

they are impossible for most humans to identify. Some have been sighted in gardens where there is little disturbance from humans.

These delicate creatures feed on plants, fruits and vegetables. They are especially fond of strawberries and, if they eat too many, will turn an alarming red colour. They like to help gardeners by pollinating plants when the bees become over-worked. In fact, many gardeners call forest sprites their 'handy helpers'.

To relax, forest sprites play hide and seek in wooded areas. Younger ones play kiss chase, riding on the backs of dragonflies. Older sprites sit on branches watching the world pass by whilst playing simple card games and chess using carved acorns. They do not mix with other types of sprite and positively dislike stone and mountain sprites, considering them to be vulgar.

Forest sprites are gentle creatures but live in fear of hawks, herons and squirrels, as they have been known to grab sprites when hungry. For this reason, groups of sprites have been known to attack birds' nests and squirrels' drays, pulling them down.

If you are gentle in your approach and keep very still in a wooded glade, you may be lucky enough to watch these wonderful creatures dancing together as the cuckoo calls in spring or when moonlight strikes on a fairy's ring. Once in a thousand days, they can offer a wish to a chosen mortal so always ensure that you care for trees. Rumour has it that forest sprites are really the souls of trees and so must be taken care of. Imagine a world with no trees!