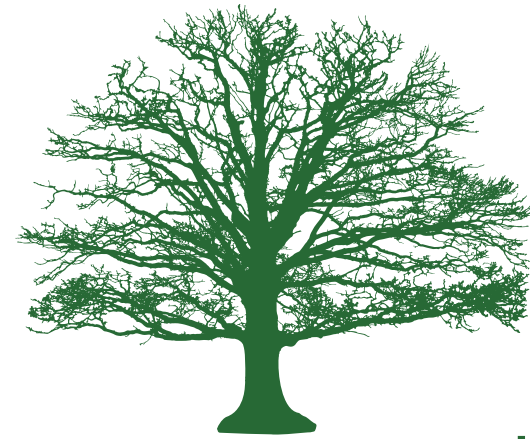


# Ealing Parks Foundation

## Southall Park Nature Activity Trail



This trail will introduce you to some of the wildlife and nature in Southall Park. We always need to cherish wildlife, because every creature helps improve our local environment- so remember to be gentle with that ladybird. Have fun and come on a journey of discovery!

### 1 Tree hunt in the dell



There is a dell, a small 'valley' of grass with trees around it, very near the playground in the park. It is surrounded by different types of trees, and there is a big open space in the middle, where you could have a picnic. Trees are so important: they are habitats for wildlife, providing animals with food and nesting sites, they produce oxygen for us to breathe, they clean the air by trapping pollution in their leaves and they provide humans and animals with shelter (from the rain) and shade (from the sun). See if you can find the following trees in the Southall Park dell:

A



A giant sycamore at the far end

B



A holly tree

C



A tall conifer (evergreen) that looks like a Christmas tree and has an orange bark

2

### Litter pick

Parks and green spaces are lovely places to visit, play in, walk through, picnic in...but there is often rubbish that has blown out of a bin, been dragged around by a fox, nibbled on by a squirrel or left by other visitors to the park who didn't take their rubbish away or bin it. If you are with an adult, maybe you could do a bit of litter picking yourself, to help keep the park clean and to stop animals from getting trapped in bits of plastic? Use a glove, or put your hand inside a clean plastic bag, and collect and bin or recycle a few items. Perhaps ask your parents to buy a litter picker - they are great fun to use! (Be very careful when litter picking and only do it with your adult so you don't injure yourself on something dangerous or sharp.)



3

### Balance challenge

The playground has a great selection of climbing areas but sometimes it is more fun to use natural features in the park to play in and climb on. This will develop your balancing skills, co-ordination and confidence. Be careful and let your adult guide you. Try walking along logs that are on the ground or climbing a tree - don't go too high! The tree trunks that are left lying on the ground in the park will eventually break down, which will return all the nutrients to the soil, for other plants to use. That's why it's a good idea to have a log pile (or a pile of twigs) in your garden if you can. Creatures will hide there and feel safe (especially over winter), and the wood will 'feed' the soil as it decomposes. And amazing mushrooms might grow on it.





## 4 Bug hunt



If you can find some small logs in the park, turn them over gently, and see what community of animals you can see! You may find woodlice, beetles, slugs or ants. All these bugs have made this quiet place their home, so once you have observed them, be sure to replace the log as you found it and leave the mini beasts alone. They might spend the winter there, and they like somewhere cool and dry. Have you ever made a bug 'home'?

You could try to do that at home, by filling a plant pot (or a crate or a shoe rack) with different sized twigs, bamboo, broken tiles or bits of cardboard. Leave it in a shady corner of your garden or balcony and see who takes refuge in there when it is cold and wet.

## 5 Find the dry Japanese garden



There is a lovely exotic garden in Southall park, with plants that you don't often see in Ealing parks- can you find it? It has bamboos and Acers, both very traditional plants you would see in a Japanese garden. Can you see them? In the past, there was water flowing down through the rocks, but it is dry now. Sit on one of the larger rocks and imagine being transported to a land far away, where the culture and surroundings are very different to here. Imagine the mountains all around you. Take some deep breaths. What can you picture?

## 6 Admire wildflowers



Wildflowers are colourful plants and great for insects. They are full of pollen and nectar which they can collect and feed on, and smaller bugs (like butterflies) are food for bigger bugs (like dragonflies). Wildflowers look very pretty, and when they have finished actively growing in the autumn, they have delicious seeds for birds to eat, and great hollow stems for bugs like ladybirds to hibernate in.

Ealing Council has created thousands of metres of wildflower meadows because they help biodiversity (living things) to thrive. Can you find any colourful patches of wildflowers in Southall park? The meadow is not far from the exercise equipment.

## 7 Discover the giant mosaic globe



There is a beautiful mosaic sphere that represents the world, hidden among the paths near the wildflower meadow. Can you find it and read about why it is there? Who made it? Can you find Ealing on the globe map?! Mosaic making and creating art is a good way of relaxing and observing nature. Mosaics are usually pieces of pottery or glass stuck on a hard surface.

Perhaps you could try and make one yourself of an animal you have seen today? You would need some bits of pottery, or coloured bits of paper, some glue and a hard surface (like a tile) to glue them on. Ask your adult to help get you started.



## 8 Creep up on a squirrel



Southall park has a LOT of squirrels. They are very sweet but can be territorial. They will often squabble with each other if one squirrel gets too close to another squirrel's tree or tries to steal their supply of acorns or conkers. They can also play together and chase each other. Squirrels are not afraid of humans, but they won't let you get too close. See how close you can get to one!? They will eat food waste left behind by visitors, like rats do.

## 9 spot a bird box



Small birds need help finding suitable nesting sites because there aren't enough trees in cities. So, Ealing Council puts up bird boxes in most green spaces. The boxes need cleaning out every year, and the nests need removing, so that the box is clean for the next family. Can you see this bird box on a big oak tree? Oak trees are wonderful for wildlife as so many different species rely on them. A bird box on an oak tree is a real treat for birds that want to have chicks- there will be plenty of insects for them to feed on when they hatch.

## 10 Harvest from the great elder bush



The elder is a shrub that is commonly regarded as a 'weed' because it spreads so easily. It has beautiful white flowers in the early summer, which you can make elderflower cordial with. In the autumn, the flowers have turned to berries, which wildlife love to eat, and you can use these to make cordial, jam or vinegar from. (Don't try eating the berries raw though as they can upset your tummy).

Try to find a large elder bush in the park, so that you can harvest a few flowers or berries to make something with. Use the internet to identify the elder plants in the park and check with an adult who knows that you are right. Never pick too much (just enough for your family), and always wash what you pick before eating. The woody stems of the elder also make great jewellery when hollowed out- you could carefully remove a small branch and cut it up with your adult. Push a stick through the middle (it is soft) and feed it onto a piece of string. You will have a lovely natural bracelet!

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Trail created (and pictures taken) by  Natasha Gavin  
[www.natashagavin.com](http://www.natashagavin.com)



# Southall Park

## Nature Activity Trail

mark your activities on the map

