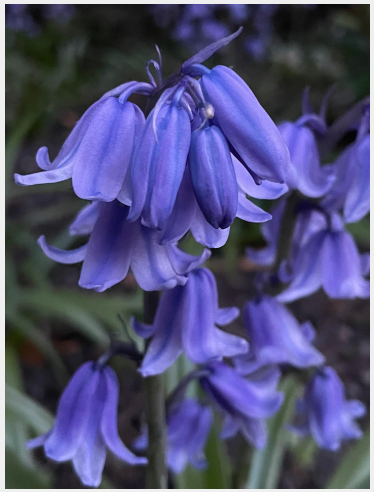
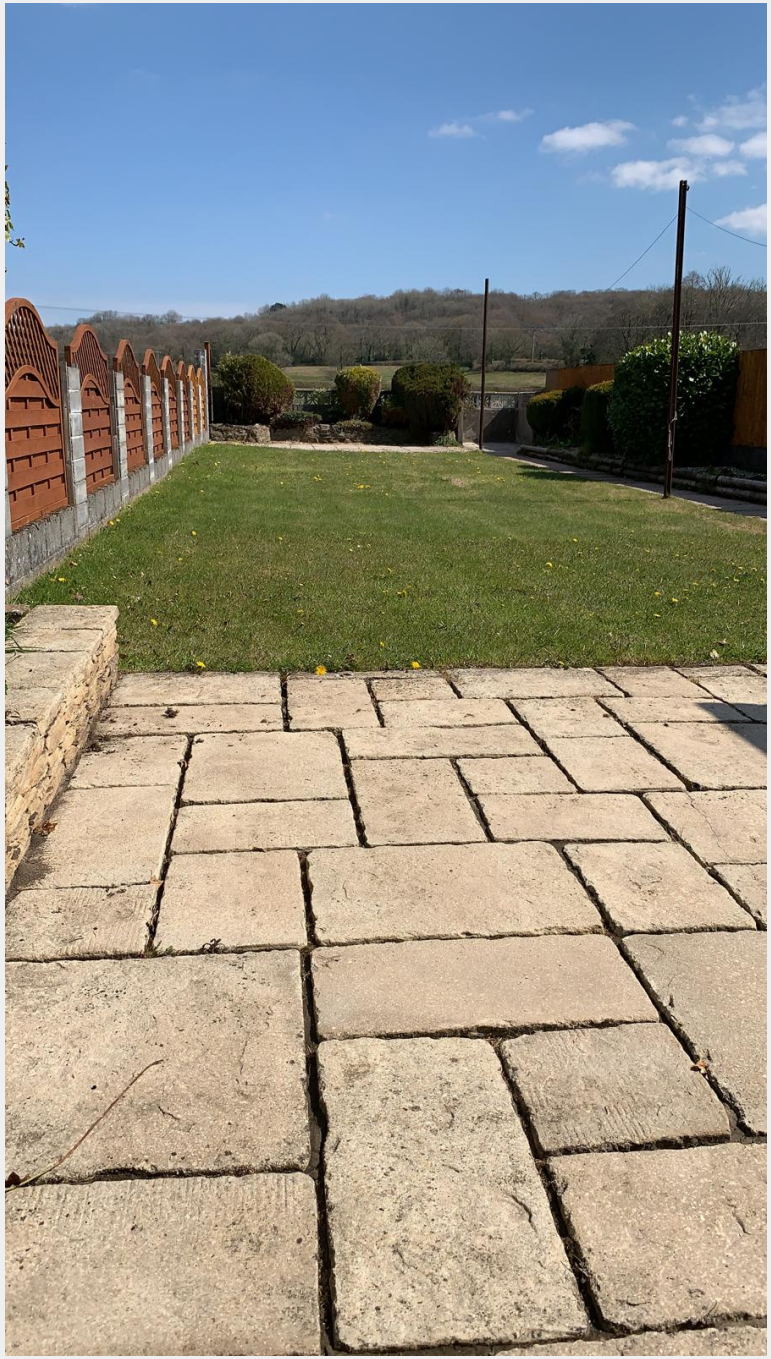
Sustainability in the Early Years

