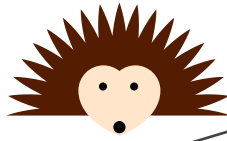This activity facilitates consolidation of the following school curriculum subjects: Maths & Science

Try these methods to calculate the approximate age of a tree...

Resources

Measuring tape
A calculator

Growth Rings

- You can work out the age a tree by counting its rings of growth. But that's not very easy unless it has been cut down!

The Science bit...

- Each year, as a tree grows, a layer of new cells under the bark, (the cambium) forms a new concentric ring, adding a layer of growth between the older wood on the inside and the bark on the outside.
- These annual rings show the amount of wood produced during one growing season. They can also give an indication of temperature, moisture and cloudiness.
- Dendrochronology is the scientific method of dating and studying climate change based on the analysis of patterns of tree growth rings.

Measuring

- Another way of working out the approximate age of a tree can be estimated from the girth (circumference) of the trunk at 1.5m above the ground.
- Although each tree grows at a slightly different rate (just like us), on average the new growth on its girth is 2.5cm per year.

Method

- Measure the circumference of a tree with a measuring tape.
- Divide the tree girth (in cm) by 2.5. This will give the tree's approximate age in years.

Challenges

- Can you work out the approximate age of a tree in your garden?
- Can you find a tree in your garden/ local park that is the same age as you?
- Which tree in your garden/ local park do you think is the oldest/ youngest?
- Please respect the government guidance on social distancing/ isolation during the COVID19 outbreak. https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus