



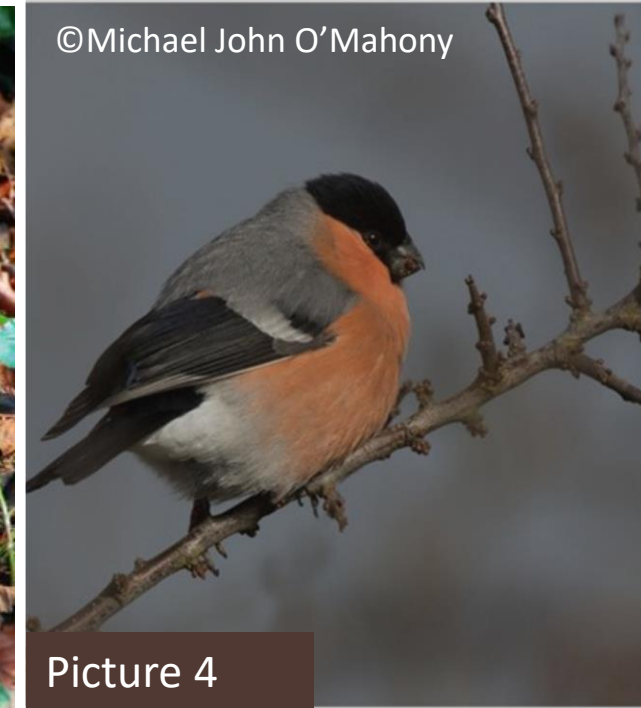
Picture 1



Picture 2

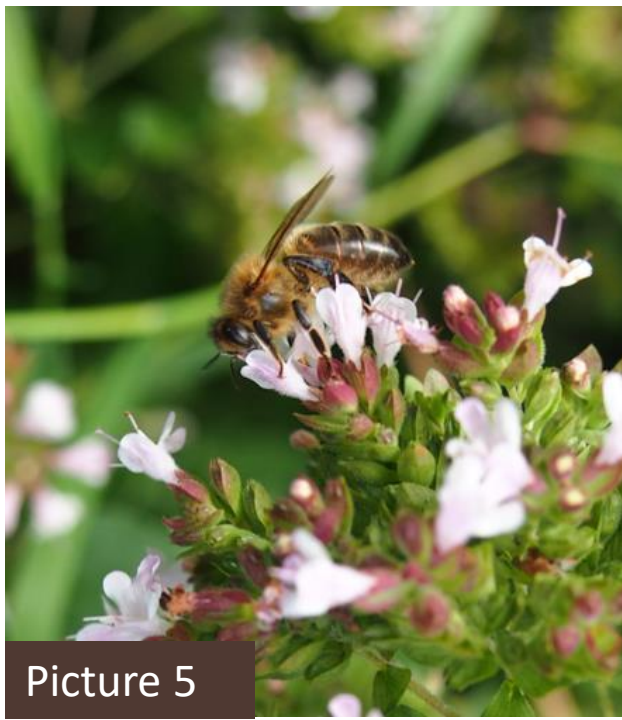


Picture 3

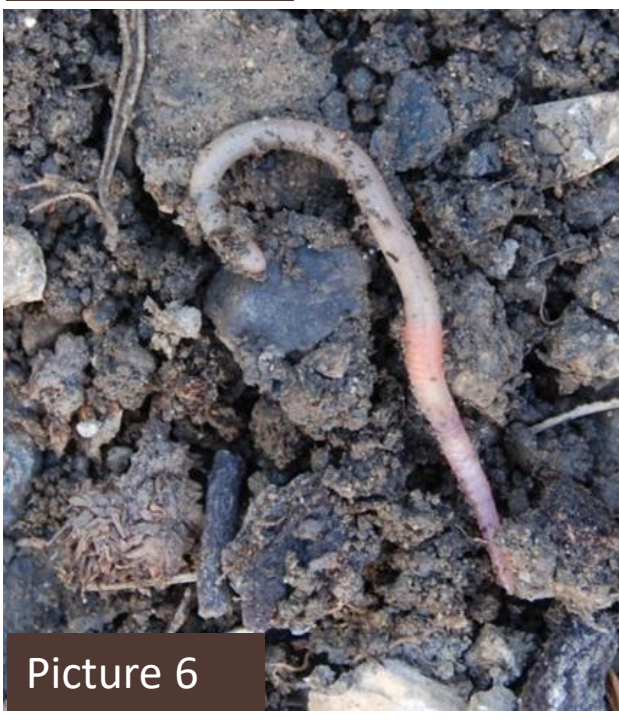


Picture 4

©Michael John O'Mahony



Picture 5



Picture 6

Can you name these Irish Plants and Animals?

