

# Seven things to do in the woods this spring

Whether you want to get up close to nature or simply escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life, getting out in the woods this spring could be just the tonic for you and your family

## 1 EXPLORE A NATURE TRAIL

Whether it's a gentle stroll along well-trodden tracks or a secret pathway through bracken and bramble, a walk in the woods gives you access to nature's biggest playground. Visit an ancient wood near you to spot historic features such as coppiced trees, or show your kids you still know how to climb that big oak. Use the Woodland Trust's searchable map to find your nearest woodland. [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk)

## 2 JOIN THE BIG BLUEBELL WATCH

Visit a bluebell wood and soak up some springtime colour as it sweeps across the forest floor. Join in the Big Bluebell Watch to help put bluebells on the map at [theguardian.com/discover-woodland-trust](http://theguardian.com/discover-woodland-trust) and help preserve these native wildflowers. Remember to watch your step! Bluebells and other wildflowers can be easily damaged by footsteps.

### Follow the fairytrail

Go on an extraordinary family adventure and help the woodland fairies save the precious bluebell woods. Find participating woods and download the Nature Detectives Family Trail app at [woodlandtrust.org.uk/fairytrail](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk/fairytrail)



## 3 RETURN FLIGHTS

Listen for migrant birds returning for the summer. You may hear a male cuckoo's trademark call, or the "chiffchaff" of the eponymous warbler. From April onwards, particularly in the south-east, you may hear a very dynamic and rich birdsong coming from a thick bush – that will be a tiny brown bird called the nightingale.

## 4 MAKE A FAIRY GARDEN

Get your children to gather up materials on the woodland floor, such as pine cones, twigs, moss and feathers, to make a home for fairies. They can use an old tree stump as a starting point and fashion a little door to go on the outside of it.

## 5 SET UP A BAT BOX

Bats have awoken from their winter hibernation and are starting to look for food. To find the ideal spot for your box, find a quiet area as dusk approaches – bats are nocturnal mammals – and then keep your eyes peeled. Get the kids to help you make up a bat box from rough-sawn timber, then choose a nice, high spot to fix it to.

## 6 GO FORAGING

Look for wild garlic leaves to wilt in olive oil for a delicious alternative to spinach (just take the leaves – don't damage the bulbs). Elderflower combines perfectly with rhubarb in jam to give a taste of spring all year round. Remember to collect responsibly; always check first that you're not on protected land and that the landowner is happy to allow foragers. For more advice on responsible foraging, visit the Woodland Trust website: [woodlandtrust.org.uk/foraging](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk/foraging)

## 7 JOIN THE WOODLAND TRUST'S SPRING WATCH

Head to your local woodlands and record any signs of spring you see. By doing so, you'll be helping the Woodland Trust monitor how our most celebrated wildlife is surviving in a changing environment. Sign up to help at [woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturescalendar](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturescalendar)

### THE WOODLAND TRUST

The Woodland Trust is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity, dedicated to protecting and restoring native woodlands, and caring for over a thousand woods across the UK. [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk)

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