

Sample pages – Pocket Winterbook

Foreword

The world is different in winter. The colours differ, the scents have altered and we hear different sounds. Birds don't whistle, the leaves don't rustle and snow might deafen all sounds. And in the dark night sky the constellation Orion shines brightly. And if you pay attention, you might see some rare birds that have travelled from the far north.

Winter is the perfect season to go outside and closely study all these changes.

Robin

During winter some robins journey south. Others seek warmth and comfort in city gardens, hoping to find some food for long cold nights

Snowdrop

Snowdrops are poisonous, their leaves, flowers as well as their bulb. They bloom very early in the year, and cheerfully announce the beginning of spring.

Winter Jasmine

Winter jasmine blossoms from December until February. It originates from China, and its flowers smell – as do the flowers of the summer jasmine – delicious!

Christmas rose

The ancient Greeks considered the Christmas rose a magical plant, with a healing power. It was considered to help against epilepsy and madness.

Redwing

The redwing is a bird that we associate with winter. It looks like a light brown blackbird, and has a rust-coloured stripe underneath his wings. Redwings love berries. They travel to the Netherlands to escape the cold of Northern Europe.

Scarlet Elfcup fungus

During autumn and during winter, the forests are filled with fungi. The tinder fungus grows on trees and was used to make fire, or the scarlet elfcup fungus, that can hold up to 40 degrees Celsius below zero.

Nutcracker

Sometimes, though it rarely occurs, pine trees in Scandinavia or Russia do not bear a lot of seed. When this happens, the nutcracker – a crow like bird with white spots – travels to the Netherlands and Germany to find food.

Red berries

Most birds love the berries from trees like the hawthorn, the holly tree or a climbing ivy tree. Folktale says that when the hawthorn tree has an exceptional amount of berries, a harsh winter is on its way.

Tracks

Only in fresh snow can tracks be seen very clearly. This might suggest animals adore treading in freshly fallen snow as much as we do.

Bird spotting

During winter you might spot a buteo, they can be seen sitting on poles along side outstretched fields. Wearing their thick winter coat, they seem larger than in summer.

Waxwing

Waxwings usually remain up north. But they tend to travel southwards when there is not enough food, in which case you might see them fluttering around in our villages.

Bluetit

Bluetits can be spotted throughout the year. During winter, they seek each other out and fly from tree to tree in small groups.

Survival

Most animals have a reserve during the winter, so that they don't have to look for food as much. Most of them also grow a thicker fur, protecting them from the cold

Widgeon

Ducks tend to look a lot prettier during summer. During winter you might see some different variations. A proper winter duck is the widgeon, which has a brown and yellow head. They tend to spend their time sitting in wintry fields with hundreds of thousands of others.

Make your own bird-seed

During winter birds can have some difficulty finding food. You can help them by hanging fat balls in your garden. Here's how to make it: Melt some frying oil or coconut oil, and mix it with seeds (or raisins, or even mealworms). Pour it in to an old milk carton, and hang a cotton thread into it. Once it's set, take away the milk carton and hang the ball in a tree.

Pinecones

When you happen to stumble upon some damaged pinecones beneath a tree, chances are a squirrel has passed.

Fox

You might encounter a fox in the wintry season, because foxes don't hibernate. Moreover, foxes mate during winter.

Squirrels

Squirrels do not hibernate. When the weather is bad they like to retreat into their ball shaped nests. In the meantime they feverishly search for the places where they hid snacks during autumn.

Brent goose

The brent goose broods in the tundra's of northern Russia. During winter, they travel to our regions.

The Brambling

The brambling is the northern version of our finch. During winter bramblings travel south.

Pine branches

Pine trees can resist cold, drought and snow. Hence, during the classical period the branches were considered to hold special powers. By burning the branches during long winter nights the tribes in the north tried to call the sun to attention.

The moon rises early and it seems that stars shine more brightly during the winter. We can often see brights stars of the star sign Orion. The ancient Greek imagined him as a hunter with a bow and arrow.

Winter pansies

Winter pansies like to pretend they're living in spring. They even blossom when it's freezing.

Witch-hazel

The witch-hazel originates from northern America where native americans used it as a medicinal plant. It was considered to be good for your skin. European colonists took the witch-hazel to Europe, and it is still used in the cosmetics industry.

Quote lewis carroll

"I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt, and perhaps it says, "Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again." "