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Wild Things

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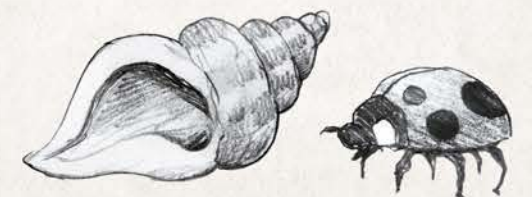
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Meet the authors

Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks have written a selection of books packed full of activities to inspire children and families to get outdoors, have fun and discover the wonders of the natural world.

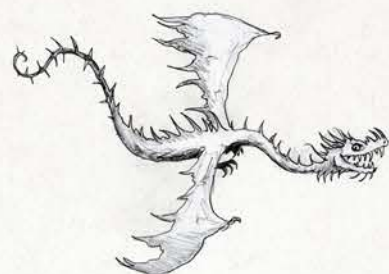
Through these titles and their website (www.goingwild.net) they aim to raise awareness of the many benefits children gain by interacting and reconnecting with wild places – whether up a mountain or in the local park. They also work in partnership with UK environmental and educational organisations and charities, making outdoor play and environmental education more accessible to a wider audience. They both live in Oxfordshire with their families.



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Discovering Wild Things

Have you ever wanted to spy on fairies in the garden, meet a unicorn, ride a dragon or share a picnic with a mermaid? Just because you've never seen these creatures doesn't mean they don't exist. The Wild Things of stories and the imagination are everywhere, but they are shy, secretive and camouflaged – and only reveal themselves to true believers.

This fantastical guidebook will help you find them by unlocking the magical power of nature. Look for Wild Things in forests, meadows and fields, in ponds, rivers and at the seaside. You can also find them in everyday places: in school playgrounds, local parks, or among the pots on the patio.

Shape-shift through real and imaginary worlds where every hollow tree leads to another planet, every stream is made of silver and magical forces whisper through the forest.

You can discover the mysteries of nature all year round and at any time of day or night. So switch your imagination onto full blast, learn to use all your senses, brush up on your magic skills and take a giant leap into the world of the Wild Things.

Wild Things survival kit

Here's some of the cool equipment you can take with you on your Wild Things adventures. You should also pack a first-aid kit, just in case you are unlucky enough to fall off your dragon or be bitten by an angry fairy.

Mirror for secret messages and seeing what's behind you

Clay for making magical creatures

Plaster of Paris for footprint casts

String, scissors and double-sided tape

Charcoal and chalk for trails and secret messages

Magical equipment: a broomstick for speedy travel, a magic wand, a spell book and a spy stone to peep into other worlds

Bags and bottles for collecting natural treasures; bottles for potions and spells

Binoculars to see the faraway Wild Things

Cat food for Wild Things bait

Hats for shade or warmth

Head torch (add red cellophane for spying on night creatures)

A blindfold for practising sensory skills

Magnifying glass and bug box to help you shrink and see into miniature worlds

Sun cream (best to use unperfumed so monsters don't smell you coming)

Drinking water and tasty snacks – you never know when you will get your next meal!