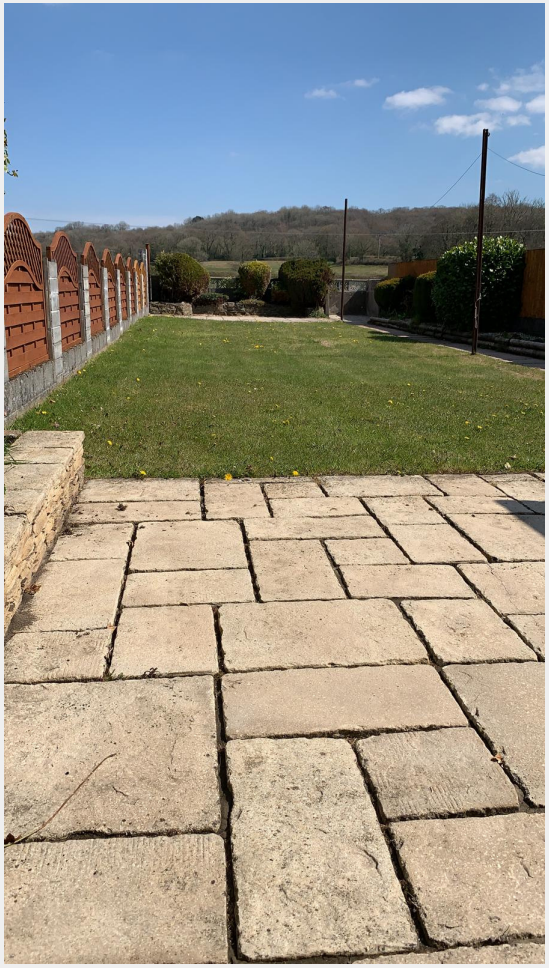
Making my garden more sustainable

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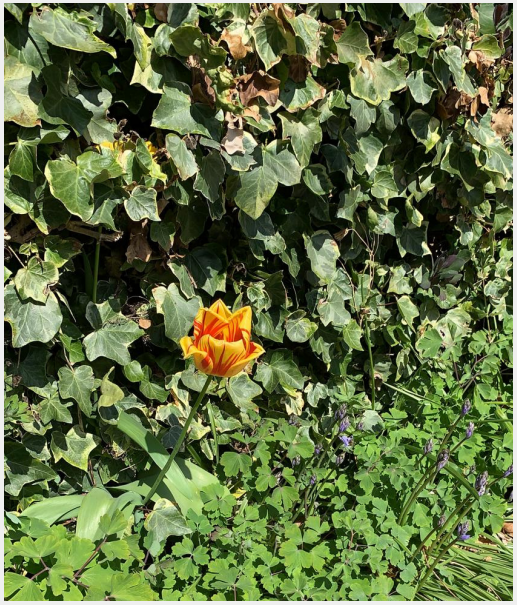




What made me choose my garden?

When I first moved into my house, my garden was full of bees, butterflies, ladybugs, and all sorts of wildlife. I used to sit outside and watch them fly around, pollinate, and listen to the noises they would make. I began to take this for granted. After some heavy rain and lack of attention to gardening, my peaceful but busy garden no longer seemed to appeal to the wildlife and the flowers were far from beautiful. I decided that if I wanted my tranquil space back, it was up to me to do so.

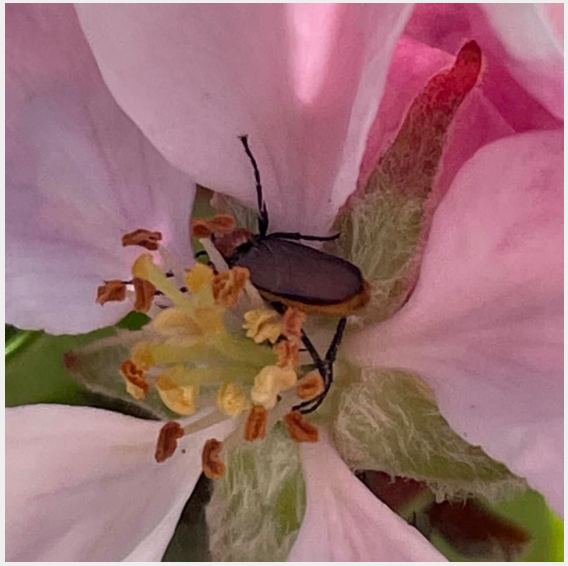
Before











My garden used to have tulips and flowers that the birds used to love.

