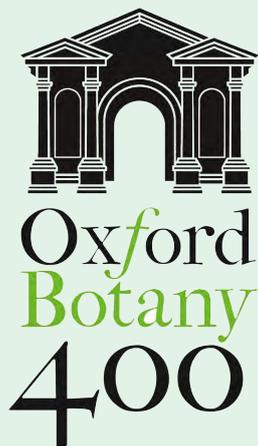
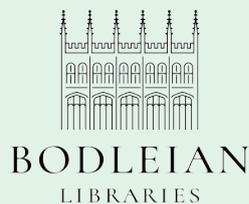


INTO THE GREEN

POETRY PROJECT

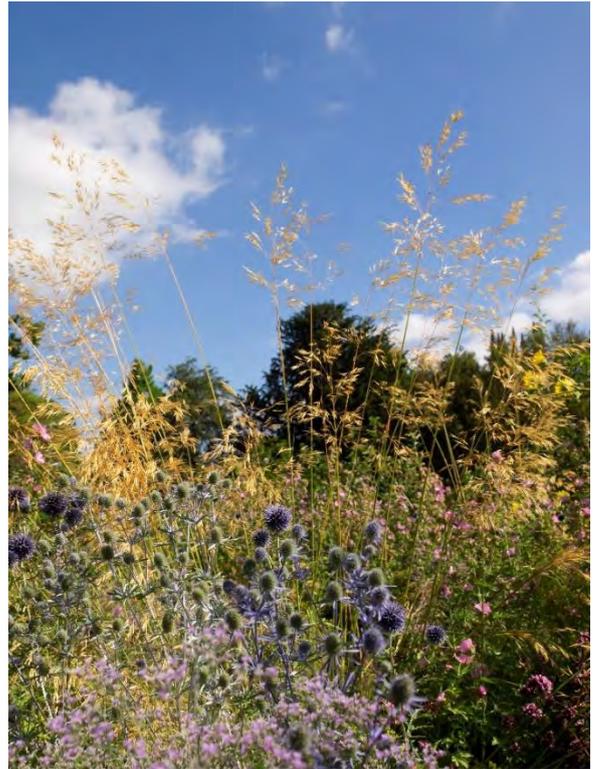


PROJECT PACK

Into the *Green* Poetry Project

The Oxford Botanic Gardens is celebrating its 400th Birthday in 2021. The *Into the Green* poetry project is an exciting opportunity to mark this important anniversary. It is being run jointly by the Botanic Garden and the Bodleian Libraries, who are hosting an exhibition called *Roots to Seeds* which explores 400 years of plant science in Oxford.

We are inviting children and young people aged 11-16 to submit their poems. Poems will be read by award-winning Oxford Professor of Poetry Alice Oswald and will be collected into a virtual anthology. A selection will be reproduced in a booklet to be produced as part of the 400th anniversary celebrations. Selected poems will also be displayed to visitors to the Weston Library and Oxford Botanic Garden.



We hope this resource pack will inspire young poets and provide some guidance on writing their poem. Don't forget to read the guidelines on page 3 before submitting your poem.



Foreword from Alice Oswald
Professor of Poetry, University of Oxford

Kaspar Hauser was a teenager discovered wandering the streets of Nuremberg in 1828. He was aged about 16 and had been kept in a cellar all his life. When he revealed that he thought Nature was man-made, his teacher asked him to sow flower seeds in the shape of his name. The flowers appeared and Kaspar was astonished, because he realised at last what it meant to be alive.

This true story reminds me what a miracle a garden is and I hope it might encourage you to join our celebration of the Botanic Garden by writing a poem about gardens or humans or plants or seeds or smells or indeed anything that grows.

I am a poet who trained as a gardener and I look forward to reading what you write and making a selection for publication. Good luck!

Guidelines

Your poem must follow these guidelines:

1. You must be aged between 11 and 16 years old.
2. You may only enter one poem.
3. Your poem should be a maximum of 200 words and fit onto one A4 page.
4. You must submit it in one of the following electronic formats
 - Text file (.txt)
 - Rich Text Format text file (.rtf)
 - Word document (.doc or .docx file)
 - JPEG image (.jpg file)
5. Send your poem to this email address: education@bodleian.ox.ac.uk with **Into the Green** in the subject heading.
6. We must receive it by the deadline of **1 July 2021**.

Make sure you have the permission of a parent or guardian before submitting your poem.

You will remain the copyright holder of your poem but by sending it to *Into the Green* you agree that the University of Oxford may use it freely in printed and electronic displays, educational resources, and promotional publications linked to the *Into the Green* poetry project, *Roots to Seeds* exhibition, and 400th Anniversary of the Oxford Botanic Garden.