Wild skills training

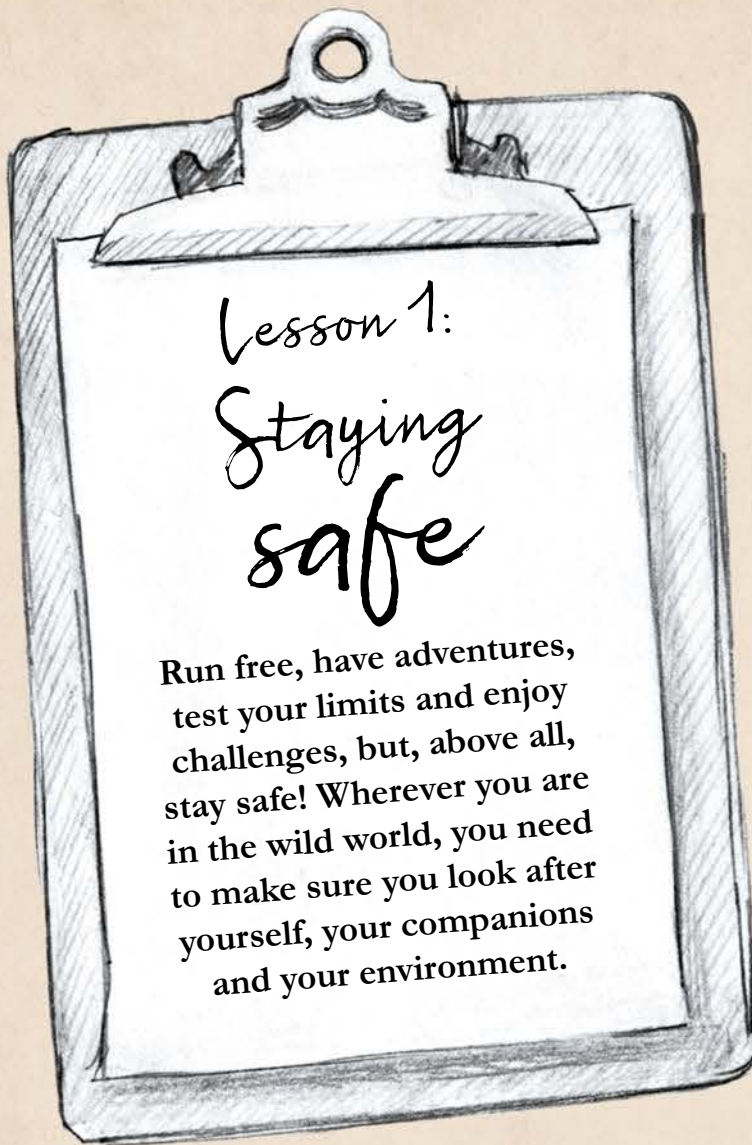
You and your friends may be able to zap aliens in virtual worlds but how long would you last outside in the real wild world? Wild skills training will get you ready to immerse yourself in nature's magic.

Did you know that nature's Wild Things have superpowers? Grasshoppers jump so high it's as if we could jump over a house, bees smell nectar up to 2 km (1.25 miles) away and ants carry such heavy weights it's like a human carrying a car.

Human powers may seem pretty feeble in comparison but, by following these lessons to develop your wild senses and skills, you will find your way in the wild world of nature and the imagination – where anything is possible.

So switch off the virtual world, get outside and become a brave wild explorer.





Grown-up guidance

Never attempt anything that may be dangerous without grown-up help. This means having an adult present during any activity that involves exploring (especially near water), cutting, tasting (particularly anything gathered from the wild), burning or the use of hot materials.



Wild safety

Different places have different dangers, so make sure you know all the ones that may arise where your adventure is taking place – as well as the necessary safety precautions.

Be aware of any poisonous plants or dangerous animals where you are exploring. Never collect poisonous plants, fungi or berries.

Tell someone at once if you are bitten or stung.

Always take extra care when playing in – or exploring near – water.

Check for ticks after playing outdoors. Always seek medical treatment if bitten by a tick.

Keep cuts covered and always wash hands after playing in wild water and working with natural materials.

If going foraging for edible fruits, leaves and nuts, make sure you know exactly what is safe to eat.

Only use knives with grown-up supervision.

Always have a first-aid kit handy, and make sure you're with someone who knows how to use it.



Fire safety

Fire can be magical and mesmerising, but always follow this guidance:

Never make fire unless you have permission to do so, and there are grown-ups around to supervise.

Make fires well away from overhanging trees and buildings.

Make fire on mineral soil, in a pit or preferably in a metal fire pan.

Never light a fire in windy or very dry weather.

Never leave a fire unattended.

Have a supply of water nearby to extinguish the fire or soothe burns.

Use as little wood as you can and let the fire burn down to ash.

Once the ashes are completely cold, remove all traces of your fire.



Looking after the wild world

Leave no trace. True Wild Thing explorers always leave wild places as they found them. Never leave anything behind in the wild world that doesn't belong there. Take all litter home with you.

Learn your local foraging laws. Some plants may be protected and so shouldn't be picked. If in doubt, leave it alone.

Only collect loose wild materials that are common and plentiful.

