

Seasons: spring and summer



Expected prior learning

- Observations about some changes in weather and day length.
- Names of some common plants and animals.
- How seasonal change can affect plants and animals.



Overview of progression

After completing this chapter the children should know about:

- weather associated with spring and summer
- some changes in day length
- how plants, animals and humans are affected by seasonal changes associated with spring and summer.



Creative context

- This topic provides many opportunities for children to make observational drawings and use images to present their findings.
- Children will be required to deploy their design and technology skills when making model birds' nests and sunflowers.
- The natural environment lends itself to various forms of creative writing, song, music and dance.



Background knowledge

Farm animals

Farm animals are bred for many purposes: eggs and meat from chickens; milk and beef from cows; wool and lamb from sheep; and pork from pigs. Chicks are traditionally associated with spring. They hatch after an incubation period of around 21 days. Lambs are also associated with spring. Ewes usually give birth to one or two lambs, often in a small pen away from the main flock, where they stay until the lambs have bonded with their mothers. Sheep are generally sheared in the summer months to prevent them from overheating.

Wild animals and plants

By the summer solstice, daylight in the UK increases to over 16 hours a day (from around 8 hours in the depths of winter). For many animals, this increase provides opportunities for courtship, reproduction and raising their young. Plants also take advantage of the increase in day length to photosynthesise and grow prolifically. Flowering plants exploit the abundance of insect pollinators at this time of year.



Speaking scientifically

In this chapter, the children will have opportunities to work scientifically and observe changes across spring and summer, observe and describe the weather at this time of year, and observe the apparent movement of the Sun and how daylight varies. A simple scientific vocabulary will enable the children to comment on their observations and could include: temperature, daylight, arable, pastoral, cereal, harvest, cattle, sheep, poultry, adult, offspring, life cycle, breeding, incubating, hatching, dawn, shadow, sunscreen, photosynthesis, air pressure, anemometer, water vapour and spectrum.



Preparation

Ensure that your class understands that it is never safe to look directly at the Sun and remind them of this when you are undertaking any of the activities relating to day length or sunny weather.

You will need to provide: cameras; video and images of spring and summer scenes, including plants and animals; weather measuring equipment; clipboards; gardening gloves; sunhats, sunglasses, sunscreen; travel brochures

On the CD-ROM you will find: photocopiable pages 'Spring and summer weather', 'The early bird catches the worm'; interactive activities 'Animals', 'Life cycles', 'Wind', 'Rainbow colours', 'Changing seasons'; media resources 'Bird nests', 'Dawn chorus'