

THE SYCAMORE TREE

Interesting facts

The sycamore tree is sometimes called the great maple tree. In early spring the twigs bear many large fat buds and by May the tree will be covered by leaves. Before the leaves are fully out small pale yellow flowers appear. In time these flowers wither and turn into seed bearing wings which are scattered far and wide by the wind.

Size

The sycamore is a large spreading tree about 20 metres high.

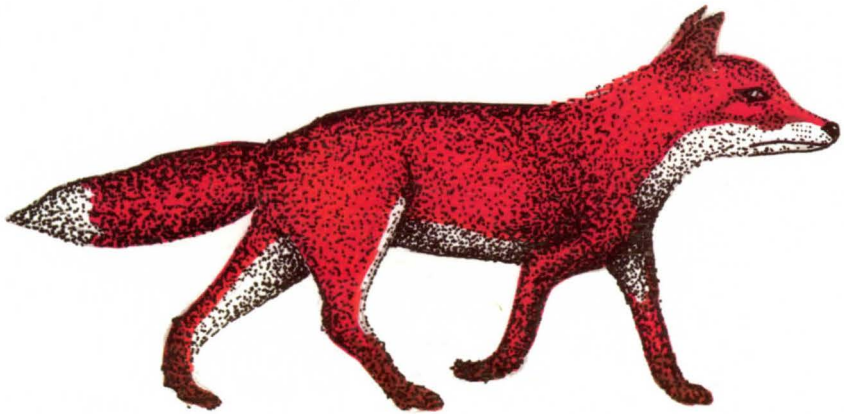
Where found

It is most common in woods and hedges.

Leaf and seed

A sycamore is a deciduous tree which means it will lose its leaves during the winter.





THE FOX

Interesting facts

A fox is extremely clever at avoiding man and will usually hunt in the evening or at night. It has an excellent sense of smell, and good eyesight and hearing. Its footprints and bark are very similar to that of a dog.

Size

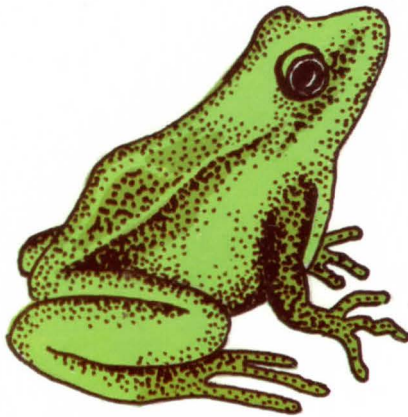
From the tip of its nose to the end of its tail a fox can measure up to 120 cm., and weigh up to 9 kg.

Habitat

The fox can be found throughout the countryside and even in towns. It normally lives in a large hole in the ground called an earth which is often the disused set of a badger.

Food

The fox eats all kinds of small animals from beetles to baby deer and will also eat fruit. The usual diet consists of mice and other small rodents but it will eat pheasants, partridges, and other birds including chickens. In towns it may also take food from rubbish bins.



THE COMMON FROG

Interesting facts

The eggs from the common frog have black-brown centres and can be found in ponds and streams from about March of each year. The eggs are covered in jelly and found in large clumps called spawn. From the spawn tadpoles are hatched. A tadpole will gradually grow back legs, then front legs and then lose its tail to become a froglet.

Size

The common frog grows to about 10 cm. in length.

Habitat

It can be found in streams, moors and marshes, and because the common frog will travel a long way from water can also be found in gardens and woods. During the winter the common frog will burrow into the soft mud at the bottom of ponds or streams.

Food

The frog will only eat live things it has caught itself, for instance snails, insects, spiders and worms. The tadpoles feed on small plants.



THE LITTLE OWL

Interesting facts

The little owl is a fierce bird which was brought to this country about a hundred years ago. It can often be found high in a tree, on a barn roof watching for its prey, or flying silently just above the ground over open woodland or orchards. A female lays 4 to 6 eggs in the spring. These are pure white and about 3.5 cm. x 3 cm.

Size

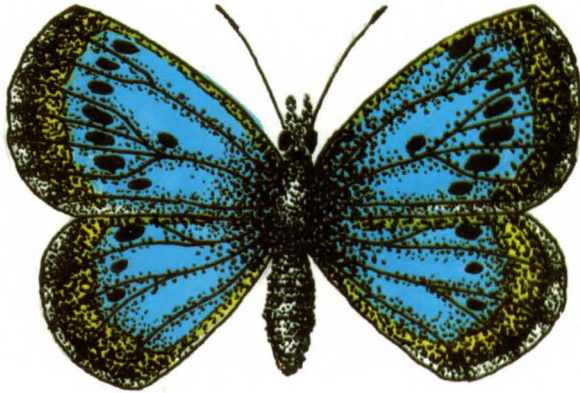
As the name suggests this is a small owl whose length is about 20 cm.

Habitat

The little owl is found near farms and villages. It does not have an actual nest but uses suitable hollows in rocks, old buildings, or trees.

Food

Though it is very small it will kill birds as large as itself, but mainly feeds on insects, mice, and bats.



THE LARGE BLUE BUTTERFLY

Interesting facts

The large blue butterfly has a very interesting life. Eggs are laid on the flowers of wild thyme and hatch into small red caterpillars. The sugary liquid which covers the caterpillars is liked by red ants who carry the caterpillars into the ants' nest. When inside the nest the caterpillars will stay all winter feeding on the larvae of the red ants. In the spring the caterpillars turn first into pupae, and in June and July finish changing into the large blue butterflies.

Size

From wing tip to wing tip the large blue butterfly measures 4 cm.

Habitat

The large blue butterfly is found on chalk hills where the wild thyme grows. It is becoming very rare and is now seen only in the south west of England.

Food

Like all butterflies it does not bite or chew and feeds by drinking nectar from flowers.