

# LITERACY learning springboards

Pappus

## Horse chestnut poem, etymology and history

### Get to know a local horse chestnut tree in the grounds or locality

**Aim:** Use the Pappus fact sheet and playful springboards to research this tree and take inspiration from poetry, history and etymology of to develop further use of descriptive language.

**Poem by Brian F Kirkham**

*"Horse Chestnut Tree*

*Sat there regally, in his park,  
with brothers and sisters in an arc,  
The Horse Chestnut tree spends his day  
watching the children and adults at play.*

*He'll be there, sitting, every week  
as little children play hide and seek  
and others shelter in the sun  
while eating sandwiches or a bun*

*He shelters birds from passing rain,  
and watches it flow down nearby drains  
he protects those animals that don't like to be pinned  
by that autumnal passing wind*

*The Horse Chestnut Tree, is an amiable chap  
and when all is quiet, he'll take a nap  
There's only one thing - That drives him bonkers  
when kids climb up him to pinch his conkers!"*

#### Activity:

Collect leaves, twigs and conkers (if it's the right time of year) from a Horse chestnut tree. Look at the Pappus Playful Springboard: Horse chestnut to find out why conkers are so called, and look at the Pappus Horse chestnut ID sheet to find out other names that Horse chestnut is known by. Research horse chestnut's clever 'traffic light' system, which it uses to help pollinators! Invent your own 'common' names for this tree, and be inspired to write a poem or a paragraph of metaphor using characteristics of the horse chestnut as inspiration.



The palm of  
a giant?

**Poem by Hungarian poet, Nemes Nagy Ágnes**

I found a leaf,  
a chestnut tree leaf.  
It's like I've found a palm of a giant.

If I keep it in front of my face,  
I see that it is bigger than my face.  
If I put it over my head,  
I see that it is bigger than my head.

If the rain dripped  
I wouldn't mind it, because  
the giant day and night,  
would cover my head  
with his huge palm.

#### Resources:

- A Horse chestnut tree in the grounds or locality

#### More springboards:

- Pappus Playful Springboard: Horse chestnut for further ideas, games, meditations and practical activities.
- Pappus Horse chestnut ID sheet

#### Key vocabulary:

Regally, amiable

#### Success criteria:

- ✓ I understand and can explain the social and historical context of the poems
- ✓ I can incorporate my knowledge of the characteristics of plants into my poetry.



Candelabra?

