



Woodland through the seasons

A woodland changes dramatically through the seasons. The lives of both plants and animals are adapted to the changes.

You have already seen how a single oak can be a home for many animals. When oaks grow together they make an oak woodland. Here you can see, all in one place, many of the ways of adapting described on the previous pages (Picture 1).

The canopy

Oaks grow until their branches fit together to make a covering of leaves called a **CANOPY**. This is how the leaves get the light they need from the Sun. The canopy is thick with leaves and acorns for part

of the year, but in winter the leaves are gone and the branches bare, windswept and cold.

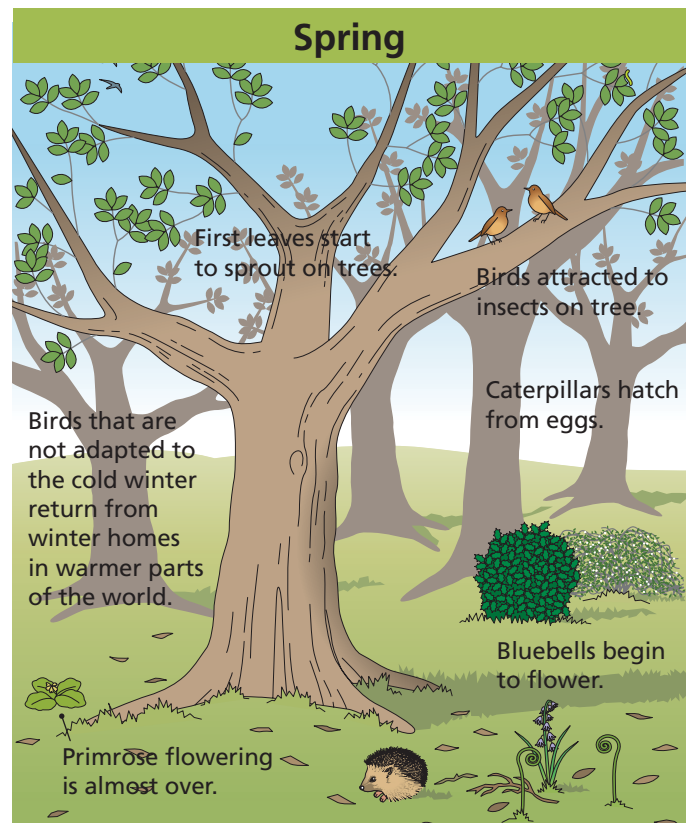
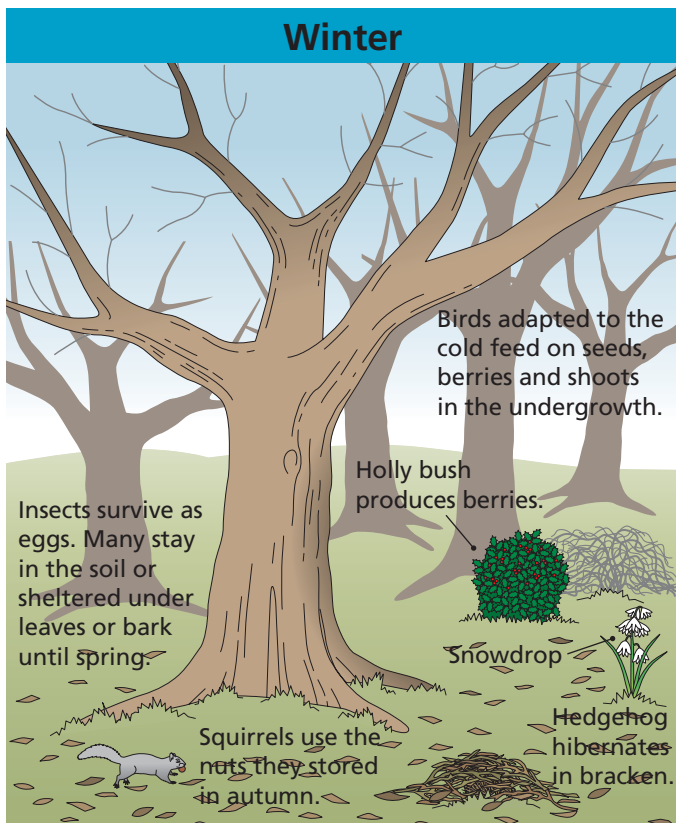
The woodland floor

Many plants and animals live below the canopy. Buds, leaves, flowers, falling fruit and nuts are all food for animals that live on the woodland floor.

Adapting to the seasons

Because the food supply of the woodland changes so much with the seasons, the way the animals behave also changes.

▼ (Picture 1) An oak woodland through the four seasons.



Many insects spend the winter as eggs or **PUPAE** (Picture 2) because they have no leaves to eat. Hedgehogs can eat worms, slugs, spiders and insects. But as their food supply dwindles, hedgehogs **HIBERNATE** and sleep during most of the winter season.

Wood mice do not hibernate. They eat seeds and bark in the winter and buds and seedlings in spring when the plants begin to shoot. They also eat insects during the summer and blackberries and mushrooms in autumn. Squirrels survive the winter on the acorns and other seeds they buried in the ground during the autumn.

The woodland has far fewer birds in winter because many **MIGRATE** (fly away) to warmer lands. Blue tits and other birds

that stay for the winter are adapted to survive the cold and the scarce food supplies.

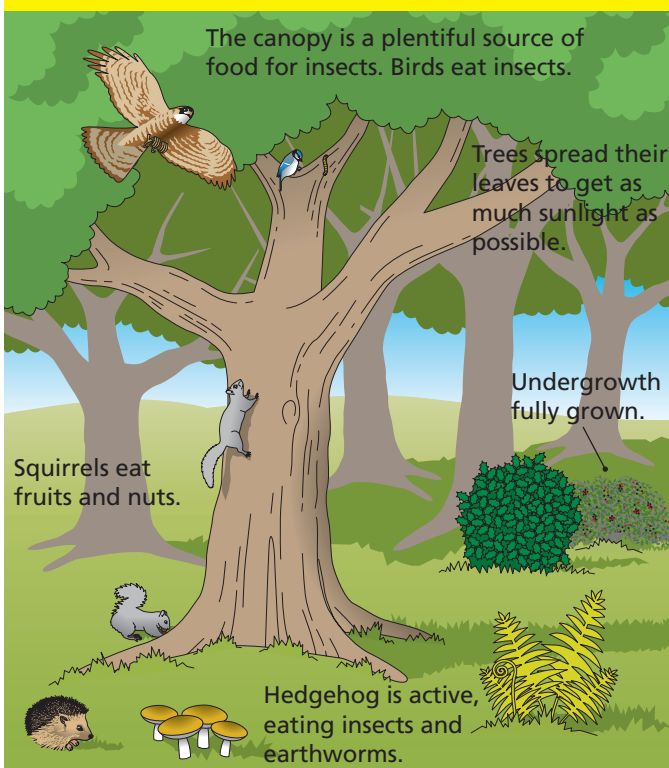
► (Picture 2) This superbly camouflaged butterfly chrysalis (a kind of pupa) is about two centimetres long. It hangs in the shelter of a twig, branch or leaf. In the winter, many adult moths and butterflies die, but their offspring spend the winter as an egg or as a pupa, often underground.



Summary

- The woodland floor changes dramatically through the year.
- In winter, when there is little food, most animals are not active.
- Many birds fly away to warmer places during the winter.

Summer



Autumn

