



ECEY6005
Sustainability in the
Early Years



Discover

Growing up as a child I was exposed to and had the pleasure of a huge garden with a variety of wildlife to explore. I was able to listen to the different noises and sounds of all the different animals that were visiting my garden.

I spent most of my time after school exploring my garden with my brothers to look for different types of animals that were living in different parts of our garden.

When I moved into my own home I wanted to make sure I had access to a big and spacious garden for my son to experience different wildlife, noises and sounds. We aim to spend as much time in the garden playing, digging and searching for new things to discover and home.

By taking on the John Muir award as part of this assignment it has opened my eyes to explore and discover the different wildlife that is out there.



Discover The Area

Having lived and grown up in Llanelli my whole I have discovered a variety of different areas and how fortunate we are to be surrounded by wildlife and nature itself.

During the beginning of spring there is a burst of life and colour after a cold winter. There is also a variety if animals that come out of hibernation after the winter and it is fascinating to see how they adapt after a cold winter.

One of our favorite places to visit is Park Howard as it is full of nature and different wildlife to explore. By visiting Park Howard it encouraged listen, explore and open my eyes to the different worlds of nature and wildlife that are around us.

This also gave me encouragement to get outdoors with my family and really explore the wildlife, plants and life around us.



Explore

After reading and learning about the John Muir Award, I started to think about the different places that I could discover and explore, and I thought what better way to do that than from my own home.

When exploring my garden I found a variety of different animals and insects that were living in and around the garden. Every morning my son and I would open the windows and listen to the different sounds the birds would sing and try to spot as many different birds as we could.

While exploring my garden I found lots of different plants and animals and decided to turn it into a game with my son to see who could find the most animals and insects.

There was one animal in particular that we kept seeing a lot of and that was the amount of bees that were in one area of the garden.



The Wildlife I Spotted in my



What Flowers are Bees attracted

When taking a closer look at where the bees were in the garden I found that they were attracted to a particular flower when doing some research and printing some photos off I found that the flowers growing withing my garden where lavender.

I found that there were many other flowers that bees were attracted too which included, crocus, foxglove and rosemary.

I found that bees were attracted to lavender because they have are rich in nectar, but the most important thing about them is that they flower through a gap. Research has suggested thar the larger lavender cultivars are the best for bees.



How to grow lavender

Having found a small patch of lavender that was growing in my garden I decided to learn how to grow lavender to add the the small circle of lavender that was already there.

I started by finding a sun-drenched spot and decided to plant the lavender in containers as I found that helped avoid root rots. I started by adding well-drained soil and placing the lavender 12-18inchs apart.

After planting the lavender seeds, it was important that the flowers were watered deeply and infrequently, when the soil is almost dry.

By planting the lavender in containers it allowed for better drainage and air circulation in order for me to grow the best lavender I could and to ensure I keep it alive.

I later found that you also need to trim back lavender annually and the best time to do this is in the later summer. To do this I need to remove any spent flower stalks and about 1inch of leaf growth.



Bee Houses

I decided to do some research on what else would attract bees to my garden and I found that bee houses were a good way to attract and protect the bees. I found that it is best to place bee houses on a fence or a wall so that they are in a sunny position and they are best attracted to it if it is waist or chest high and close to flowers. By building the bee houses it also found that by it attracting more bees it would increase the pollination in our garden and it was fun to do this activity with my son to allow the opportunity for creativity and imagination.

I wanted to make sure that I took a practical approach for nature to support relevant issues and apply minimum impact approaches showing respect and care for the environment that is around me.



Bug Hotels

As my son and I enjoyed building bee houses and planting lavender I looked around the garden for any other ideas that we could do to conserve the environment around us. When looking under rocks and wood we found that there were lots of insects living under them such as woodlice, ladybirds and spiders. I found that by building bug hotels it would provide a snug and safe place for the insects to hibernate. A bug hotel provides a safe haven for all sorts of bugs in your garden, and it's a project that can be as simple or as sophisticated as you want it to be. As well as bringing in beneficial insects to your outdoor areas and giving them a safe space, they also provide a handy use for spare or leftover materials and stops them from going to waste.



Bird feeders

As well as building bug hotels and bee houses I also decided to add some bird feeders to our garden to attract different types of bird so I could learn about them and get my son to listen to the different songs that the birds were singing. I found that seed eating birds help plants to spread and thrive. Birds that eat seeds leave them behind in their droppings and this has helped many plants to be dispersed to new places and to revitalize ecosystems that have been damaged and destroyed. I found also that children learn a huge amount and benefit enormously from nature and by making and hanging different bird feeders with my son was a worthwhile activity.



Conserve

By taking part in the John Muir Award it opened my eyes to a new world of nature that was going on around me.

I decided to make some new additions to my garden to help conserve and encourage the nature around me. I decided to find some different materials around my garden to build some bug houses and bee hotels with my son. My son and I loved taking part in the John Muir award and we both started to enjoy the outdoors much more. We also decided to hang some bird feeders up to attract some more birds into our garden to learn about the different types of birds. As we started to put the bees houses, bug hotels and bird feeders around the garden it made it much more colourful and allowed for us to be more creative.



Reflection.....



REFLECTING BACK ON MY EXPERIENCE ON THE ACTIVITY IT OPENED MY EYES TO SEEING WHAT WAS LIVING IN THE WORLD AROUND ME. IT ALLOWED ME TO BUILD MORE CONFIDENCE TO EXPLORE WHAT IS AROUND MY GARDEN AND LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT FLOWERS TO PLANT AND GROW.

I FOUND THAT BY GETTING MY SON INVOLVED IT PROMOTED HIS CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION. IT ALSO TAUGHT ME TO HAVE A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND HELP REDUCE ANY STRESS OR ANXIETY I WAS FEELING AS BY SPENDING A COUPLE OF HOURS WAS RELAXING AND PEACEFUL.

I WAS ABLE TO CONNECT TO NATURE IN A WAY I HAD NEVER NOTICED BEFORE AND I FOUND THAT NATURE WAS ABLE TO GENERATE MANY POSITIVE EMOTIONS, SUCH AS CALMNESS, JOY AND CREATIVITY AND HELPED TO FACILITATE CONCENTRATION.

