# National Trust urges public to deepen nature connection with autumn’s sensory delights



As the crispness of autumn settles in and days grow shorter, the National Trust is urging the public to resist retreating indoors and instead to embrace the season’s unique sensory experiences through its new nationwide campaign, 'Wild Senses'. Launched alongside the first episode of the BBC nature series "Hamza’s Hidden Wild Isles," co-produced by the Trust and The Open University, the campaign invites people to reconnect with nature where they live—be it in city parks or countryside woodlands.

The series, presented by wildlife expert and cameraman Hamza Yassin, celebrates the UK’s seasonal biodiversity and encourages viewers to notice and appreciate everyday wildlife, even in urban environments. Yassin emphasises the importance of engaging with nature year-round, especially in autumn, saying that simply stepping outside or sitting quietly to let nature come to you can significantly boost well-being. Despite 90% of UK adults recognising the positive effect of spending time outdoors, a stark disparity remains: only 13% feel most connected to nature during autumn, even though 79% say they are likely to seek it out in this season. The National Trust’s commissioned YouGov poll reveals that the highly valued autumn colours are the top seasonal highlight, with 42% citing sight as their most cherished sense for enjoying autumn.

Recognising the barriers posed by poorer weather and shorter daylight hours, the Trust stresses the accessibility of nature in everyday surroundings, highlighting that 85% of the UK population lives in urban areas. Hilary McGrady, Director-General of the National Trust, underscores the importance of safeguarding green spaces such as gardens, streets, and parks, which serve as vital habitats and gateways for people to connect with seasonal wildlife. She notes the sensory feast offered by autumn—the crunching leaves, the scent of damp soil, the texture of conkers, and the taste of hedgerow berries—as being crucial for mental health, especially as the darker days draw in.

To deepen public engagement, the Trust has collaborated with the walking app Go Jauntly to launch Naturehood, featuring curated nature walks in London, Manchester, and Birmingham. This initiative also includes a nationwide challenge with 25 nature-based activities, from cloud watching to touching tree bark. Additionally, the Trust is urging gardeners to help wildlife cope with the impacts of climate change, especially after a record-breaking hot summer and drought caused many berries and nuts to fruit earlier than usual. Ben McCarthy, Head of Nature Conservation at the Trust, advises planting late-fruiting shrubs and native trees, leaving leaf piles for hibernating animals, and reducing excess garden tidying to support species like hedgehogs, dormice, and birds later in the season.

This autumn is expected to deliver a particularly vibrant natural display. The National Trust’s experts forecast a colourful season across its gardens, parklands, and woodlands due to a favourable combination of ample sunshine and late rains preventing premature leaf fall. John Deakin, the Trust’s Head of Trees and Woodland, describes autumn as a pivotal time for nature, marked by vivid colours and bountiful harvests of acorns, fungi, and berries, all signaling a healthy environment for wildlife.

Beyond the National Trust’s campaign, other organisations are running complementary autumn initiatives to nurture nature connection through sensory experiences. The South Downs National Park Authority encourages visitors to engage all five senses with the season’s sights, sounds, tastes, and textures, deepening appreciation for the changing landscape. Meanwhile, the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester, and North Merseyside is hosting family-friendly activities at Mere Sands Wood throughout October, including hedgehog spotting, fungi hunts, and autumn crafts, designed to foster environmental awareness and enjoyment.

These efforts resonate with a broader conservation movement, including initiatives like the Wildlife Trusts’ '12 Days Wild', a festive period challenge promoting daily interaction with nature to maintain connection through the colder months. Collectively, these campaigns highlight the growing recognition of the crucial role that nature plays in public well-being and climate resilience, advocating for year-round engagement with the natural world.

The National Trust’s 'Wild Senses' campaign is part of a wider strategy encouraging people to experience the unique beauty and sensory richness of autumn, wherever they are. It reflects a call not just to observe nature, but to immerse oneself in its rhythms, textures, and colours, fostering a deeper connection to the environment that is increasingly vital in today’s urbanised and climate-impacted world.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/), [[2]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/), [[3]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/2025-autumn-predictions)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/embrace-autumn-with-all-five-senses/), [[4]](https://www.lancswt.org.uk/events/2025-10-04-wild-autumn-mere-sands-wood), [[6]](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/12-days-wild)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/), [[2]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn), [[3]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/2025-autumn-predictions)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/lifestyle/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn-58430/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/national-trust-launches-wild-senses-campaign-to-reignite-nature-connection-this-autumn> - The National Trust has launched the 'Wild Senses' campaign to encourage the public to embrace autumn's sensory experiences and reconnect with nature. This initiative follows the premiere of 'Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles,' a BBC nature series co-produced by the National Trust and The Open University, which highlights the UK's seasonal biodiversity and promotes appreciation of everyday wildlife, even in urban settings. Wildlife expert Hamza Yassin, who presents the series, emphasises the importance of engaging with nature throughout the year, especially during autumn, to enhance well-being.
3. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/services/media/2025-autumn-predictions> - National Trust experts anticipate a vibrant autumn display across the charity's gardens, parklands, and woodlands, attributing the expected vivid colours to ample sunshine and beneficial late rain. This combination has prevented a 'false autumn' caused by hot, dry conditions. The experts also note abundant acorns, fungi, and berries in gardens and the countryside, indicating a healthy environment for wildlife. The Trust's Head of Trees and Woodland, John Deakin, highlights the significance of autumn as a pivotal moment in the calendar, contributing to the season's vivid colours and bountiful harvests.
4. <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/events/2025-10-04-wild-autumn-mere-sands-wood> - The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester, and North Merseyside is hosting 'Wild Autumn at Mere Sands Wood,' a series of family-friendly activities celebrating wildlife and seasonal treasures. Running from 4th to 31st October 2025, the event includes hedgehog spotting, fungi adventures, and pumpkin painting. Participants can build hedgehog hideouts, go on mushroom treasure hunts, and create autumn crafts. The activities aim to connect families with nature and promote environmental awareness, with sessions led by Gang of Elk and concluding with campfire treats like hotdogs and s'mores.
5. <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/embrace-autumn-with-all-five-senses/> - The South Downs National Park Authority encourages visitors to experience autumn through all five senses. The initiative suggests activities such as observing the transformation of treescapes into vivid tapestries of reds, oranges, and yellows, listening to the sounds of nature, tasting seasonal produce like freshly harvested apples and pumpkins, and feeling the textures of nature, including the rough bark of ancient trees and the smooth surface of conkers. This multi-sensory approach aims to deepen the connection to the landscape and enhance the appreciation of the season's beauty.
6. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/12-days-wild> - The Wildlife Trusts' '12 Days Wild' is a festive challenge running from 25th December to 5th January, encouraging participants to engage in one wild activity each day or night. Activities include tracking animal footprints, creating wild art using recycled materials, winter wildlife watching, volunteering at nature reserves, and making New Year's resolutions to help nature. Conservationist and TV presenter Chantelle Lindsay highlights the simplicity of connecting with nature, even in winter, and the opportunity to relax and unwind by enjoying the natural wonders of the planet.
7. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/escape-into-autumn> - The National Trust's 'Escape into Autumn' campaign offers free passes to over 200 of its gardens, castles, and houses, allowing visitors to enjoy the beauty of autumn in various locations. The promotion, which ran in 2024, provided a single-use pass valid for visits between 16th September and 18th October 2024. The initiative aimed to encourage people to explore the Trust's properties and experience the seasonal changes in nature, with activities such as woodland walks, bird watching, and photography amidst the autumn leaves.