

# Autumn Scavenger Hunt



# Can you spot these signs of autumn?

Go on a nature walk and take some time to look up, down, and all around you. Things are changing as autumn emerges! The sun is lower in the sky, the temperatures are dropping, the leaves are changing color, and the earth is expressing itself in new and exciting ways! See how many of the following you can find and read the fun facts about each when you find them!

**SEED PODS:** Seed dispersal is the way seeds get away from their parent plant to a new place so that they can fall to the ground and create new plants! How many different types can you find?

**PUMPKINS:** A pumpkin is a fruit, not a vegetable! There are around 800 seeds in a medium sized pumpkin.

**FALLING LEAVES:** Leaves fall off trees so that the trees can survive the winter! The tree takes the nutrients from the leaf back into the stems and roots, and when the leaf is empty it falls to the ground.

**PINE TREES:** Pine trees are called evergreens because their leaves stay green all year long!

**SCARECROWS:** Scarecrows were originally created to do exactly what their name suggests- To scare crows and other birds away that might ruin a farmer's crops.

**OWL:** Owls are nocturnal (active at night), and most hunt insects, small mammals, and other birds.

**SPIDERS:** Most spiders spin webs to catch bugs to eat, but not all do! Some spiders actively hunt and pounce on their prey.

**FEATHER:** According to many scientists, birds developed from reptiles millions of years ago! They believe that as the reptiles became birds, their scales turned into feathers.

**PINE CONE:** Pine cones are the seed pods of pine trees! The pine cone grows as the seeds inside grow, protecting them from predators and harsh weather.

**MUSHROOMS:** Mushrooms are the fruit of a fungus! Similar to how an apple is the fruit of a much larger fruit tree, the mushrooms we see are the reproductive structures of a much larger underground fungus.

**PUDDLES:** Autumn brings rain and dew! Puddles form when water is present and is not absorbed, spread, or evaporated.

**BATS:** Bats are pollinators, and hugely important for people and the planet! Hundreds of plant species rely on bats to pollinate them, such as avocados, mangos, and bananas!

**SQUIRREL:** Squirrels store nuts for the winter! They will crack a nut to make sure it doesn't begin to grow before winter, then bury it just below the surface, hiding it from predators. They then use their sense of smell to find their nuts when the time comes!

**CLOUDS:** Clouds are formed when tiny droplets of water in the air rise with warm air. As they rise, they get cooler. They combine with other water droplets to form clouds!

**LEAFLESS TREES:** Trees that lose their leaves are called "deciduous trees." Deciduous means "temporary" or "tending to fall off." The tree usually loses its leaves in autumn, and the leaves grow again in spring.

**CROWS:** Crows are some of the smartest animals in the world. They have even been known to make and use tools!

**SPIDER WEBS:** Spider webs are sticky nets that spiders make from silk in their bodies to trap their prey. Insects fly or crawl into the web, get stuck, and the spider eats them. Spider webs that have been abandoned are called cobwebs!

**ACORNS:** Acorns are the fruit of oak trees. They are a hugely important food to creatures of their ecosystem such as birds, mice, squirrels, deer, bears, and even pigs!

**COLORED LEAVES:** As summer fades into autumn, our days get shorter and there is less sunlight. This tells the leaf to prepare for winter and stop making chlorophyll. When this happens, the green color fades and the reds, oranges, and yellows become visible- These colors are already in the leaf! The green is just dominant when chlorophyll is being produced.



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