

Tuesday Club Nature Notes

with Jan Flamank

Answers to the December Nature Quiz

1. **What do Fly Agaric, the red and white spotty fungi, eat?** Fly Agaric tap into the roots of a tree, taking carbohydrates and helping the tree to absorb various nutrients such as minerals and water in return. The relationship between fungi and trees is complex and only recently better understood.
2. **What are oak apples?** Oak Apples are the result of a tiny wasp laying eggs into an acorn, and as this develops it distorts the growth and shape of the acorn. Oak galls contain lots of tannin and have been used for centuries to make ink.
3. **Roe deer are crepuscular. When are they most active?** Crepuscular means an animal is most active at dawn and dusk.
4. **How many wood ants can a green woodpecker eat each day?** A Green Woodpecker can eat up to 2,000 wood ants every day. Yum yum.
5. **How do Peacock butterflies survive the winter?** Peacock butterflies overwinter in log piles, hollow trees and sometimes in our garden sheds and outside buildings. Their dark brown underwings keep them well camouflaged in dark, woody places.
6. **What is an old country name for a nuthatch?** An old name for a Nuthatch is Mud Stopper, because they bring mud to the nest and 'plaster' it, to make the entrance the best shape for them, and to keep larger predators out.
7. **Which insect likes to overwinter in roof spaces and spare rooms?** Ladybirds very often overwinter in roof spaces and quiet spare rooms, and together can make a rather impressive ball. They also like hollow stems of plants, so another good reason not to over tidy gardens.



8. **How did earwigs get their name?** Earwigs were thought to resemble a human ear, which seems unlikely, even for rugby players!
9. **Name our three native species that hibernate.** Our 3 native species that properly hibernate are bats, dormice and hedgehogs.
10. **Why do hoverflies have black and yellow coloured patterns?** Insects like hoverflies copy the black and yellow colour patterns of wasps and bees to deter predators, who will think they may sting them.
11. **Which favourite garden bird sings all winter, and why?** The robin sings through the winter, to announce and retain their territory. Unusually both the male and females sing.
12. **How many moults does a Mountain Hare have each year, and why?** The Mountain Hare has 3 moults, with the early winter one producing a whiter coat to help them 'disappear' in snowy hills.
13. **Name our three native deer.** Our 3 native deer are the Red deer, the Fallow deer and Roe deer.
14. **What type of antlers do fallow deer have?** Fallow deer antlers are much broader in shape, called palmate, and are used far less in dominance fights with other males.
15. **Which is the most nutritious winter berry for birds?** The deep purple / black berries of the ivy are the most nutritious berry for birds in winter, ripening just when they are most needed.
16. **Which member of the Corvid bird family has red legs?** The member of the highly intelligent Corvid family of birds who has red legs is the Chough.
17. **What is the winter coat of a stoat called?** When stoats develop their pale winter coat after moulting, it is called Ermine.
18. **How can you tell a female and male barn owl apart?** Female barn owls have spotty markings on their breast.
19. **How are mistletoe seeds spread?** Mistletoe Seeds are very sticky, so after a bird has enjoyed eating the white, fruity flesh round the seed, they wipe their beak on the tree bark, thereby scratching the bark and depositing the seed.
20. **Which 3 native species change their coat/feather colours in winter?** Three native species who change their colour for winter are the Mountain Hare, Stoat and the Ptarmigan.
21. **Name 5 adaptations reindeer have to help them survive in the cold.** Five adaptations by reindeer to help them survive the cold are: a heat exchanger in their nose to warm the air, a type of antifreeze and a heat exchanger in their legs, their hooves change shape, reducing the soft pad area to reduce heat loss and giving them more grip on ice, they have a very thick layer of woolly undercoat for insulation, and their fur hairs are hollow which helps to conserve body heat.
22. **Name 3 swans that migrate here, and where have they come from?** Three migratory swans who come to our shores are: the Bewick, from Siberia, the Whooper from Iceland and the Mute swan from Eurasia.

23. **Name 3 different types of frost.** Three types of frost are: Hoar frost, air frost and ground frost. Sometimes people refer to grass frost, which is really ground frost.
24. **What is thunder snow?** Thunder snow is when a thunderstorm occurs and there is snow in the cloud. The loud noise is due to the rapid heating of the air by lightning.
25. **Which native tree is the best host for more than 500 other species, and why is it late to lose its leaves?** Our fabulous native oak tree is host to over 500 other species. It is late to lose leaves as it took longer to come into leaf in spring, because the oak makes a new vascular system each year for the sap to travel through.

Hope you did well! There are lots more answers and more amazing fingertip facts in the Autumn to Winter nature booklet I wrote. Enjoy.

