

Night-time activities

Make the most of the longer evenings this autumn and winter.



Animals of the night

Help the wildlife that only comes out at night time.

What you need

- A big cardboard or plastic box
- Knife or scissors
- Leaves and twigs
- Adult supervision

- 1 Search for a safe spot for your wildlife home, in a well-sheltered area. This could be a quiet corner in your garden, or any spot that is shielded from wind and sunlight.
- 2 With the help of an adult, cut an entrance for small nocturnal mammals. Also cut a few holes on the sides for ventilation.
- 3 Place dry leaves inside the box to make it cosy for the animals to sleep in.
- 4 Cover the top of the box with leaves and twigs.



How does it work?

Nocturnal animals are those that are active mostly during the night and sleep during the day, such as hedgehogs, dormice, owls and bats. They are adapted to survive in the dark, and have a sharp sense of smell or good hearing to help them get around. Throughout the coldest months of the year, hedgehogs and dormice hibernate, which means they become inactive and many of their bodily processes slow down. They've already spent most of the summer and autumn eating to prepare themselves for a lengthy nap. Now they just need to find a warm, safe space to rest.

A glow lantern

Make your own spooky glowing night light.

What you will need

- Glow-in-the-dark paint
- Biodegradable glitter
- A glass jar

- 1 Mix the glow-in-the-dark paint with about a tablespoon of glitter. Add a splash of water to make it runnier. Pour the mixture into a jar.
- 2 Leave the jars out in the Sun to "charge" up.
- 3 When it gets dark, shake the jar and then turn off the lights to watch it glow.
- 4 Once the glow fades, place the jar in the Sun again to "charge" up the glow once more.



How does it work?

Glow-in-the-dark paint contains luminescent phosphor. This material emits visible light when it is exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light, a type of light that comes from the Sun. While the glow fades after a certain amount of time, it can be recharged by leaving it out in the daytime. It's similar to charging a battery, as the energy is "stored" in the paint, allowing it to glow for hours afterwards.

Observing autumn stars

Find constellations in the night sky that can only be seen during autumn.

DID YOU KNOW?

The largest constellation in the night sky is Hydra. Shaped like a giant snake, it is best seen between January and May.



What you need

- A smartphone or tablet
- Stargazing app (e.g. SkyView Lite or Star Tracker)

- 1 If it's a clear night, wrap up warm and go outside as soon as it gets dark. If possible, turn off lights indoors that might spoil your night vision, or get away from any streetlights.
- 2 Get as wide a view as you can of the whole sky. See what shapes you can spot on your own.
- 3 Open your stargazing app and point your phone or tablet towards the sky. The app will give you the names of constellations, as well as any planets you might be able to find with the naked eye.

How does it work?

A constellation is a group of stars that create a pattern in the sky. There are 88 official constellations, but not all of them are visible all year round. As Earth travels around the Sun, stars appear to shift in the night sky, so the stars you can see change with the seasons. Light pollution (artificial lights from buildings, cars and lamps) can affect observations. Find a dark spot and give your eyes a few minutes to adjust to the night sky.

Getty Images - Rex Shutterstock - NaturePL.com