



December Activity Pack

Season's Greetings,

We hope that you enjoyed watching the magical beauty as autumn unfold.

December is here and brings along its own challenges. It can become harder to go outside, look after our wellbeing and face the colder and wetter weather. Here at Wild at Heart we like to combat these 'Winter Blues' with Winter wellbeing tips – we encourage you to layer up warmly, bring a raincoat and an umbrella, and treat yourself to a nice warm cup of tea or hot chocolate that we provide during or after your walk, you can still enjoy the cold weather and all the positives it brings being in nature.

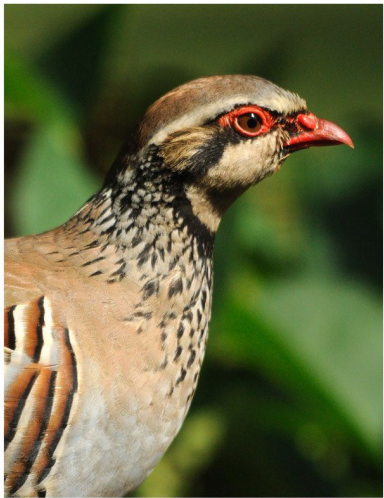
In this month's pack we are providing you with a collection of festive spotter sheets, seasonal crafts, poems, colouring sheets, puzzles and a delicious winter recipe to keep you warm.

We hope you have fun making some of your very own festive decorations and manage to enjoy a fresh wintry walk.

Enjoy!

www.wildsheffield.com

Festive wildlife detective



A red-legged partridge
(pear tree optional)



Two collared doves



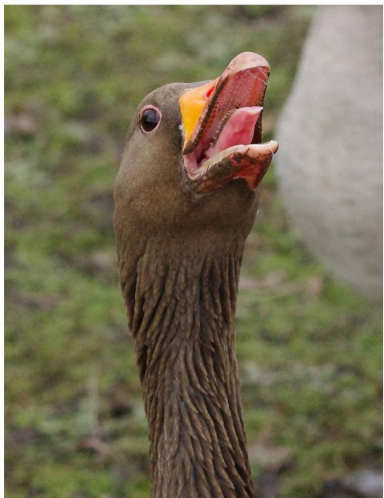
Three pheasant hens



Four calling birds



Five cold things



Six geese-a-braying



Seven swans-a-swimming



Eight glades-a-tinkling



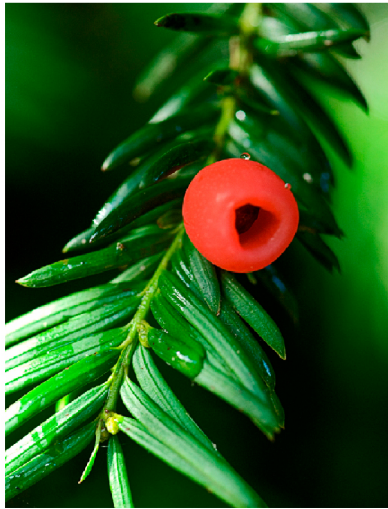
Nine red deer prancing



Ten paws-a-creeping



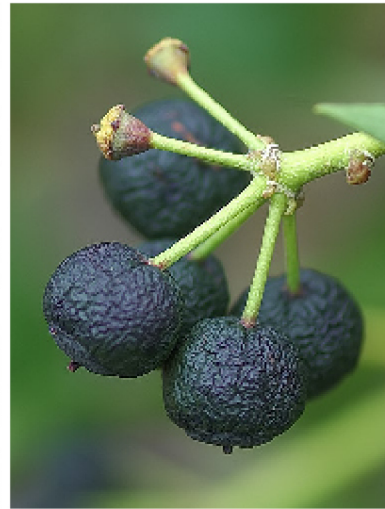
Winter nuts and berries



Yew berries



Acorns



Ivy berries



Conkers



Rose hips



Beech nuts



Holly berries



Crab apples



Rowan berries



Hawthorn berries



Winter Seasonal Soup

Vegetable soups are perfect for making the most of what is in season and using up what's in the cupboard.

At this time of year there's nothing better than hearty, warming soups made with a variety of delicious late winter vegetables.

