



in association with



DOWN TO EARTH

Safe use of plants and trees in Forest school.

Plant/tree use.	Safe use	Danger for plant or humans.
Tree Bark for crafts/ baskets/ book covers/ writing material. Etc.	Use bark from dead or felled trees, or only use very small portions of bark from living trees.	Do not cut bark from living trees in a full circle around a tree trunk as this will kill a tree.
Leaf collection from live trees/ shrubs and plants.	Always leave lots more leaves than you take. Collection of autumn leaves directly from the plant/ tree is ok as the sap is returning to the roots, but it is always best to collect the fallen leaves instead.	If all leaves are removed from a tree, plant or shrub in the spring and summer time the leaf will not be able to collect the sun's energy from photosynthesis and the tree will suffer or die.
Flower collection	Always leave more lots more leaves/flowers than you take.	Never take all the flowers from one plant as this can create nutritional and reproduction issues for the plant and can leave bees without food. There are 188, protected plants, grasses and mosses in Ireland. See Botanicgarden.ie for the full list
Coppicing hazel/ willow rods for craft use.	Coppice in the winter when the sap is in the roots to make sure new limb growth in the spring.	Do not cut all limbs off in the spring/ summer when the sap has risen, as the branches/limbs will not grow back.
Which woods to use on a fire	Ash, oak, hazel, alder, pine, dry. The best green wood, that you can burn is the ash, according to the poem about fire wood in NOTES Fire wood poem.	DO NOT use woods from the following trees yew, rhododendron Do not burn wood that has mushrooms growing on it.
What wood can we use for bread sticks.	Hazel, oak, ash. Hazel is the best as it is straight and long, freshly peeled/ whittle the skin for clean use.	DO NOT use Yew, Rhododendron, elder or willow (willow has small traces of aspirin, check if people are allergic.)
Knowing dangerous plants/ shrubs and fungi	If in doubt of the safety of a plant, then do not use it.	ONLY USE PLANTS/ SHRUBS/ MUSHROOMS you know,
Endangered and protected species.	Only use plants that are plentiful and not on the protected list, remembering to leave much more than you take.	Research what plants are endangered and protected. Botanicgardens.ie http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/ have lists of all the red listed plants and species in Ireland.



in association with



DOWN TO EARTH

Forest school site.	Leave areas of wild/ untouched undergrowth.	Do not cut back all the brambles or undergrowth from your forest school site, this is important protection and habitat for small mammals, rodents and insects living in the forest.
----------------------------	---	---