

# BIODIVERSITY

## TRAIL



OPW  
Oifig na hOibríochtaí Poiblí  
Office of Public Works



**Biodiversity is the enormous variety of life on earth, from the tiniest bacteria and insects to massive trees and giant animals like elephants and whales!**



### 6: THE POND



Many insects, birds, mammals and plants live in or around the pond. Now is your chance to be a nature detective! Look at all the living things around you. Keep an eye out for the beautiful black and blue Damselfly. Make sure to stay back from the water's edge!

**Q:** List how many different types of birds and insect you can see.

### 7: GIANT RHUBARB

Stand under the umbrella-sized leaves of this plant that is sometimes called 'dinosaur food' or *Gunnera manicata*. Dinosaurs such as the Triceratops may have feasted on these! Look at the stem and nasty thorns.

These plants don't normally grow in Ireland and have no predators. They grow very quickly and can become invaders, changing the environment they live in and blocking out native plants.

**Q:** Why do you think some plants have thorns?

**We depend on nature and nature depends on us!  
If we work together, we can save biodiversity and protect our planet**

### 8: LICHENS

**Q:** Can you see grey and orange patches on the trunk of this tree?

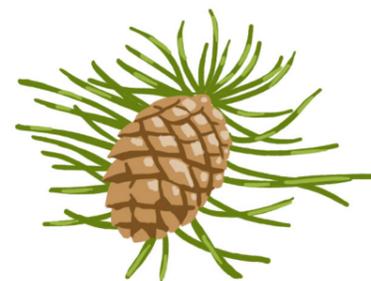
They are called lichens: small communities of fungi, tiny plants called algae, and sometimes bacteria, which live together and help each other survive. They live in lots of places including rocks by the seashore and even in the frozen arctic.



### 5: ROWAN

Rowan trees—also called mountain ash—produce berries in late summer and autumn, which birds love to eat! Have a look at the berries on the trees around you. Which colour is the most common?

**Q:** Why do you think that is?



### 4: PINES

**Q:** Look up, Can you see the pine cones growing above your head?

These cones are actually like suitcases for seeds of the tree. When the cone is ripe it opens and the tiny seeds are blown far away from the mother tree. Cones are also a favourite food of the Squirrels who love to chew on them.



### 3: Oak

The Oak is Ireland's national tree and it can support over 200 different species of insects, birds, animals, plants and fungi—very important for biodiversity!

**Q:** How many different species can you see?



### 2: ANNUAL BEDS

Lots of flowers have been bred to have fancy frilly petals, but often these make it difficult for pollinators to get to the centre of the flower where the nectar is.

**Q:** Can you find some flowers here which would be good for pollinators and some which would not be so good?



### 9: GIANT REDWOOD

The Giant Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) is the largest tree on Earth! It also lives for a very long time.

**Q:** How long do you think a single Redwood can live?



### 1: BEE BORDER

Did you know that bees visit thousands of flowers every day to drink nectar and then return to their hives to make honey? When a bee visits a plant they also carry tiny pollen grains from flower to flower. This leads to pollination and helps the plants to make seeds so that new plants can grow. Think of the seeds inside an apple for example!

**Q:** How many bees can you see along this border today? Can you see any other pollinators?



## SOME ANSWERS

- 1** While bees are our busiest pollinator, other insects such as butterflies, hoverflies, wasps and flies pollinate our plants. In other places, animals such as hummingbirds (South America) and bats (Australia) pollinate plants!
- 5** Most berries are either red or black as birds can see them easier.
- 7** Plants have thorns to protect them from being eaten by animals like the Triceratops!
- 9** The oldest known giant redwood is 3,200–3,266 years old.

My Name (Professor):

Scientific Investigation  
Date:

## my Findings

- 2** Name some flowers which would be good for pollinators and some not good for pollinators.
- 3** How many other species did you see on the oak?
- 6** What animals did you see at the pond?