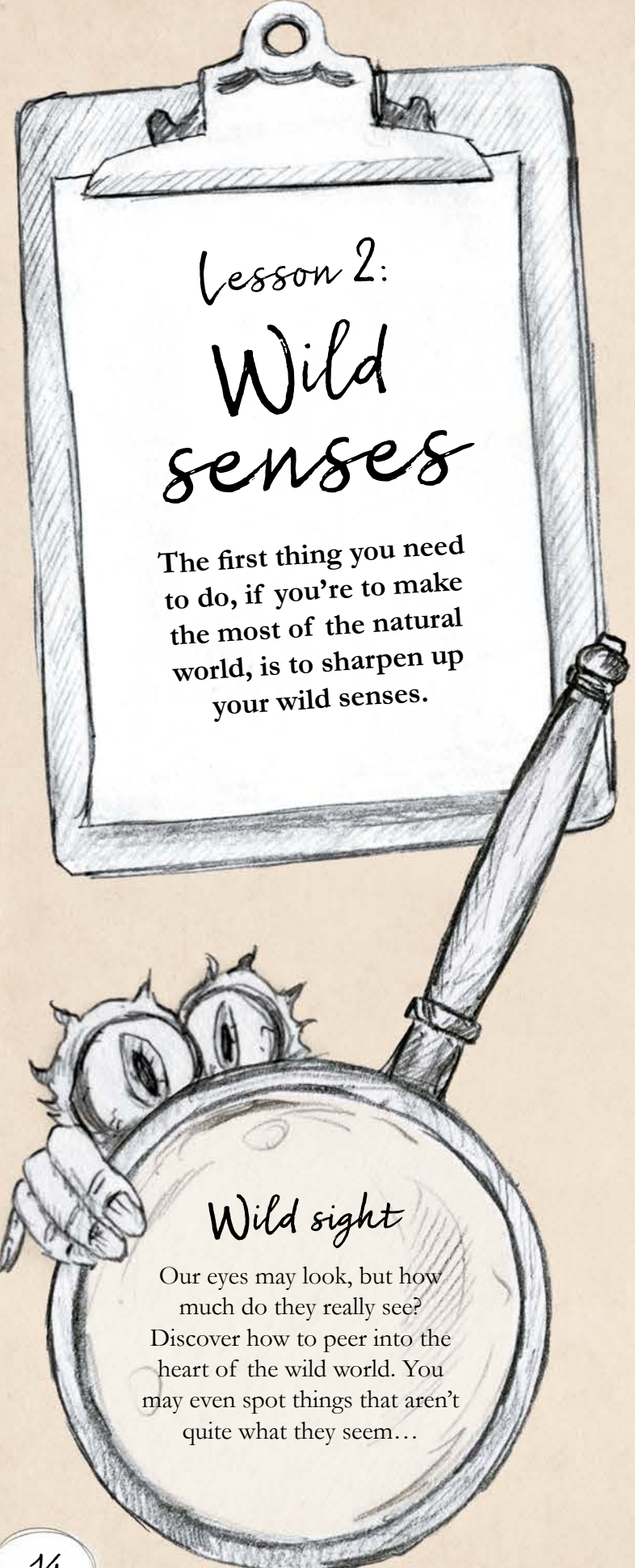
Do not trespass on private property or take anything without the landowner's permission.

When foraging for wild foods, don't be greedy. Leave plenty for the Wild Things.

Be considerate of other people enjoying wild places.

Wild Things live everywhere – look after them and protect their homes.





Lesson 2: Wild senses

The first thing you need to do, if you're to make the most of the natural world, is to sharpen up your wild senses.

Wild sight

Our eyes may look, but how much do they really see? Discover how to peer into the heart of the wild world. You may even spot things that aren't quite what they seem...

Looking up close

Use a magnifying glass to check out nature's tiny wonders.



Is that leaf an elf's map?

Is that red thorn a bloody dagger from an elf battle?

Are those tiny flecks of ice or glittering fairy diamonds?



Is that little stone a troll's decaying tooth?



Looking far away

Allow your eyes to gaze far away into the distance. If you look through half-closed eyes, you may spot some surprises!



Is that faraway island mountain a sleeping giant?