Writing your Poem

The theme of your poem should be *Into the Green* and your focus should be on plants. There are many different ways you could interpret the theme, and lots of ways in which plants might inspire you.

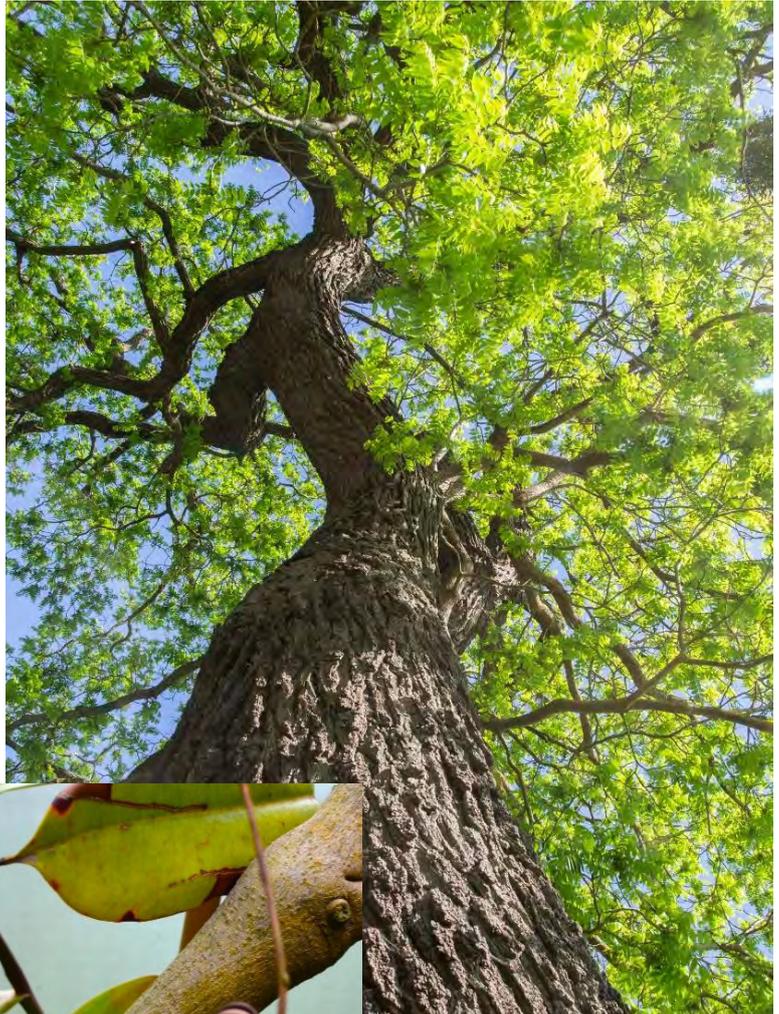
Your poem will be your own unique creation. What you write and how you write it is entirely up to you, but we have provided some tips on the following pages that we hope will inspire you.

Think about plants

Your focus should be on plants, but could be on any aspect you like. Your poem might be about an individual plant, or even just a part of a plant, such as a flower or leaf.

Alternatively, it could be about a garden, a window box, or a park. You might be inspired by a particular green space, which could be cultivated or wild.

Your poem might be about the importance of plants in the natural world, or about nature in a wider sense.



