



Extension Brown Bag Grab & Go Kit

Fall 2023

Hi! We're back with your Quarterly Extension Brown Grab and Go Kit! This month let's focus on FALL and explore a few topics to help you connect in and discover more!

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DeSoto County Extension Office
DeSoto County 4-H

-Fall into Health

-Trees

-What is 4-H?

-Bats

Throughout this PDF version you will notice words in **bold and underline**. Click those words to be taken to more information on the given topic. If you have trouble contact our office by calling 662-469-8480 or to request a printed copy.

Check back with us to continue learning with us!

Thank you!

Extension Agents

P.S. Find us on Facebook, Instagram & YouTube!

Handwritten signatures of extension agents: Lara Angel, Jessica D. Sibbey, Laura Angelin, and another signature.

Please scan this QR Code to let us know if you participated in this kit.



Fall into Health

It's Fall in Mississippi! Fall is a great time to get up and go outside to enjoy the cooler weather, less humid days and all things FALL brings to Mississippi like the beautiful leaves. Generally as the weather shifts to Fall individuals can handle getting outside more because the extreme Summer heat has vacated. Trees are starting to drop their leaves, birds and butterflies are migrating South, other wildlife animals are moving too, and kids can once again enjoy the outside playing without getting scorched. Join the fun!

Check out these ideas for you to enjoy during the Fall this year:

- Set a goal to achieve this Fall
- Try a new FALL vegetable or fruit
- Use this [map](#) to discover a park or trail in DeSoto County
- Track your steps (using a pedometer, smart watch, fitness tracker or fitness app)
- If you're ambitious and have outdoor space plant a fall garden! We have tons of gardening resources at the Extension Office. Reach out if you have questions or need info on gardening
- Try yoga
- Play Fall BINGO (see the next page for game board)
- Drink more water
- Be physically active
- Cleanup your yard
- Eat breakfast
- Take a family walk
- Enjoy a bike ride
- Stop and smell the flowers
- Play a sport
- Go to an apple orchard or pumpkin patch
- Breathe and rid yourself of stress
- Discover a new passion
- Reach out to someone that you haven't recently spoken to reconnect with an old friend
- Get a flu shot
- Take some time to yourself and do something you enjoy
- Get yourself ready for Daylight Savings Time by going to bed earlier when you can
- Prepare your home for winter
- Be kind to yourself and give yourself grace

Fall BINGO

Here are fun ways to keep moving this FALL! See how many BINGO squares you can check off.

B	I	N	G	O
Go to a pumpkin patch	Take a trip to the farmer's market	Hike in the fall foliage 	Collect colorful leaves	Warm up with a bowl of soup 
Make a maze in the leaves 	Choose the stairs instead of the elevator	Try a new type of winter squash	Roast pumpkin seeds 	Take an evening walk
Attend a fall festival	Play hide and seek	Free Space	Plant bulbs for spring	Go for a morning bike ride 
Have a fall picnic	Rake leaves 	Try a new fall recipe	Taste different varieties of apples	Unplug from technology for the day
Jump Rope 	Play an active video game	Play catch outside	Carve pumpkins 	Create an outdoor obstacle course

Source: <https://food.unl.edu/>

If you are looking for a location to do some of these BINGO activities find a local park in DeSoto County to get moving this FALL! Click on this [MAP](#) from the DeSoto County Government! This is an interactive map of locations throughout the county the GIS department has an awesome map, so you can locate one close to your home! Visit <https://bit.ly/3aj4A8b>



TREES



Are you a homeowner with a tree? There are some terrific options when deciding what to plant in the home landscape here in Mississippi. We have Extension Agents who can offer practical advice about what, where, and when to plant for the best effect and greatest chance of success. We also have a wealth of info on proper pruning, how to handle storm damage, and dealing with pests and diseases. Let us know how we can serve you by calling us with your tree question! Call us at 662-469-8480 or email desoto@ext.msstate.edu

Here are some common questions we get:

Question

When is the best time to plant a tree?