In this soup the base of onion and carrots is enhanced with various root veg. Over the winter root veg are at their best. This is where the plant stores all its energy to regrow the following year.

This means that the roots like carrots, parsnip, swede, potatoes etc. are all packed full of nutrients. You could add early nettle leaves to this vegetable soup as they will start to grow as the days lengthen.

Ingredients – serves 4

- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 large onion
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 parsnips, diced
- 3 sticks celery, sliced
- 2 small leeks, sliced
- 200g dried red lentils
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tbsp vegetable bouillon powder / stock cube
- 1 heaped tsp ground coriander
- 1 heaped tsp ground paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Salt and pepper



Method

1. Chop all the vegetables.
2. Fry the garlic and onion until brown.
3. Fry the vegetables (carrots, parsnips, celery, leeks) until softened.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients (lentils, tomato puree, thyme leaves, vegetable stock, coriander, paprika, cumin, salt and pepper).
5. Pour over 1.2 litres boiling water from the kettle, then stir well.
6. Cover and leave to simmer for 30 mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender.
7. Ladle into bowls and eat straightaway. Serve with chunks of crusty bread.
8. As you like it:
Use milk instead of half of the boiled water if you prefer a creamy soup.
Blend the soup with a hand blender if you prefer a smooth soup.

Here is a list of fruits and vegetables which are in season during the late winter in the UK.

- Beetroot
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Celeriac
- Cabbage
- Field mushrooms
- Kale
- Leeks
- Parsnips
- Potatoes
- Shallots
- Onions
- Swede
- Turnips
- Carrots - stored over winter



Have an eco-Christmas



Save any Christmas cards and cut them up to use as tags for next year.

Help save the planet this festive season!

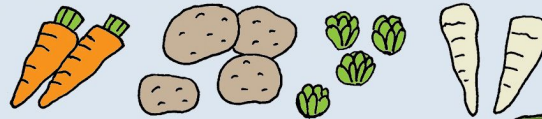
PRESENTS

- Try making gifts yourself! From knitting a scarf to baking a batch of cookies, there are lots of fantastic presents you can DIY.
- Buy presents from shops that make their products in an ethical and sustainable way... just like The Wildlife Trusts' store.
- Think quality not quantity; having a family Secret Santa means you don't have to buy for everyone and helps to create less waste.
- Avoid non-recyclable wrapping paper by using brown paper and brown paper tape. Better yet, go for a reusable option like a bag or a box.



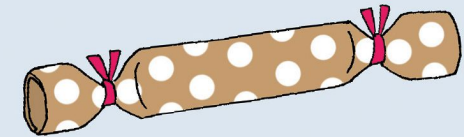
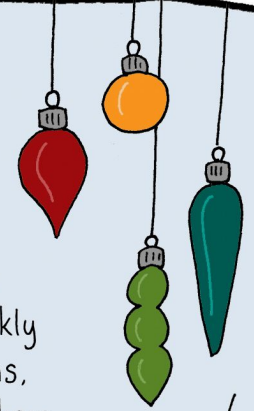
FOOD

- Plan your meals so food doesn't go to waste. Leftovers can make some of the tastiest meals!
- Shop local. Are there ingredients for your Christmas dinner that you can source from local farms or shops?
- Compost your vegetable waste.
- Try out some veggie and vegan alternatives to cut down on meat and dairy.



DECORATIONS

- If you already have a cupboard full of sparkly Christmas decorations, make sure to reuse them.
- Instead of plastic tinsel, try using bunting, pinecones, or popcorn tinsel instead.
- Avoid buying Christmas crackers that contain plastic toys. You might want to try making your own using toilet roll tubes instead. Writing your own jokes is the best bit!



Wild at Heart

Be wild, whatever your age

Grow Your Own Festive Wreath



Bringing greenery inside the home when all is dark and dismal is an age old tradition.

With a bit of pre-planning you can make your own festive wreath from natural materials – far more attractive, unique and much better for the planet!

There's loads of wildlife benefits to growing your own wreath - all through the growing season your plants will be providing nectar, pollen and habitat for all sorts of wildlife, there will be plenty of berries and seeds for birds to eat, as well as creating little nooks and crannies for insects to overwinter in.

Come December, you can collect some of the material for your own enjoyment too!