What is this life
if, full of care,
We have no time to
stand and stare

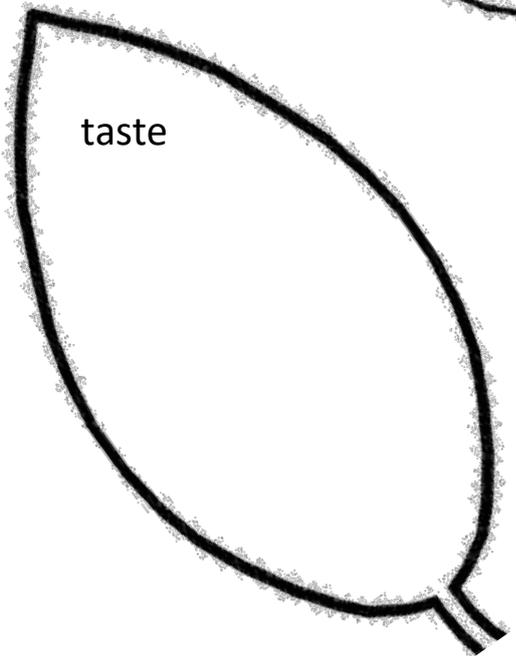
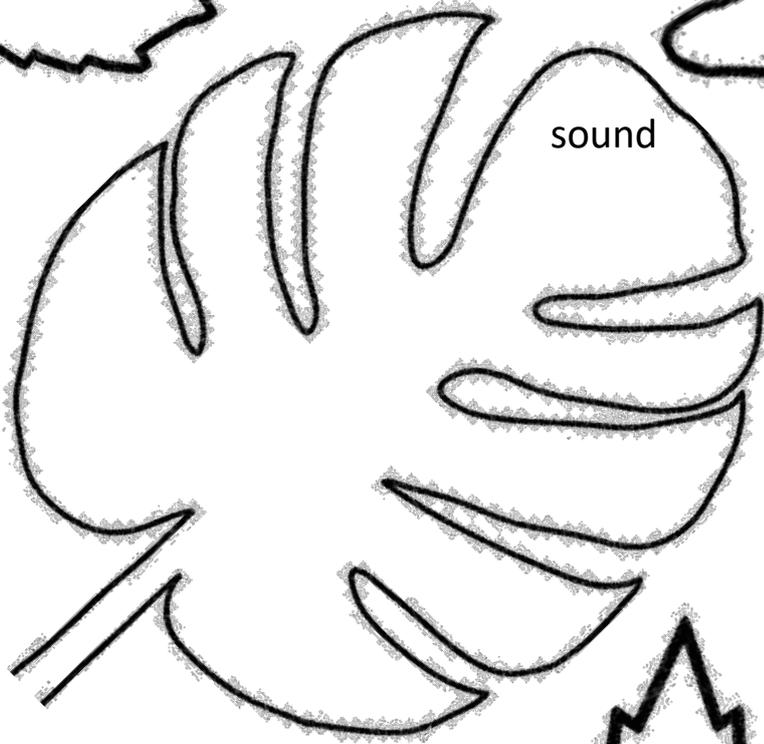
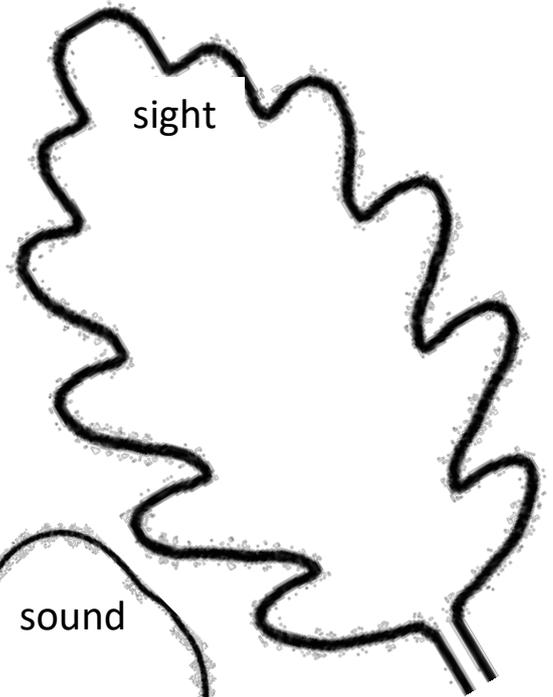
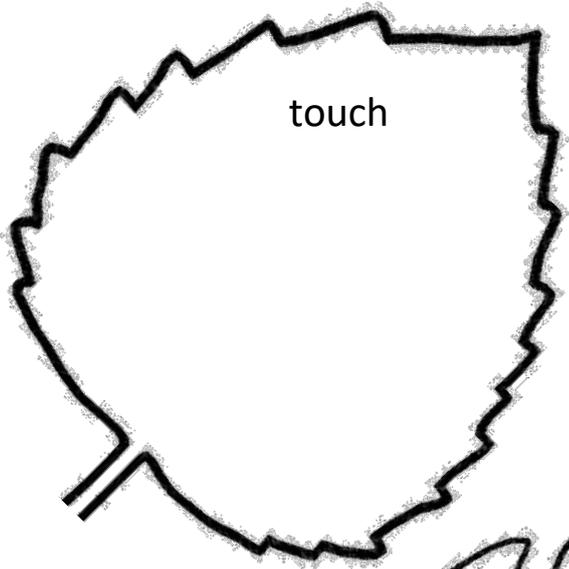
From *Leisure* by W.H. Davies

Read the full poem at:

yourdaily-poem.com

Use your senses

Consider what you perceive with each of your senses. Your first response to *Into the green* might be an image or a feeling, but think about what you perceive with all of your senses. You could describe it here.



