

Langlee Nature Trail was created with the help of children from Langlee Primary School and Galashiels Academy. It has been designed to be child friendly with a fairy village, holly tunnels and a giant xylophone. We aim to encourage children and families to use the woodland and connect with nature.

The woodland boasts a large variety of native trees including holly, hawthorn, beech, silver birch, hazel, oak, ash, rowan and lime as well as a variety of wild flowers such as cow parsley, germander speedwell, red campion etc etc. You may notice signs of fox and badger and will often spot deer in the adjacent field.

Follow the leaf sign up the hill, turning right after the two wide steps.

The first feature you'll see is a bug hotel created by young people from Gala Academy. This supports bio-diversity by providing homes for many different species of insects and can support the conservation of bees by providing them with a home.

Just along the path is the fairy village with fairy doors made by Langlee Primary School and a story telling area designed and built by Gala Academy pupils.

Leading from the fairy village are a series of holly tunnels, for children to explore and find the fairies' pet dragon, which come back out onto the path a little further up the hill. Notice the piles of holly brash left for hedgehog homes.

When you get to the main junction, why not stop and let your children do some den building. Notice that the predominant holly starts to give way to hazel, oak and beech here. If you are only doing the short (green) loop then turn left here and head back down the hill. Pass a few silver birch on your left and you'll come to a natural weave hanging in the trees. Feel free to weave in a stem or two before you go home. Remember the golden rule of foraging when picking plants: take a little from where there's a lot.

If you are continuing, follow the purple leaf signs up the hill past the standing deadwood, a great home for invertebrates, on the right until you come to a stone cairn on your left. Here, see if you can spot a deer hidden in the bushes.

Make some music on our giant xylophone then carry on up to the bench made of a silver birch trunk wedged between two oak trees. Have a seat and look across the field. You will often see deer in the far corner close to the trees.

As you approach the top of the hill you'll see some dead hedges made from ash coppiced on site. Using traditional woodland management and green woodworking techniques help to improve the woodland by thinning out the trees.

At this point the predominant trees are hazel and hawthorn and at the top of the hill the woodland opens into a grassy area surrounded by mostly rowan, silver birch, hawthorn and some oak. Catch your breath and take in the great views of Gala and the Eildons. Also notice that the trees are thick with lichen, a sign of clean air quality.

You'll then head down a steep path between slender ash trees, turning left at the bottom and back into holly territory. Watch out for the wildlife hide just off the path on the left. It's a great place to sit quietly, close your eyes and listen to the birds calling to each other.

Continuing downhill, see if you can spot the heart-shaped leaves of the lime trees and a large old beech, with its smooth grey trunk.