Answer

After the first frost in Fall and before the last freeze in the Spring. Read more [here](#) from the International Society of Arboriculture

Question

When do I prune my tree?

Answer

This depends on the type of tree! The Mississippi Forestry Commission recommends that when a pruning job is done you should be considering the type of plant, its condition and the desired results you want. They say light pruning should be done almost anytime, as well as removal of dead, broken, weak or heavily shaded branches. Early spring pruning allows the tree to focus its nutrients on the remaining portions of the tree and cuts callus over more rapidly. However, sprouting may be more of a problem at this time. Pruning to slow plant development is best done after the initial growing season but before the tree begins to store nutrients for the next seasons growth. In Mississippi, this would be about mid-summer. Fall pruning is most hazardous because it is at this time that decay-causing fungi are sending spores into the air and the tree has less time to callus over and prevent infection. Winter pruning usually has the least damaging effect on the tree physiologically and gives the cut an entire growing season to callus over. However, extremely cold temperatures may be damaging to the exposed wood.

Question

What is the web in my tree?

Answer

In the Fall you will find **Fall Webworms** and in the Spring you will see **Eastern Tent Caterpillars**. Click on bolded and underlined word to see more information on these topics.

Question

How to plant a tree?

Answer

Read this blog post [here](#) on how to plant a tree.

Question

Why do leaves change color?

Answer

Fall brings shorter days and cooler weather, which brings this food-making process to a halt. The green chlorophyll breaks down, and golden-colored leaves begin to appear instead. Other chemical changes may occur, which result in different leaf colors like orange, red, and even deep purple. Read more [here](#) on why leaves change color.



What is 4-H!



PURPOSE

The purpose of 4-H is to help young people become productive citizens by instructing them in useful skills, community service, and personal development.

FACTS

National organization that believes in young people

Encourages youth to "learn by doing"

Brought to you by County Extension Services through land grant universities

Available to youth ages 8-18

BENEFITS

- All beliefs & backgrounds are accepted
- Encourages youth to take on leadership roles
- Pushes youth out of their comfort zone and into new experiences that they can excel at
- Gives youth a voice to express who they truly are
- Provides opportunities for youth to improve their lives and their communities.

GOAL

The goal of 4-H is to develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility and life skills of youth through experiential learning programs and a positive youth development approach.

How do I get involved?

1. FALL is the perfect time of year to enroll into our DeSoto County 4-H program. Our "year" runs October to September.
2. Complete a **4-H Enrollment form** for each youth in your household.
3. Return completed form to the DeSoto County Extension Office via email desoto@ext.msstate.edu or mail or dropping off at our office 3260 Hwy 51 S. Hernando, MS 38632
4. Attend one of 4-H event(s) or activities that interest you! We have activities from livestock project, pet care, rabbits, cooking, sewing, robotics, shooting sports, fishing, and more!

FYI the information on the following pages in on "Bats, Bats and MORE Bats". This is a 4-H Activity, but is also great info for ALL!

Bats!

In the Fall some celebrate Halloween. Do bats make you think of Halloween? They may look spooky to some, but they actually perform critical tasks in the environment that help humans all year long!

The 1,400 species that are spread across six different continents serve an important purpose in our ecosystem. They pollinate plants, distribute seeds, and control insect pests, including mosquitoes. Fifteen different species of these small mammals live in Mississippi.

We sometimes get the question, “Do Bats Help Control Mosquitoes?” The answer is that scientists know bats eat mosquitoes but that insect makes up only part of their diet!

Pest consumption is one of the many ecosystem services bats perform. Most insect-eating bats can consume up to 50 percent of their weight in insects each night. A pregnant or nursing bat can eat up to 100 percent of her body weight each night.

