imagination and a little patience!



**Handprint flowers.** Can we brighten up our room like Joe brightened up his town? Hand-printed flowers are a simple, fun and messy way to add a splash of flowers and colour. Sticks collected by the children make perfect stems. Discuss: Can the children name the parts of a flower?

**Go on a colour hunt.** Can we find more colours than are in Joe’s garden? Hunting for or collecting the colours of the rainbow is great fun – why not use paint sample cards to add a bit of challenge? If you have cameras, then make it a photography challenge!







## **Acknowledgements**

The production of this resource was supported by a number of outdoor educators who kindly responded to a request to share photographs of their work.

Special thanks to: Yvonne LC (@vonvon1), Amazelab (@Amaze\_lab), Howsham Mill, Korpi Forest School (@KorpiForest), Mrs T (@CatT1970), Jacqueline McBeath (@JacquelineMcBe6), Corstorphine Primary (@corstorphineps), Free Range Play (@JoFreeRangePlay)