Having a bit of colour and interest certainly lifts the spirits when the days are short and cold. Plus the satisfaction from creating something wonderful and the little smiles it generates every time you see it or someone asks you where you "bought" it from!

Even the act of going out on a nature walk to collect extra natural materials is a mood booster.

Plants to grow in your garden to use in wreath-making

The list is of course endless - here are some to start with.



Foliage

Ivy, Rosemary, Sage

Berries

Pyracanthus, Cotoneaster

Flowering Shrubs -

Viburnum, Winter Flowering Jasmine, Sedum, Skimmia, Mahonia etc

Flexible, structural plants to use to make your hoop base - dog wood, willow, hazel, bramble

Plants to grow in your garden and harvest in the summer / autumn and dry until needed.

- Honesty
- Oriental Poppy (seed heads)
- Teasels
- Echinops
- Sea Holly
- Hydrangea
- Lavender
- Allium Flower heads
- Ornamental Grasses

You can also dry annuals like cornflowers, Love in a Mist seed heads, ammi majus – these all keep their shape and can look beautiful when dried. Simply cut in summer when they are at their best, tie a rubber band around the stems and hang upside down in a cool, dry, dark place and forget about them until December!



Wild at Heart is funded by Rotherham Social Prescribing Service and The National Lottery Community Fund

Join us online: www.facebook.com/WildatHeartproject

Items to forage whilst out on a nature walk



Guidelines for Foraging – Fallen items are best - think about nature, only collect things that are in abundance, only take what you need – leave plenty for wildlife, so as not to have a detrimental effect on the plant and the ecosystem.

All wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is illegal to dig up or remove a whole plant (including algae, lichens and fungi) from the land on which it is growing without permission from the landowner or occupier. Some species like orchids are specially protected against picking, uprooting, damage and sale.

A list of these can be found on [Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act \(1981\)](#).

Evergreens/Conifers

Small pieces of Noble Fir, Pine, Spruce, Larch, Leyland Cypress, Holly, Laurel, Fern etc.

Structural material for base

Dogwood, willow, bramble, birch and hazel all work well

Natural treasures to embellish your wreath

- **Pine cones** (collect in the autumn)
- **Fruit & Berries** – to add colour - Hawthorn / Buckthorn berries. Rowan, Late black berries, Crab apples, Quince, Rosehips.
- **The fluffy seed heads of “Travellers Joy”**
- **Feathers**

Wild at Heart is funded by Rotherham Social Prescribing Service and The National Lottery Community Fund

Join us online: www.facebook.com/WildatHeartproject



How to create your wreath

Gather your materials

- Secateurs
- Cotton thread – can be used to attach material to your wreath

Optional

- Floristry wire – can be useful for attaching items to your wreath.
- Hessian to make extra bows and ribbons

Make your hoop base.



Use your flexible, freshly cut or pre-soaked willow, dog wood or hazel to shape into a circle. The size of this circle will determine your wreath size - shorter length will create a perfectly attractive mini-wreath. Twist the end in so they push against each other to hold the shape. Continue to weave and twist the willow etc. Add a few more lengths to give the hoop structural integrity. A good tip is to overlap joins. Wait until you are happy with the thickness of the wreath before clipping the willow to improve the shape.

Attach the greenery first - this is where your evergreen foliage will come into play. You can use the natural gaps in your willow base to push the stems of the cuttings into. If you think they need to be more firmly attached you can use the cotton or floristry wire.



Experiment with colours and texture of different plants. See what fits the look that you're going for!

Then add some colourful embellishments. Things like berries, seed and flower heads. Use the natural treasure that you saved back in Summer. For an unknown (!) artistic reason – an odd number of items seems to hold people's attention better, try adding, 3, 5 7 or even 9(!) of one of your treasures and see what you think. Add your berries last of all – they are delicate and will easily fall from your cutting.



Your wreath will last about a month – you could always revamp it each week, changing its look to suit your mood. Once the festive period is over and it is time to take down your wreath, you could add it into your compost heap to be retaken back into the natural world.

Add some garden twine to make a loop to attach your wreath to your front door, ready to spread cheer over the Festive season.

If you enjoyed making it – why not make one for your neighbour too!