Use comparison and metaphor

The following are just suggestions, but you might find it helpful to think about what your subject would be by comparing it to something else. For example, what would your subject be if it was:

- a season of the year?
- an animal?
- a colour?
- a song or piece of music?
- a piece of furniture?
- an item of clothing?

You might want to have a go with the grass in this picture:

If it were...	It would be...
A season	
An animal	
A colour	
A song	
Furniture	
Clothing	



Now try it with the subject of your poem. If you don't want to use our suggestions of comparisons, feel free to think of some of your own; it's your poem.

**The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;**

From *The Trees* by Philip Larkin.

Read or listen to this poem at The Poetry Archive: poetryarchive.org/poem/trees

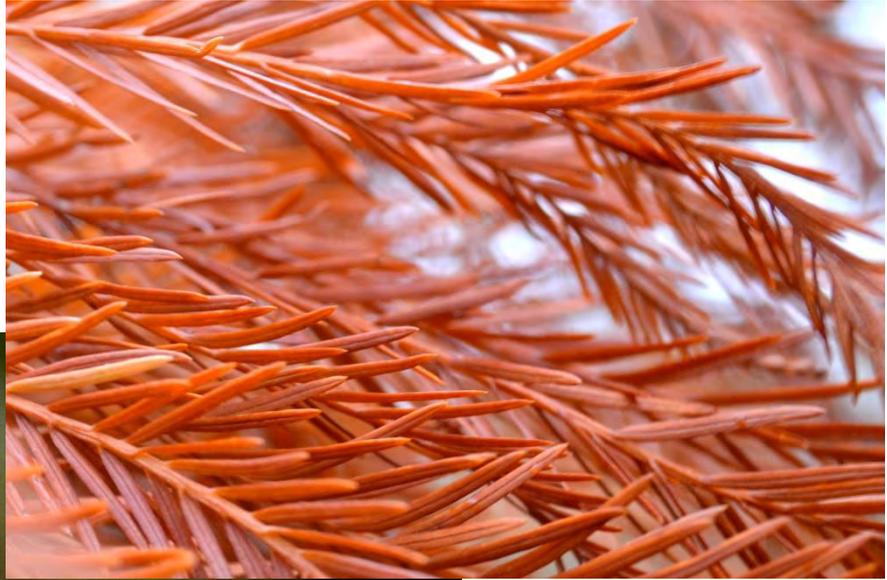
You can build some of these comparisons into your poem as metaphors: figures of speech that aren't literally true but are symbolic. For example, we might describe a lawn as a "carpet of grass". We don't mean that it *is* a carpet (unless you do have grass on the floor inside your home!); we are making a comparison.

Metaphors are useful in poetry to help convey thoughts, ideas and feelings to your readers.

Extraordinary or commonplace?

You might choose something extraordinary as the subject of your poem, perhaps a rare plant or one with unusual or surprising features.

On the other hand, when we take the time to look closely, we can often find the amazing in the most commonplace of things.



Try really observing the leaf of a plant for example. It might be green, but what shade of green? What is the texture? Does it have a scent?

You could try the same for a whole plant, a garden or another green space.

Within the flower
 there lies a seed,
Within the seed
 there springs a tree,
Within the tree
 there spreads a wood.

From *Spell of Creation* by Kathleen Raine
Read the full poem at: poemhunter.com

Plants and people

You might want to consider how and why plants are important to you, or to people in general. There are several things you could think about.



- A particular plant or green space that's important to you.
- The value of green spaces to your family or community.
- Plants that produce seeds or fruits which are foods.
- Plants that are used to make medicines.
- The contribution of plants to our physical or mental health and wellbeing.

Between forest and field, a threshold
Like stepping from a cathedral into the street

From *Crossings* by Ravi Shankar.

Read the full poem at <https://poets.org/poem/crossings>



Rhyme?

A poem doesn't have to rhyme, but it can if you want it to. If you do decide to use rhyme, think about what it is contributing to your poem and what it helps communicate about your subject.

Loveliest of tress, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,

From *Loveliest of Trees* by A.E. Houseman

Read the full poem at <https://poets.org/poem/loveliest-trees>

Try reading your poem out loud. How does it sound? Do the words, phrases, rhythm and rhyme you have used help to express what you wanted?

Take a virtual tour

For more inspiration, you can roam the Oxford Botanic Gardens and Arboretum on a virtual visit with Google Street View: <https://www.obga.ox.ac.uk/virtual-visit>



Photographic credits: © 2021, Oxford Botanic Gardens & Arboretum