

Nova's Autumn Discovery

Learning objective: To understand the seasonal changes in plants and animals during autumn.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below using full sentences.

As the air turns crisp, Nova the barn owl watches the forest transform. Autumn, or the autumn equinox, marks the transition from summer to winter. The most striking change is the colour of the leaves. During summer, leaves are packed with chlorophyll, a green pigment that helps plants create energy through photosynthesis. As daylight hours shorten and temperatures drop, trees stop producing chlorophyll. This reveals hidden pigments like yellow and orange, which were masked all summer.

Many deciduous trees prepare for winter by shedding their leaves to conserve water and energy. Meanwhile, the forest floor becomes busy. Bea the honeybee has slowed down, retreating to her hive, while other creatures prepare for winter in different ways. Some animals, like hedgehogs, enter a state of torpor to survive the cold, while many birds begin their long migration to warmer climates. Nova observes that nature is not dying, but simply entering a period of rest. By recycling fallen leaves into the soil, trees ensure they have the nutrients needed to sprout new life when the spring sunshine finally returns to the canopy.

Word bank: deciduous · chlorophyll · dormant · migration · photosynthesis

1. Why do leaves change colour from green to yellow or orange during autumn? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what are two different ways animals respond to the arrival of winter? (2 marks)

3. Why is it beneficial for deciduous trees to shed their leaves before winter arrives? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, why does Nova believe nature is 'resting' rather than dying? (2 marks)

5. Do you think autumn is the most important season for the survival of the forest? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a forest scene showing a deciduous tree with half its leaves green and half orange, including a small hedgehog hiding in a pile of fallen leaves.



Extension challenge: Research one animal that migrates and one animal that hibernates in the UK. Create a fact file explaining why they choose these methods to survive the winter.