



Family Edition

Junior Forester Award Family Handbook



Aims

The Junior Forester Award aims to give children and young people of all ages an insight into the skills needed for a career in Forestry as well as equipping them with the practical ability to assist in woodland management in their schools and local communities.

What does it include?

- A wide menu of activities grouped around six themes in which children and young people complete practical tasks and enhance their knowledge of woodlands and forestry.
- A course booklet for participants to record and reflect upon their achievements.

What facilities do we need?

- Access to some trees, preferably at least six different species. These do not need to be planted as a woodland, they can be in your garden, in a hedgerow or nearby in the local community.

Do we need to have particular knowledge or skills before we start?

- The award has been designed to make outdoor learning accessible for all ages and levels of experience.
- **If your family chooses to complete the tool use activities then only use tools with your children that you feel are appropriate for their age and your level of experience in using the tools.**

What resources will we need?

- Clothing that you can get muddy, sturdy footwear and waterproofs / sun protection depending on the weather.
- A Junior Forester Award booklet for each participant (optional).
- Optional resources are mentioned along with each session plan but these can be adapted to suit what you have available.
- Optional certificates and badges can be purchased from the RFS shop to present on successful completion.

How do I use this handbook?





The activities suggested in this handbook are just a guide and should be adapted to suit your environment, the age of your children, the time that you have available and your skills and experience.

All of the activities will need to be supervised by an adult and some thought should be given to the risks that you might encounter during the session.

Remind your children at the start of each session that they should not pick up anything which:

- Is alive
- Is growing e.g. still attached to the ground or a plant
- Is dead e.g. a dead mouse. Fascinating but best supervised by an adult wearing gloves
- Is animal waste
- They are not sure of or could cut themselves on.

If in any doubt about something they have found in the woodland they should always leave it well alone and call an adult to look at it rather than bringing it to the adult.





Session 1: Managing Risk

Resources: Note pad, camera, plant ID guide.

Connecting

Questions for discussion

What risks do they think there are in this area? How should they stay safe? Why does a forester need to ensure his forest is safe?

We want children to think for themselves about the level of risk in any situation and how to keep themselves safe. If you're in a community woodland they might need to watch out for litter or dog mess. Are there any plants in this area that could be dangerous to them? There's a great opportunity here for independent research before you go. What hazards might they find in a local woodland?

Challenging

As you go on your walk, could they take photos or draw pictures of any hazards that they find?

If they're able to, could they add labels to explain the safety measures that they might need to take?

Remember that woodlands are natural environments so we aren't trying to remove all the risks. It might be that the safety measures are for people visiting the woods e.g. wear long trousers so you don't get scratched by brambles or nettles.

Consolidating

Either:

Produce a poster or guide explaining to other young people how to stay safe in a woodland area.

Or:

Find out who owns the woodland that you've been to. Write them a letter to tell them about any risks that you found and how they could make the woodland safer for visitors of your age.





Session 2: Tree and Plant ID

Resources: Tree ID guide

Connecting

Questions for discussion

Which tree names do they already know? How can we tell the difference between each type of tree?

Why does a forester need to know the names of different trees in their forest?

Challenging

Depending on the size and variety of your wooded area, how many different types of tree can they identify?

Activity A

Collect as many different types of fallen leaves as they can find while being cautious of hazards.

Bring them back, spread them out on their sheet or tarpaulin. Can they sort them into groups that are similar? What features help us to identify different leaves?

Can they use their ID guides to identify their finds?

Activity B

If there are not many loose finds to bring back, can they take an ID chart around the area and see which they can identify?

If they have the means to do so can they take photos of the different tree species they have identified and add their own labels?

Consolidating

Could they use these what they have learned to create a map or their own ID guide relevant to your woodland area?





Session 3/4: Habitat creation

Resources: sticks, leaves, pieces of wood are all ideal but there's loads of potential to get creative here

Connecting

As you look into your garden or go on a walk in your local community, what animals can you see? Can you find at least 10 different animals that live in your chosen area?

What do these animals need to survive?

Why does a forester need to know what lives in their forest?

Challenging

Choose from one or more of the following

Activity A - Homes

Lay log slices, stones or thick branches in quieter areas of your garden or a local woodland as habitats for minibeasts.

Activity B – Food

Once you know what the animals in your area like to eat, put some food out for them. Do some research and see if any of the visitors to your garden would like to eat things that you already have in your kitchen cupboards.

Activity C – Hotels

Make your own bug hotel ready for summer.

Consolidating

Write a story or draw a poster to include as many animals as you can that would be found living in your chosen area.





Session 5: Woodland Management

Pathway A: Planting

Tree planting season is November to March. This ensures that the trees go into the ground in conditions that give them the best chance to get established and grow into mature trees. If you want to carry out the planting activities outside this window you may wish to consider planting shrubs.

Resources:

Stakes and tree guards for the trees.

Depending on the quality of soil in your area and what may be found in it you may want gloves for the children.

Digging tools suitable for the age group that will be using them.

Connecting

This topic is ideal for some research before the session. Can they find some statistics on deforestation and climate change? Why do we need sustainable forestry?

Challenging

Plant something!

A tree would be great but woodlands are made up of much more than just trees. If you've only got limited space available to you have a think about what you could plant in a pot which you might also find in a native woodland.

If you're planting outdoors you'll need to protect it from animals or from accidental damage such as footballs.

Indoors you'll need to think more about whether its getting the right amount of light and moisture. Also, how big is it going to grow, do you have enough space?

Consolidating

What do plants need to grow? Can they create a diagram which shows all the things they need?





Pathway B: Tool Use

Only choose this pathway if you feel that you have the necessary skills and experience to do so. This handbook does not provide guidance on the safe use of tools.

Resources:

Appropriate tools

Protective equipment

Connecting

If trees are so wonderful then why do we want to cut them down?

Have a look around their house and see if they can find five different things made from wood? What would we do if we couldn't make things from wood? Would that be better for the environment?

Challenging

Foresters need to be confident using a wide range of tools to keep their woodland well managed and to produce sustainable wood products.

UNDER ADULT SUPERVISION

Are there any plants in your garden which would benefit from being pruned? Is anything growing in the wrong place and needs to be removed?

Consolidating

Can you produce a guide or a short video to show what you have done to improve your area?



Session 6: Forestry Ambassadors

Resources: None



Connecting

There is a great research opportunity here, what forests do your children have in their local area? How many different reasons can they find for why people like to visit a forest?

Challenging

The Little Forest

What leisure facilities would they provide for the public if they were a forest manager? Can they create a miniature model of a forest park?

Consolidating

Welcoming Visitors

Can they produce marketing material for a local woodland? This could be a poster, leaflet, website or short video.