Sometimes bats find their way into houses and other structures. Bats can accidentally fly into an open door or window or squeeze through a small opening to get into an attic or wall void. However, you should never handle a bat. Like other wildlife, bats can carry diseases that could make humans sick.

If a bat accidentally enters a home or business, simply open exterior doors and windows to allow the bat to escape. If the bat doesn't leave or if you encounter a bat in one of the other scenarios, contact the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks for guidance. Again, do not handle the bat yourself under any circumstances!

Some bats are protected by federal law because of the role they play in our ecosystem and their declining numbers. Mishandling or killing certain bat species is punishable by law.

For further reading visit our website to learn about how **Bats Enjoy the Night Life in Mississippi** and the threat of **White Nose Syndrome**. Click on bolded words for an Extension Publication.

Or continue reading on the following pages for great info on BATS from our friends at “4-H At Home Activities”.



BATS, BATS, AND MORE BATS

OVER 1,300 SPECIES

Bats are shy, gentle creatures, and are the only mammals that can fly. As mammals, they are warm-blooded, and generally have one baby, or pup, per year. The newborn pup is remarkably large at birth – almost a third the size of its mother. Imagine if human babies were born a third the size of their moms! The pup clings to its mother's fur, and nurses milk for a couple months, tucked near the mother's armpit for warmth and safety.

BATS AS POLLINATORS

Bats are nocturnal, which means they are awake and active during the night. They feed on bugs, fruit, frogs, fish and nectar from flowers. Nectar-feeding bats fly to a flower and use their long snouts and tongues to dip in and out of the flowers, while their powerful wings keep them hovering in mid-air. There are tiny hairs on their tongues that serve as miniature spoons to scoop and drag up the delicious sap. While they eat this tasty nectar, some pollen gets on their fur and transfers to other flowers as they make their feeding rounds. That transfer of pollen from one flower to another helps flowers reproduce, and is what makes bats such important pollinators. This is what's called a symbiotic relationship, which is when both organisms benefit.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are three kinds of vampire bats. As their name suggests, these are bats that drink animal blood. They live in Central and South America, as well as in the Amazon Rainforest. One species only feeds on birds, while the others drink blood from sleeping or wounded animals such as wildlife, cattle or horses. They seldom suck it out, but instead they use their tongues to lap it up. They rarely drink human blood, and this has only been reported to occur in the Amazon. In fact, bats generally fear humans and avoid them as much as possible.



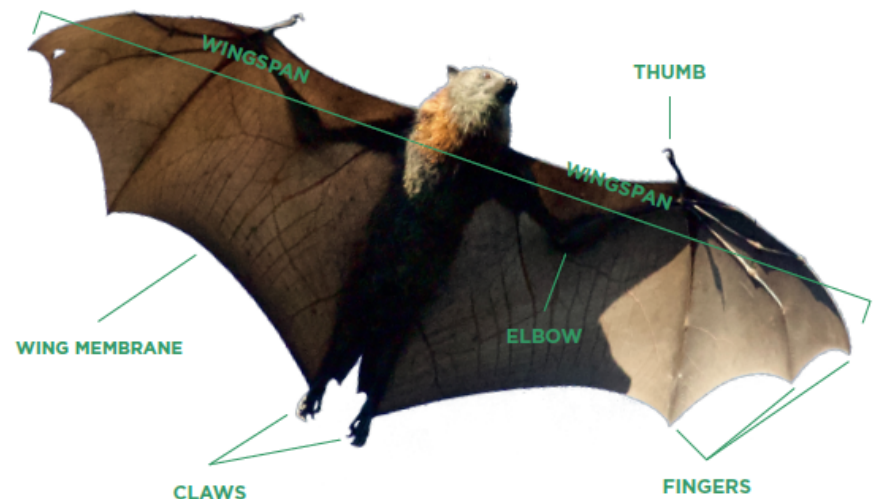
ANATOMY OF A BAT



PARTS OF THE BAT

A bat's wings are like its hands, with four long fingers and a thumb. The wing membrane, a thin layer of skin, spreads between each finger. Bats produce high-pitched sounds from their larynx, and some also from their nostrils. These high-frequency sounds bounce off objects in their vicinity, and the bats listen for the returning echoes. This is a process known as echolocation, and it allows bats to understand their surroundings so that they can hunt food, avoid predators, and, of course, keep from flying into trees or buildings. These sounds are so high-pitched that humans can't hear them. Bats also communicate with each other by clicking their tongues.

SPREAD YOUR WINGS TO FLY!



BAT FACTS



BIGGEST AND SMALLEST

Fruit bats and flying foxes can grow as large as 4 pounds. These are the largest bats in the world, with a wingspan of approximately 6 feet. Bumble bee bats are the smallest in the world, weighing about 2 grams, and they're about the size of your pinkie finger.



A COLONY OF BATS

Bats usually become active and leave their home, called a roost, to hunt in the evenings. Most bats live in large groups called colonies, or camps, that are in warm places like caves, hollowed trees, barn rafters, or abandoned buildings. These are places that are safe and where bats can avoid humans and predators.



A NURSERY OF BATS

Maternity season for bats – when babies are born – in North America is from April to June, when it is warm and there is an abundance of insects to eat. The female positions herself upward so gravity will help when she gives birth. A newborn bonds with its mother as she licks it clean. As the pups get older, females will leave them huddled upside down in groups with a babysitter in the nursery at night while they go out to feed.



SHARP TEETH

Bats have sharp teeth so they can cut through fruit skin and grind through its pulp. These sharp teeth are also useful for breaking the hard shells of insects. Most bats can eat 50 to 150 percent of their body weight in insects in one night!



MAKE YOUR OWN Bat Mask

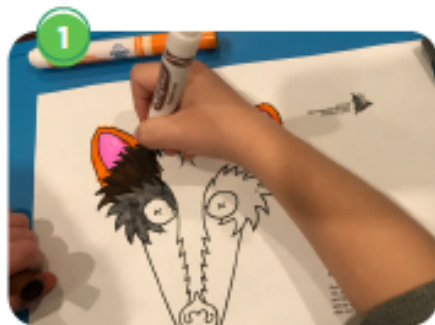


ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

Use the template to create a bat mask with any combination of colors you can think of.

MATERIALS

- Bat mask template (Provided)
- Crayons or markers
- Pipe cleaners
- Scissors



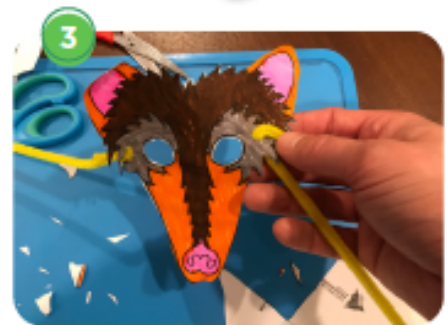
STEP 1:

Color your bat mask.



STEP 2:

Cut out your mask.



STEP 3:

Cut out the eyes, and poke small holes under the ears and next to the eyes using a pen.



STEP 4:

Thread a pipe cleaner through one cheek hole; twist one end of the pipe cleaner around the cheek, then fold the other end to fit like eyeglasses over the mask-wearer's ear. Do this on both sides.

DID YOU KNOW?

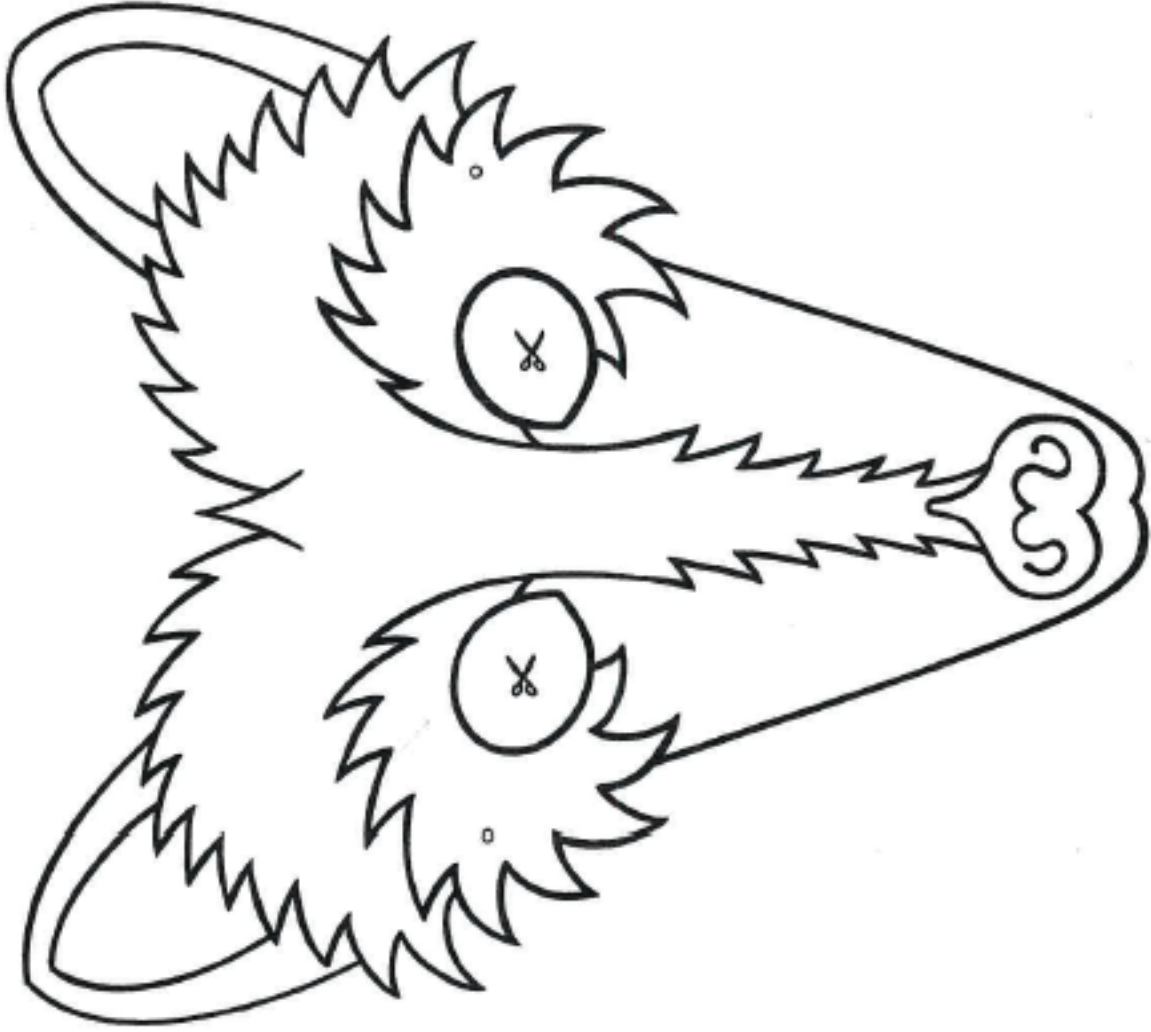
Bats are typically brown or black in color, but may have grey, red, white or orange fur.

Enjoy your mask!

STEP 5:

Thread the pipe cleaners through the holes and make a knot at the end, on the colored side.





Grey-headed flying-fox
Pteropus poliocephalus

Fun Fact

This megabat is native to Australia and likes to eat fruit. This bat only uses its eyes to find its food - it does not echolocate!

www.batcons.org

Tell us what you think!



<http://bit.ly/3UTNNg1>

Use your smart phone and scan this QR code and simply answer the questions using the link above. Your feedback is so valuable!

Thanks!