• Picture 1

• Picture 2

• Picture 3

• Picture 4

• Picture 5

• Picture 6

Bramble

Common Name: Bramble or Blackberry

Irish Name: Dris

Scientific Name: *Rubus fruticosus*



Description

Bramble stems grow in the shape of arches and are covered with sharp thorns. They can create a new root into the ground when they touch it. Flowers are pink or white. The leaves have three or five lobes. They produce blackberries.

Habitat found

Bramble typically forms a large part of our hedgerows in Ireland. It reclaims disused land, laneways and ditches. It can be found anywhere really; fields, woodlands, gardens and on the side of the road.



Be Careful....

- ✋ Do not touch the thorns; they can cause an infection if they stick in your skin; maybe wear gloves if you go blackberry-picking!
- ✋ Also the juice from the fruit is a strong dye so don't get it on your clothes!

Bramble 'dies back' to sleep during the winter. This helps save energy when there is not enough sunshine.

Growth begins in Spring when the sun starts to shine again. Brambles, like most plants, get their energy from the sun!

Blackberries are eaten by many birds and mammals, thereby helping to spread the plant's tiny seeds (that are hidden inside the berries) in Autumn.

Fruit starts to form from late summer through to September.

Life Cycle

Flowers grow from May to September.

Once a flower gets pollen from another bramble flower, it will start to produce fruit.



Fun Facts!

Blackberries are delicious, and are packed full of Vitamin C! The plant also provides a really important source of nectar (a sugary drink found inside the flowers) for bees and other hungry pollinators.

Flower: May – September

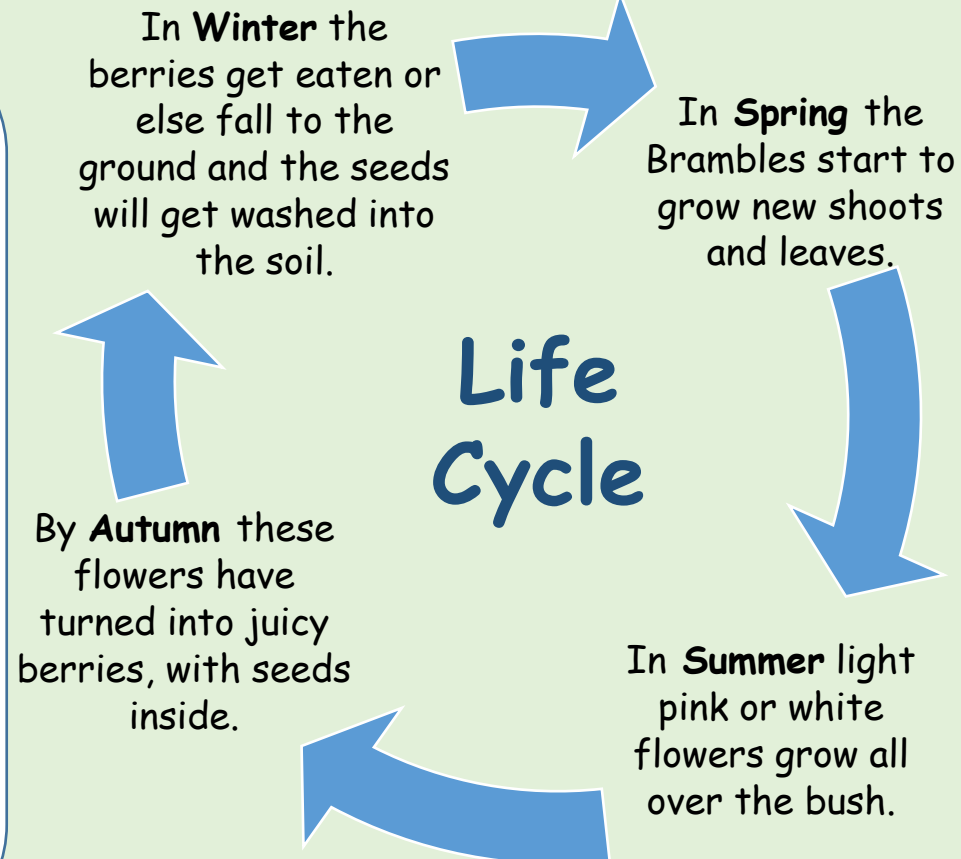
Fruit: August - October



Bramble

Draw a Bramble bush:

Draw a bird eating Blackberries from the Bramble in Autumn:



Dandelion

Common Name: Dandelion

Irish Name: Caisearbhán

Scientific Name: *Taraxacum vulgaria*



Description

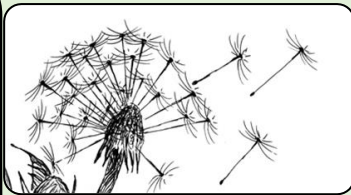
Dandelion is a common plant with bright yellow flowers and with hollow stems full of sticky white sap. The flower heads are 2-5cm across. Once they have received pollen from their own or another dandelion flower, they produce seeds, and thus change into a 'Dandelion Clock'; these are spheres of mini-parachutes, each one attached to a tiny seed. The leaves are long and narrow and have a distinctive jagged edged pattern.

Habitat found

Dandelions are very common in any grassland area; you can find them on roadsides and grassy wasteland, fields, lawns and greens.



The Dandelion is a pretty clever plant! Its mini-parachutes are perfectly designed to carry seeds away on the wind. This means baby plants, that grow from the seeds, will not be growing in the shadow of their parent!



Flower: March – October

Fruit: April – October

In Autumn the Dandelions stop growing, and take a break to rest for Winter.

Dandelions start to grow again once the weather begins to get warm in Spring.

Dandelion Clocks can be seen from Spring through to Autumn.

Life Cycle

The Dandelion produces flowers from March to October

Bees and flies visit the flowers to drink the sweet nectar from the middle of the flower.

Pollen from other flowers rubs off these visiting insects and onto the Dandelion. The pollen then gets absorbed.

Pollen that is absorbed creates new seeds. A group of these new seeds is a 'Dandelion Clock'.



Fun Facts!

The leaves of the Dandelion are responsible for the flower's common name which comes from '*Dents de lion*' meaning 'Lion's teeth' in French.



Dandelion

Draw a Dandelion Leaf:

Draw the "Dandelion Clock":

The seeds rest
on the soil
during **Winter**.

In **Spring** the old
plants grow again,
and the new seeds
start to grow into
new Dandelions.

Life Cycle

By **Autumn** the
flowers have turned
into fluffy seeds. The
seeds look like tiny
parachutes and
altogether are called
a 'Dandelion Clock'.

The Dandelion
grows flowers all
Summer.

Draw the bright yellow Summer flowers:

Blackbird

Common Name: Blackbird

Irish Name: Lon Dubh

Scientific Name: *Turdus merula*



Description

Male or 'daddy' blackbirds are black, and female 'mammy' blackbirds are in fact brown! The males have a bright yellow beak and a ring around the eye. Their song sounds a bit like a flute and travels far in the air.

Habitat found

Blackbirds are found almost everywhere in Ireland; you'll see them in gardens and countryside and from coasts to hills, although not on the highest peaks! They eat insects, especially earthworms, but they also enjoy berries and other fruit including apples. If you leave apples out in winter they will definitely come to your bird table!



Female/Mammy

A blackbird's nest is cup-shaped and is made of grass, straw and small twigs. It is plastered inside with mud and lined with fine grass. It can take two weeks to complete! The eggs that are laid are a beautiful blue green colour!



Image by Dennis@Stromness via Flickr.com

Their parents will probably raise two more broods (small families) of chicks in the same year, before spending the winter, each on their own again.

Blackbirds build their nests early in Spring – usually in March. The nest, built by the female, is low down in any suitable hidden place such as a hedge.

The mammy normally lays 3-5 eggs in a clutch. She incubates them (keeps them warm) on her own. The male will bring her food so she doesn't get hungry.



Male/Daddy

Life Cycle

As the chicks learn what to eat, and how to find it, they begin to explore further away, and become totally independent just three weeks after leaving the nest!

The chicks are ready to fledge after another 13-14 days, but if the nest is disturbed, they can leave and survive as early as nine days old.

The chicks hatch 13-14 days later. Both parents feed the chicks.