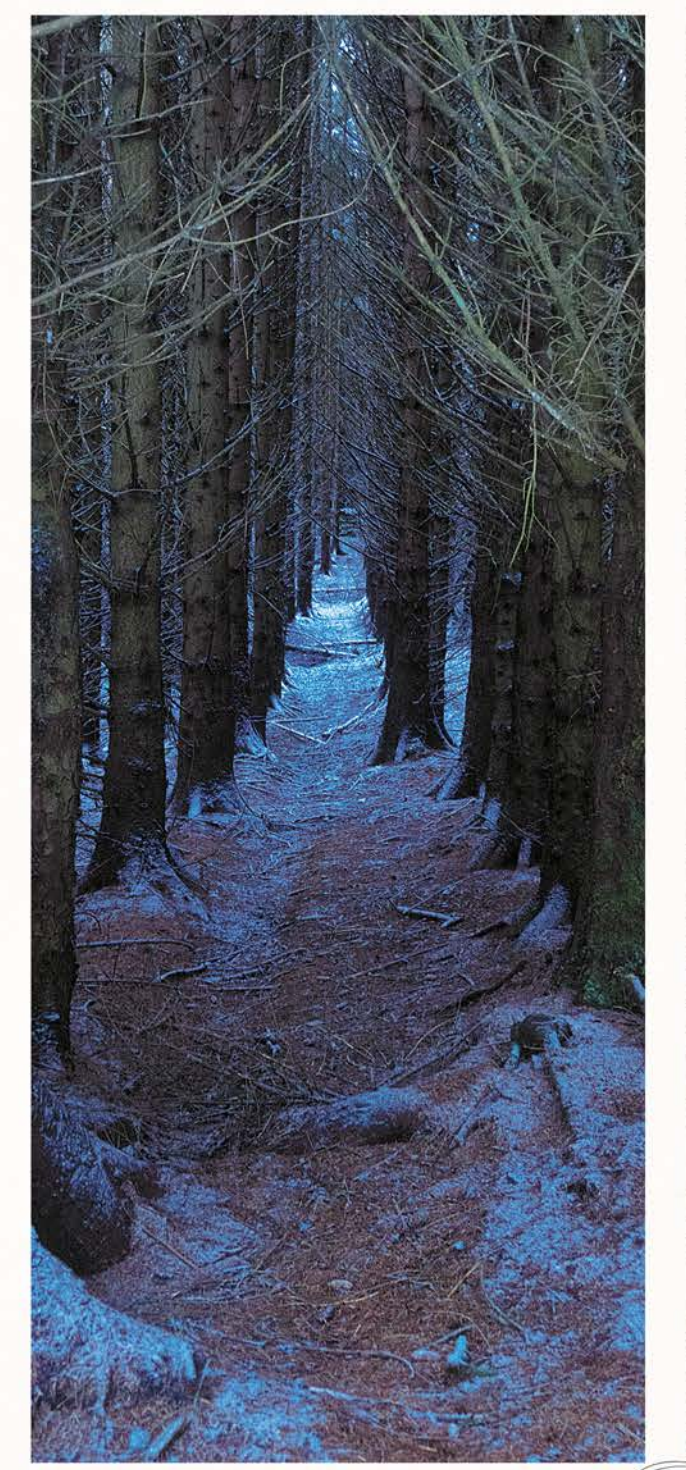
Is that fluffy white cloud a monster's head?



Is that early morning fog or a dragon's smoky breath?

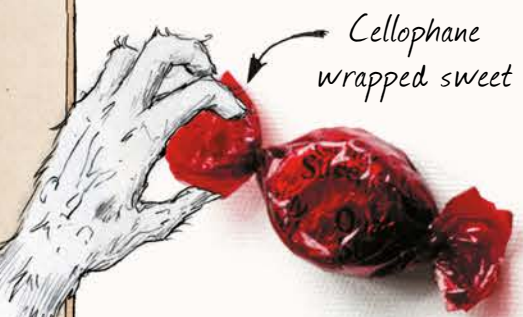
Looking in the dark

When we are tucked up in our beds at night, the wild world comes alive. To see Wild Things at night, try not to use a torch at first. After a few minutes, your eyes will adjust and your natural night sight will show you shapes, shadows and surprising details.



Red light night sight

Night sight is best, but if you have to use a torch, try to make it a red one, as most Wild Things can't see red light. Use a head torch to keep your hands free.



You will need:
**Head torches,
coloured cellophane
and elastic bands.**

1. Attach red cellophane to a head torch with an elastic band.
2. Go on a night expedition – your red light won't scare wild creatures away.
3. Experiment with different colours. What does the world look like through each one?
4. For a fun night-time game, give everyone a different coloured head torch and play dark tag.

Training your eyes to look for wild materials

Loose wild materials are found everywhere, from the wild woods to city streets. You may find fallen leaves, petals, twigs and seeds, empty shells, lost feathers and who knows what else.

Always look carefully at loose materials. Try to imagine what they may become:

This fireweed monster has a red leaf tongue and sticky burr eyes.

This woodland dragon has fiery breath (a red leaf), a beady eye (an acorn), scaly legs (pine cones) and a wooden head.



You never know what wild treasures you may find, so always have a collecting bag or box at the ready.

Safety tips

- All loose wild materials are precious. Only collect small quantities of commonly found materials that are safe to gather.
- When no longer required, return unused materials to a place where they can rot down.

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