Wild at Heart is funded by Rotherham Social Prescribing Service and The National Lottery Community Fund

Join us online: www.facebook.com/WildatHeartproject

Wild at Heart

Be wild, whatever your age

Christmas Paper Chains

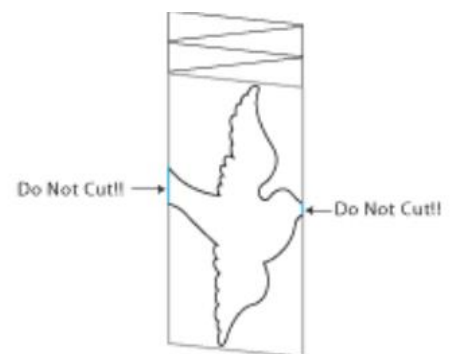
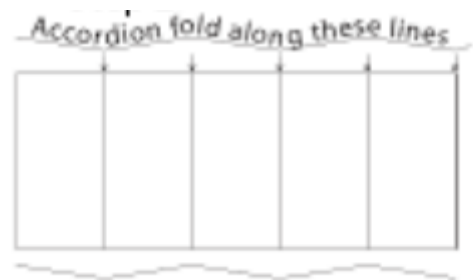
Make your own Paper Chains to hang up as homemade Christmas Decorations!

What you need:

- A4 Blank Paper
- Scissors
- Pen or pencil
- Optional colouring pencils or paints to decorate

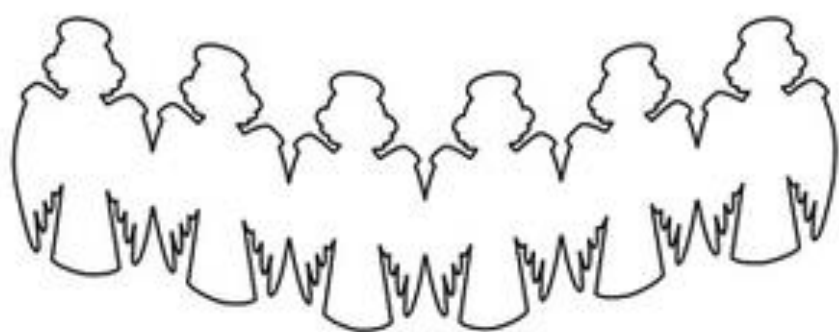
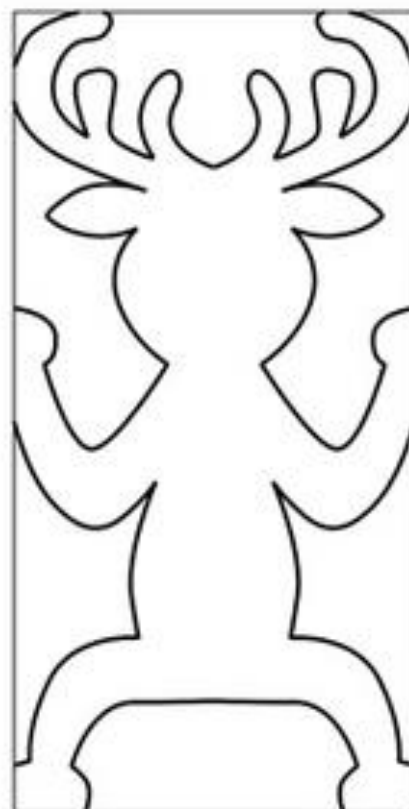
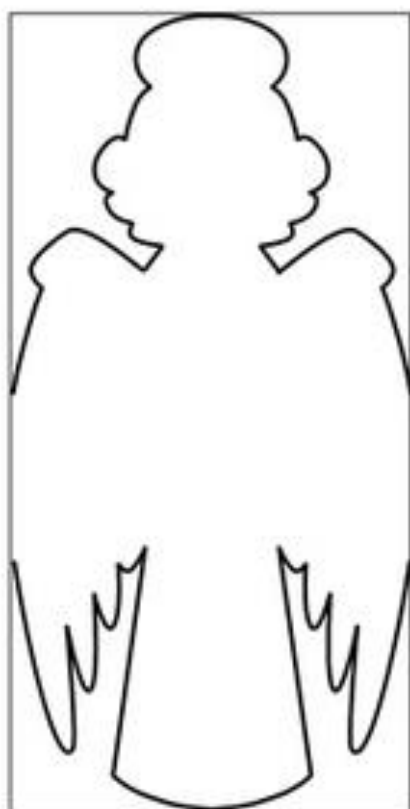
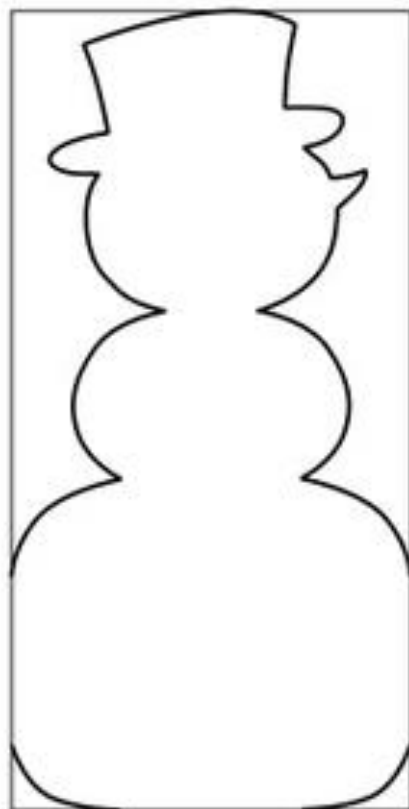
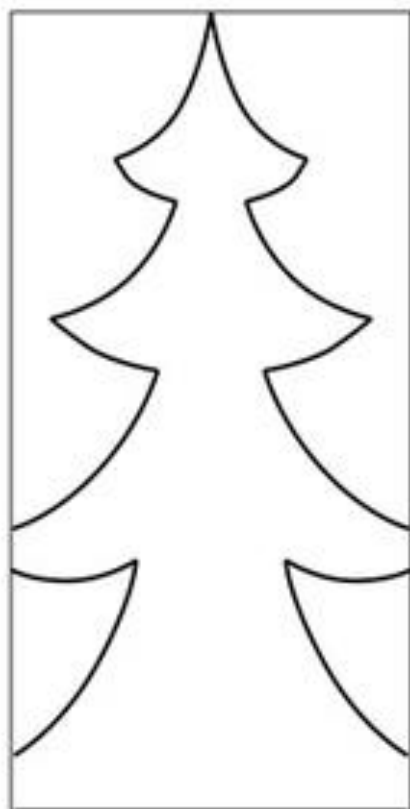
Steps:

1. Fold and cut the blank sheet of paper in half, lengthways to give two paper strips.
2. Take each paper strip and fold it accordion-style to give 5 sides of paper 4.25 inches by 2.125 inches in size like this:
3. On the front fold of paper, draw on the template – you can trace using the Christmas-themed templates on the back of this activity sheet if you like.
4. With the paper strip folded and your template at the top, cut along the traced lines of your Christmas shape – careful you do not cut the left and right hand edges off, those need to stay put to attach it to the rest of the chain!
5. Decorate your paper chain and hang it up!



Wild at Heart is funded by Rotherham Social Prescribing Service and The National Lottery Community Fund

Join us online: www.facebook.com/WildatHeartproject











Winter Eyes

by Douglas Florian

Look at winter

With winter eyes

As smoke curls from rooftops

To clear cobalt skies.

Breathe in winter

Past winter nose:

The sweet scent of black birch

Where velvet moss grows.

Walk through winter

With winter feet

On crackling ice

Or sloshy wet sleet.

Look at winter

With winter eyes:

The rustling of oak leaves

As spring slowly nears.

British Deciduous Trees Word Search

Winter is a great time to get to know the trees that grow in your local area.

Deciduous trees are the ones which drop their leaves in winter.

Can you find the names of these common deciduous trees?

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

Sweet Chestnut

Beech

Field Maple

Holly

Elder

Common Lime

Horse Chestnut

Rowan

Sycamore

Hawthorn

Wild Cherry

English Oak

London Plane

Willow

Silver Birch

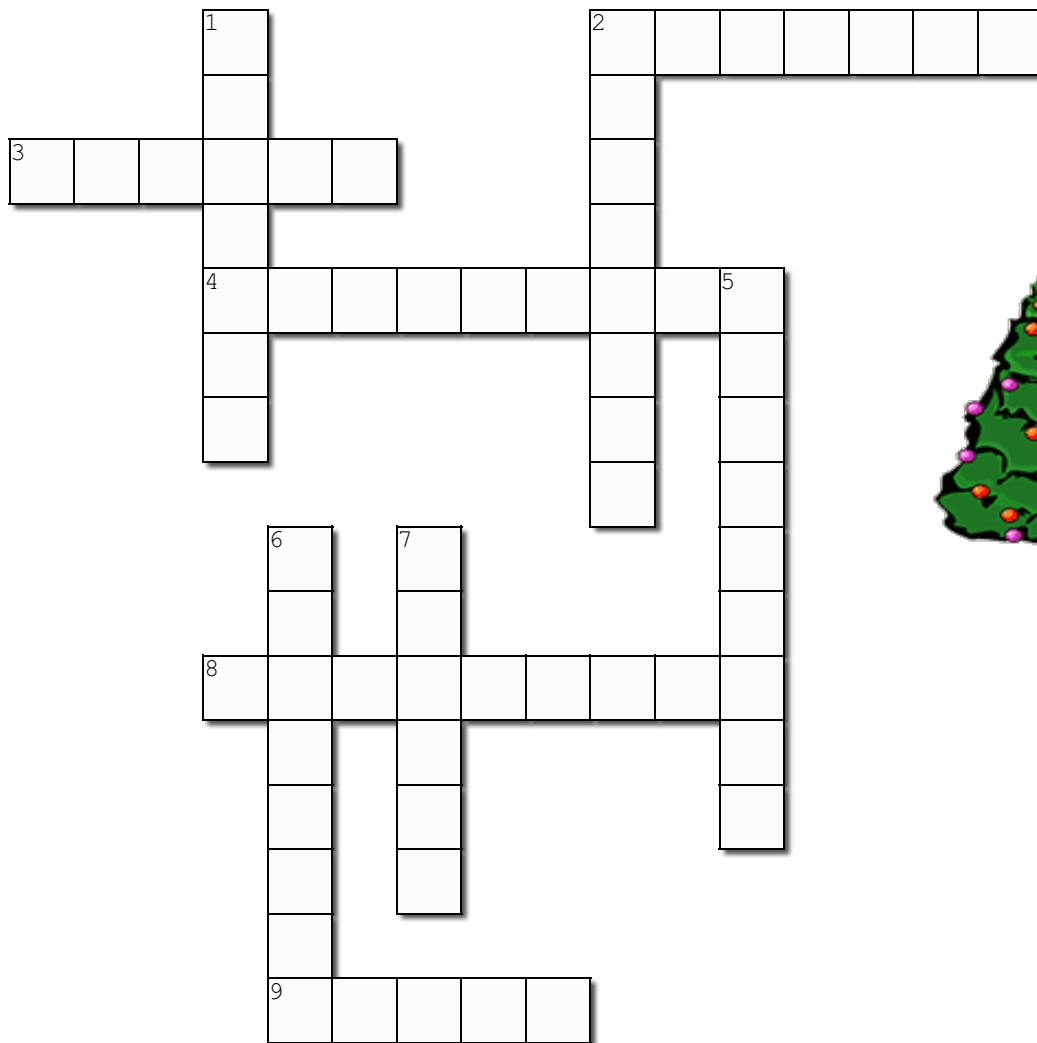
Crab Apple

White Poplar

Hazel

Festive Crossword

All these words are associated with Christmas and the Festive season, see if you can guess them all!



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

- 2. Made of beeswax, and creates little lights around the house
- 3. Traditional songs sung at Christmas
- 4. The plant you kiss underneath at Christmas
- 8. Under the mantelpiece, and good at warming up cold toes!
- 9. Small common bird, also known as the 'Redbreast'

Down

- 1. A person made out of snow, carrot, and hat!
- 2. The nut that we roast at Christmas time, grows on trees in UK
- 5. What do you call trees, like Christmas Trees, which never lose their leaves?
- 6. What animals pull Santa's sleigh?
- 7. A circle made of greenery hung on the front door at Christmas