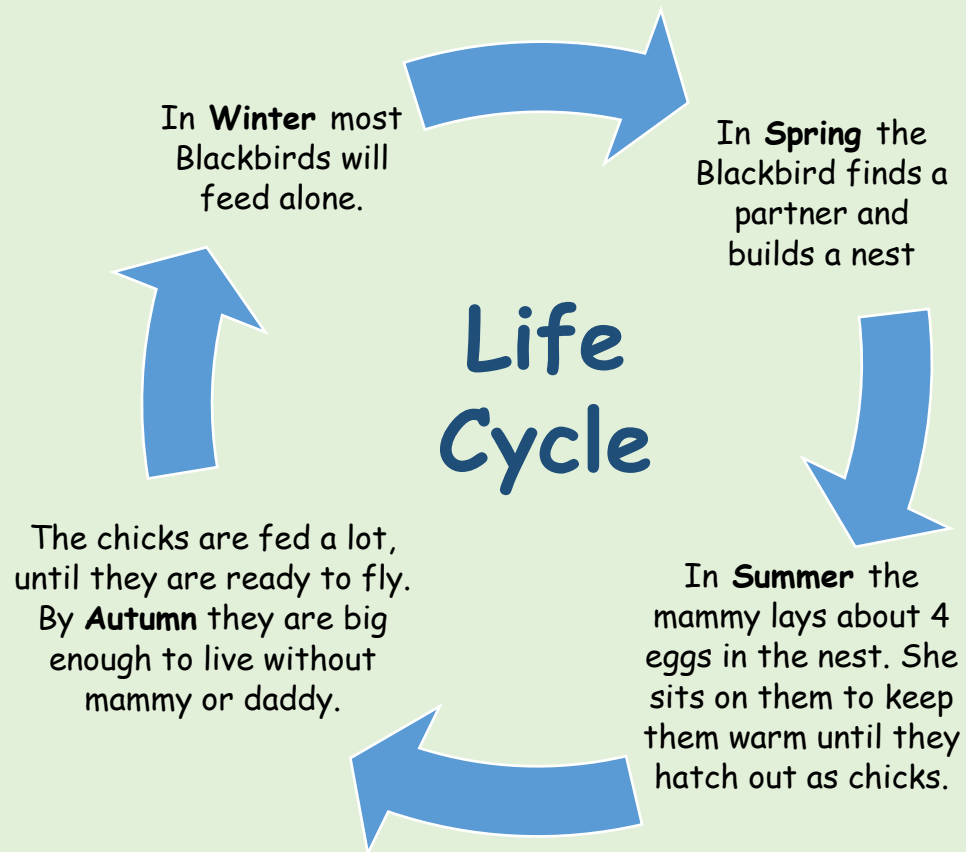
Fun Facts!

Blackbird chicks in gardens are usually fed earthworms; woodland chicks are fed mainly caterpillars. Why do you think that is? Do you think the garden chicks are just fussy eaters? 😊



Blackbird

Draw the mammy and daddy Blackbird at their nest:



Bullfinch

Common Name: Bullfinch

Irish Name: Corcrán coille

Scientific Name: *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

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Description

Bullfinches are 15cm long from beak to tail. Their thick, stubby black beak is the perfect tool for nibbling flower buds off trees and for crushing seeds. Males have a dark black cap, face, wings and tail, a pale bar on each wing, and striking white rump patch. They also have a grey back and beautiful reddish-rose breast and belly. Females are similar except that their breast and belly are more grey-brown than red.

Habitat found

Bullfinches are common and breed throughout Ireland, usually in hedgerows and deciduous woodland. They visit gardens regularly. They feed mainly on the buds of native trees (e.g. Oak and hawthorn), as well as seeds and berries such as bramble and dandelion.



Female (mammy)

Paired birds often stay together over the winter, and will be partners again the following year.

Bullfinches find a partner in the Spring time.

Most pairs will try to raise two or three families or 'broods' every summer.

The mammy or 'female' lays the first clutch of blue spotted eggs in the middle of May.

4-5 turquoise eggs with brown spots, are normally laid per brood, and are kept warm or 'incubated' by the female.



Male (daddy)

Life Cycle

The parents teach the young chicks how to collect food in the garden or woodlands for a few more days.

Chicks leave the nest or 'fledge' at around 16 days old.

Two weeks later, chicks hatch and are fed by both their parents until they are strong enough to leave the nest



Image by Mark Hope via Flickr.com

Fun Facts!

The name 'bullfinch' comes from the bird's front heavy, bull-headed appearance. Bullfinches were once popular cage birds because they can be taught to imitate flutes.



Bullfinch

Draw the Mammy and Daddy Bullfinch building a nest in a bush:

In **Winter** all the birds will leave the nest area. The Mammy and Daddy will stay together. The other birds will live on their own.

In **Spring** young Bullfinches find a new partner. All partners try to find a nice place to build a nest.

Baby birds will hatch from the eggs, and Mammy and Daddy will feed them until they can fly away. The Mammy and Daddy might have another family before the **Autumn**.

In **Summer** the mammy bird will make a nest in a bush and she will lay about 4 eggs.