After

















Discover

After looking at my garden and choosing this area for my experience, I took a bit of time to not only discover the area but to discover a bit about how I currently felt about sustainability. Growing up, and still to this day, I enjoy country walks, walking along the beach, and enjoying nature but thinking about it, I never enjoyed it enough to try to protect it.

I grew up in a built-up area in Kent, England so would have to drive places if I wanted to be outside and surrounded by nature. I think this had something to do with my attitude that nature would always be there as it was always there when I went. I also did not have to worry much about being in the garden and planting flowers as my dad was a gardener so touching his flowers was not considered an option.

For the first time ever, I went into the garden, and I looked; not just a sweeping glance to appreciate but looked at what I had and what I could achieve. I cut back hedges, I found a bird's nest, and I found out that what plants I thought I had been watering were actually not wanted in my garden.







Discover the Area

I moved to Llandybie in April 2021 and apart from knowing it was close to work and people said nice things about it, I did not really know a great deal about where I lived. I did drive up to the local village to have a look around when I realised that when considering the John Muir Award, maybe driving to a built-up area was not what was meant by discovering the area. After putting it off due to rain, I eventually decided to take a walk up the lane and through the fields behind my house. Instead of seeing beautiful flowers and wildlife flurrying, I found some dairy cows and lots of horses.



Conserve: Part 1

In order to have my garden return to my happy place, I knew I needed to do my research on what flowers I would need. This information I began to source from various websites but I started to feel out of my depth. I knew that this was probably the most important step so I called my dad for some advice. I explained that I needed seeds that would encourage bees and butterflies back into my garden and seeds that would grow despite it being June. I was given a list longer than I ever could have made myself and I began the first part of my conservation experience.















Conserve: Part 2

The flowers I chose were all recommended and had the labels on that let me know that they were ideal for the wildlife I wanted to encourage in my garden and that they were also able to be sowed during June. I was extremely excited to plant my first ever seeds and decided to do it the same day I bought them. Unfortunately, my excitement may have been overly eager as I failed to read the instructions about how they should be sown.









Conserve: Part 3

The flowers were planted but I knew that I had not followed the instructions therefore was doubtful of how well I had achieved sustainability. I thought on my feet and decided that bee bombs were the next option on my sustainability experience. Myself and the children I work with spent hours tearing up paper and egg boxes ready to soak it over night. A quick blitz with a food processor, sprinkle in some wildflower seeds, and they were ready to mold into shapes and left to dry.







Conserve: Part 4

The bee bombs were made and the flowers had been planted, everything was on the right path for day 4 of my experience. Only then I had remembered that the flowers needed to be watered! Luckily, the Welsh rain had kept them hydrated and they were looking good. I also invested in some raspberries to support sustainability and managed to salvage the chilly plants I had purchased in April

Conserve: What Happened Next?



Whilst the John Muir Experience is only meant to last 4 days, I could not just stop watering the flowers and trying to look after them as I thought that by doing so, I would have undone the sustainable work I had done. I continued to look after the plants and here are the results.Unfortunately, I think by not following the instructions, the flowers did not all grow. And despite my best efforts at watering them, I was not aware until after the flowers had wilted, that watering flowers in the midday sun would not have helped them grow or live.







My Reflection

If someone told me 5 years ago I would be planting flowers in my own back garden to actually encourage bees to visit, I never would have believed them. This experience has shown me that I am capable of gardening and I am capable of caring about the natural environment. Before, bees were insects that I was scared of and would run a mile if it came near me. Now, I have educated myself on the importance of bees for the wold we live in and how much our lives would be altered if bees were no longer around. I have also realised that sustainability does not have to be something massive such as switching to electric cars or only using bars of shampoo instead of bottles, but it is something that I can achieve in one afternoon and make a significant impact on my local area. This experience may only have needed to be a four day activity, but it appears to have been something that I will carry with me as I go on through life. And maybe I will end up switching over to bars of shampoo, who knows.

A poem about my progress throughout learning sustainability

I think back on a time
when a garden was just good for sunbathing
I cannot help but realise
all the time that I had been wasting.

I used to look outside
and there would be flowers of plenty
but in the current world we live in
my garden became so empty.

It got me thinking of what I could do
Could I become more sustainable?
I would think that meant changing my life
And for me, it seemed too unobtainable.

So, I started out small
planting flowers and not just a consumer.
Now when I look outside,
I know I am making a better future.

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Sustainability

Hannah Daly
1903033