

## Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together

Hi All! As always, we hope this issue finds you well and that you have managed to take some time out in nature over the last couple of weeks. Haven't there been some truly beautiful sunsets and wonderfully clear skies at night? If you've managed to capture any sunset photos, we'd love to see them and share in the next issue!

We had a couple of emails from former bushcraft attendees who certainly have missed their weekly dose in the woods. It's only a couple of weeks since both current bushcraft courses (European Social Fund, Armed Forces Covenant) were suspended due to Lockdown 2.0 and I have missed bushcraft too.

To combat the bushcraft void I have been trying to get out especially at the weekends and go for a long walk (be active). My walks are not only for my mental wellbeing but also as an opportunity for me to connect with nature and see what's happening (take notice). At the moment there are so many fallen leaves on the ground and I began to wonder what ecological impact these leaves have.



I found out that fallen leaves are fascinating because they become leaf mould (decayed leaves). They help soil to retain moisture and suppress weeds, as well as insulating tender seedlings from the cold. Slowly decomposing leaves feed earthworms and are very beneficial to micro-organisms. The nutrients seep into the ground which then enriches and improves the soil condition. This amazing decomposed organic matter, which contains nutrients and minerals, then feeds the trees. The tree draws the goodness from deep down in the soil.

Nature sometimes blows my mind, like the way a tree sheds its leaves in the autumn and the leaves become nutrients for the tree to feed on to help it grow. Trees are nature's natural recyclers!

Those of you who have gardens, fallen leaves are brilliant for your compost pile. They are good for composting especially leaves from ash, maple, fruit trees, willow and poplar because these have more calcium and nitrogen and less lignin. Lignin is the substance found in the edges of some plant cells that makes the leaves rigid and woody. It is the lignin that makes oak leaves so long lasting on the ground. But beware of eucalyptus leaves as they contain natural herbicides which could prevent seeds from germinating.



Leaves are useful in protecting containers from harsh winter temperatures too. Place your containers together in a sheltered area and cover with leaves on top and sides of the containers. Also if you have bare ground like a vegetable patch, cover the soil with leaves over the winter to help stop soil erosion and this acts as a top dressing as well.

The other thing I like to do when I am out for a walk is to forage or collect things and make use of them. I am really excited whenever I come across silver birch trees, I always look on the ground for fallen twigs and collect these for kindling. Silver birches are brilliant trees in terms of bushcraft because the outer dead bark is a fragile skin which is great for tinder, the twigs for kindling and it can even be used as a sweeping broom.

Also this time of the year, long lengths of twigs can be used to make a wreath. You take a few twigs together and twist into a wreath shape. If the wreath needs strengthening then add a length or two of willow to it. Then add some ivy, holly and other greenery that may be around. It makes a great natural wreath. Remember please always be responsible when foraging and not take all of it, as nature has its own plans.



So if you can, I do encourage you to venture out while there is still a bit of day light and see what nature may be inspiring you to explore and learn.



Take care and stay safe,

Man Lan



# WILD-WORDSEARCH

## Autumn

- Antlers
- Chill
- Cobwebs
- Colour
- Conkers
- Fungi
- Golden
- Ivy
- Leaf pile
- Mist
- Nuts
- Pumpkin
- Tracks
- Woodland

C	I	K	P	M	U	P	C	N	S	O	M	I	S	F
C	O	E	I	O	L	C	S	O	A	R	W	H	U	A
P	H	N	L	G	O	L	D	E	N	K	O	G	S	E
Y	U	L	K	B	N	D	T	C	T	O	E	N	K	D
N	E	M	W	R	M	U	P	L	L	I	H	C	C	B
U	S	E	A	N	S	V	F	V	E	G	O	W	A	F
T	B	D	L	O	G	H	Y	C	R	B	O	V	R	G
S	O	Y	V	I	T	R	A	K	S	O	Y	L	T	U
W	S	A	L	O	P	S	E	R	D	K	N	S	N	B
O	T	B	L	A	R	F	T	L	E	V	I	O	P	D
R	I	S	E	U	D	U	A	B	T	M	K	Y	C	P
L	M	L	O	C	O	N	K	E	R	S	P	N	E	A
I	O	L	R	N	D	Y	B	W	L	E	M	U	R	F
H	O	T	U	I	V	O	M	L	R	A	U	S	I	E
C	W	F	N	O	C	R	O	T	C	K	P	U	T	L

Challenge... Find the two hidden words that hint at next week's theme!

Autumn whispered to the wind: "I fall but I always rise again"

Angie Weiland-Crosbie

## Name It!

Can you identify the wildlife in the photos?



Issue 25 answers...

### Name It

1. Blue roundhead 2. Velvet shank mushroom 3. Shaggy parasol



### Missing Links...

- rain - tie (**bow**)
- Scots - needle (**pine**)
- black - table (**black**)
- oxeye - chain (**daisy**)
- collared - tail (**dove**)

### Missing Links...

Your task is to find the missing word that follows the first clue and precedes the second. For example, the answer to Rain-String could be 'Bow' giving Rainbow and Bowstring.

**hedge - roast**

**bird - kite**

**wag - spin**

**kind - kite**

**bull - march**

Answers next week!

You can also follow TEaM on social media for a Daily Dose of Nature...



The Environment and Me



theenvironmentandme



TheEnviroandMe



## CAMOUFLAGE 4

### USING MATERIALS FOR CAMOUFLAGE

For animals (including humans) that cannot change their colour to suit their surroundings or change the texture of their skin or their markings, the use of materials or objects becomes the only option. The aptly named '*Decorator Crab*' uses objects (alive or dead) which it glues to itself in order to cover, and hence camouflage, itself. Typical objects include small stones or grains of sand, dead coral debris and even living organisms such as sea-urchins or sponges.



Image: Maddi Larson

*Decorator crab using debris.*



Image: Miles Hoskin

*Decorator Crab wearing a sponge*

In the human world, the military provides the most obvious examples of humans changing their appearance in order to blend into the landscape. However, humans have also successfully made objects aimed at '*deceptive mimicry*' and also '*Dazzleflage*' which is used to break up the outline of an object too large to hide.

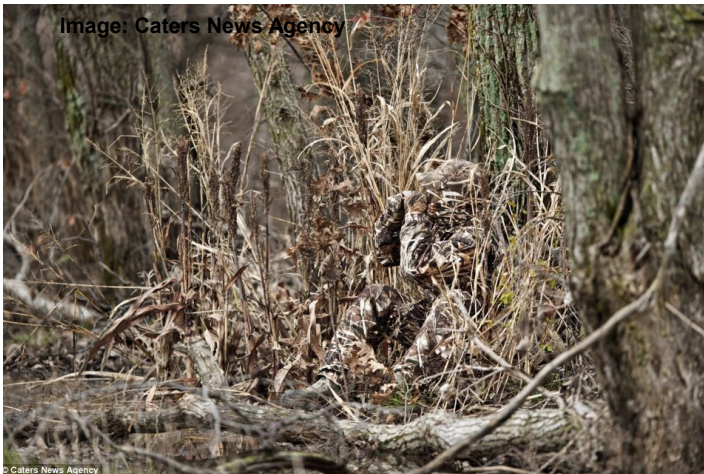
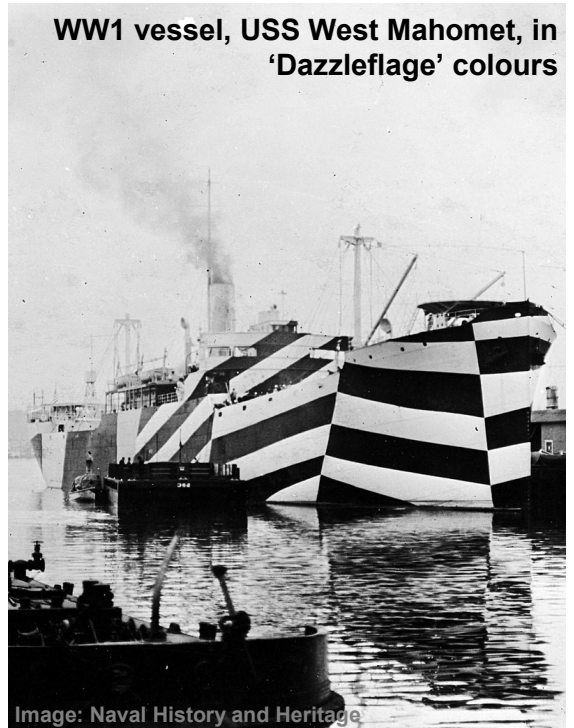


Image: Cafers News Agency

*Can you find the camouflaged soldier?*



**WW1 vessel, USS West Mahomet, in 'Dazzleflage' colours**

Image: Naval History and Heritage



Image: Daily Mail

In common with many indigenous tribal groups we may also want signal our sense of belonging to a particular group by adopting common colours or markings. The picture shown is a more obvious example however other examples include clothes (e.g. Punk Rock), make-up and hair styles. Maybe we are not so different to many animals as we think!

*Liverpool FC terraces (other football clubs are available!)*



In terms of creative art people have been camouflaging each other for a long time using body-painting. Indigenous peoples use it during ceremonies, when hunting whilst more recently we have started using body paints purely for art, or just for fun with startling success.



Painted lady hiding on a vegetable stall.



Can you find the hidden painted human figure in this picture?

Through nature-observation humans have developed their own means camouflage and although we have pushed some boundaries it is clear that animals remain the most adept at camouflage in all its forms.

Next week will be a final article on this subject so I am going to pick out a number of the most amazing animals for you to try to find, marvel at and in some cases laugh in amazement!

All the best, Martin

### TEaM does



Unscramble the letters to discover the invertebrates you might find living in a log-pile or bug hotel habitat...

**tailsory ebes**



**ipesdr**

**deeptenci**

**pilimelde**

**souldoewo**

**drongu telebe**

Issue 25 answers...



- cones tips - Scots pine
- fogilus rad - Douglas fir
- neurjip - juniper
- harcl - larch
- ewy - yew

### How to... Build a bug hotel.

WWT colleague, Hilary, and her family have been busy making this amazing 'bug hotel'. Creating habitats for invertebrates is a fabulous way to encourage a whole host of wildlife to your garden. Not only will solitary bees use it to nest, but you'll also find spiders, woodlice, millipedes, beetles and many other tiny critters moving in to the different layers. These all provide food for birds and hedgehogs! A small bug house on a fence in a sunny spot is great for attracting flying insects whereas a habitat on the ground like this one will also house ground dwelling invertebrates such as beetles which hedgehogs love (especially if you fill the bottom layer with a good pile of fallen leaves and rotting wood like Hilary has). You will need: your frame - this could be an old bird house, crate or pallet wood. Good things to fill it with include old broken bricks, smashed pots, rotting wood, fallen leaves, moss, sticks with holes drilled in (10cm + deep) or hollow canes. Add a roof and you're done! If the frame is not doable, a stick pile with some fallen leaves against a fence will attract plenty!



Images: Hilary White



**Stay safe**