Life Cycle

Honey Bee

Common Name: Honey Bee

Irish Name: An Beach mheala

Scientific Name: *Apis mellifera*



Description

There are three types or 'castes' of bee within a hive; 'queen' (female), 'worker' (female) and 'drone' (male). They are all similar in appearance; they have a body covered in short hairs, and divided into three main parts; head, thorax and abdomen. They have two large eyes and a pair of antennae on the head. There are 2 sets of wings above, and three pairs of legs below the abdomen, and there is a narrow waist between the abdomen and the thorax. The queen has a longer and more slender abdomen than the others.

Habitat found

Bees can be found feeding in most rural and urban habitats in Ireland; you are likely to see bees anywhere there is flowers that produce nectar. For example bees feed on clover, hawthorn, ivy, dandelions, bramble and many other common native plants. You are likely to find bees feeding on flowers in gardens, parks and hedgerows.

WARNING: Never touch a honey bee, or go near a beehive, without permission! If a female bee gets a fright, she will protect herself by using her (very painful) sting! Ouch!



The new queen returns, having mated with a male from a different colony, to the hive. She is the new Queen Bee! The colony will live in the hive from **Autumn** through **Winter**, surviving off the summer's honey.

Honey bees live in a home called 'a hive'. In Spring they emerge from the hive and start looking for food.

A new queen that hatches leaves the hive on her "marriage flight". When she is gone, the old queen with a large group of her workers leaves the nest as a swarm and looks for somewhere else to live.

Life Cycle

Spring to Summer the Queen Bee's eggs turn into female worker bees. Young bees are fed by these workers; their big sisters! Workers also gather pollen on their specially designed back legs.

When the hive gets too full of bees in **Summer** the workers build bigger cells for the queen to lay in. The eggs that she lays there, are fed for longer and grow to become a new queen (some males are also produced then).

Honey has to be manufactured in the hive from nectar, which is brought back by other bees. Adult bees only eat honey.



The honey bee is one of the best known insects in Ireland. It has a very important role in pollinating flowering plants such as Dandelion and Bramble.

Fun Facts!

Honey Bees do not hibernate, instead during cold weather they live indoors in their hive, with thousands of their sisters and brothers, and their mother of course! They all eat up the honey that they had collected earlier in the year!



Honey Bee

Draw a Honeybee visiting flowers:

Draw the inside of a hive:

In **Winter** all the bees take a rest, and stay in the hive, out of the cold weather. They can now eat the honey that they have collected all summer!

By **Spring** the bees have eaten all the honey in the hive. They must visit flowers to collect nectar to make new honey.

Before **Autumn** the Queen will lay eggs that will turn into boy bees and new Queen Bees. A new Queen Bee will take over the hive.

In **Summer** the Queen lays lots of eggs that make girl bees! These bees all work hard to collect nectar.

Life Cycle

Earthworm

Common Name: Common Earthworm

Irish Name: Péist talún

Scientific Name: *Lumbricus terrestris*



Description

The common earthworm is up to 30 cm long and is pink in colour. Its body is composed of up to 150 segments. There are stiff hairs 'chaetae' on the underside of its body which help it move. They have no eyes!

Habitat found

Earthworms live in soil and feed on dead plant material. They can be found in soil in gardens, woodlands, in fields and other grasslands. They are really important to farmers and gardeners as they recycle dead plants by digesting it and returning the nutrients back into the soil in a way that can be used up by growing plants, such as bramble.



Earthworms will lay eggs many times throughout the warmer part of the year; Spring to Autumn.

As Earthworms move through the soil, they form small tunnels which then allows air and water to move easily through the soil afterwards. They also add to its fertility with their 'worm casts'. This is great for all plants!

In winter, when it is cold, earthworms burrow deep into the ground and become totally inactive or 'dormant'

Once the weather begins to heat up in Spring, worms become active again.

When they are active they move through the soil, and eat it as they go. As soil passes through their body they take in or 'digest' all the good bits in it. The other bits that are not taken in are left as a 'worm cast' or worm poop!

On warm nights worms will come up to the surface of the soil to find a partner, with which to make a family.

Like snails and slugs, Earthworms have both male and female parts in their body. Therefore after they've found a partner every worm will lay eggs!

Life Cycle



Fun Facts!

Worms sometimes come to the top of the ground to look for extra tasty food, such as fallen leaves in Autumn. When its there it will try to keep its tail inside its burrow so that it can escape quickly if danger threatens; birds such as thrushes and blackbirds think that earthworms are delicious!! Do you think thrushes and blackbirds are crazy!?



Earthworm

Draw an Earthworm in the soil:

