

Outdoor Explorers at Home

Secret Squirrels

This week, in our Woodland Explorers session, we have been learning all about squirrels - about where they live, what they eat and how we can help to protect the endangered red squirrel.

To help continue your child's learning, and to do some outdoor exploring at home, try these squirrel-themed ideas.

- **Squirrel walk** - Go on a walk to a park or a woodland to look for squirrels. You might also see some squirrel nests which are called dreys. Dreys look like messy, leafy bird nests and are found high up in the forks of trees. If you find nibbled pine cones beneath a tree, it is a good sign that a squirrel lives there!
- **Squirrel feeder** - Feeding red squirrels is encouraged. Buy or make a squirrel feeder with an entry hole suitable for the size of the smaller red squirrel only - this is so that the larger grey squirrels cannot steal the food. Place the feeder somewhere where there is a quick escape route from predators such as cats i.e. high up in a tree or close to a high wall. Red squirrels enjoy hazelnuts, sweet chestnuts, sunflower seeds, pine nuts, apples, carrots and cuttlefish bones. Food is scarce in the spring and summer so feeding a small amount is helpful, but remember not to overfeed squirrels as it is important that they still look for natural food sources. Regularly clean and disinfect the feeder to prevent disease and always remove any uneaten food before refilling.

