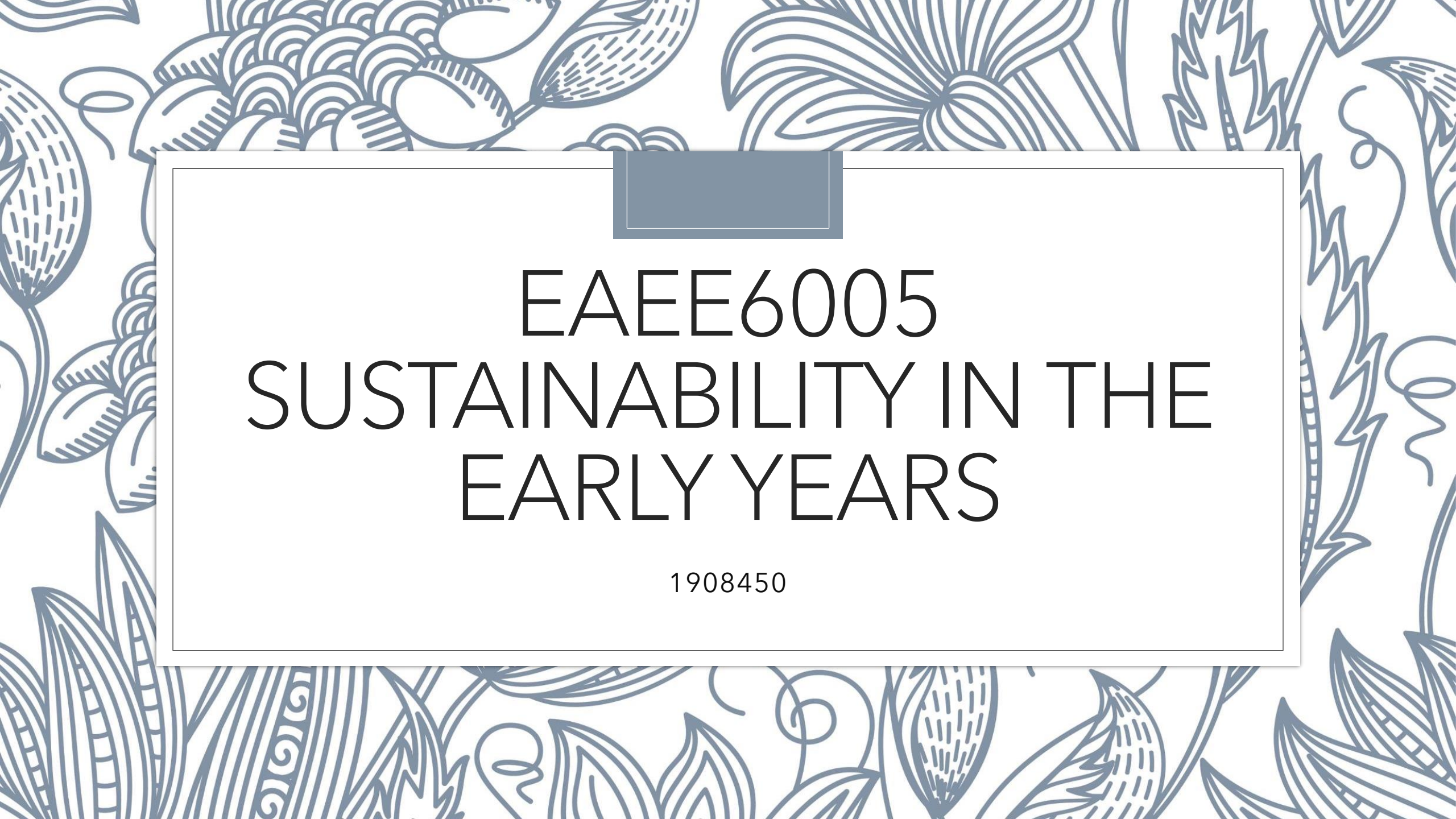
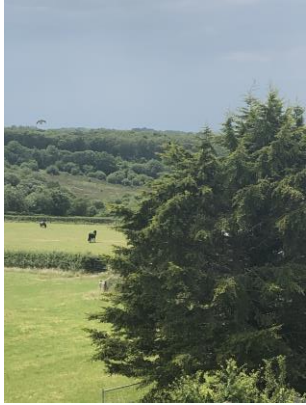




EAAA6005 SUSTAINABILITY IN THE EARLY YEARS

1908450

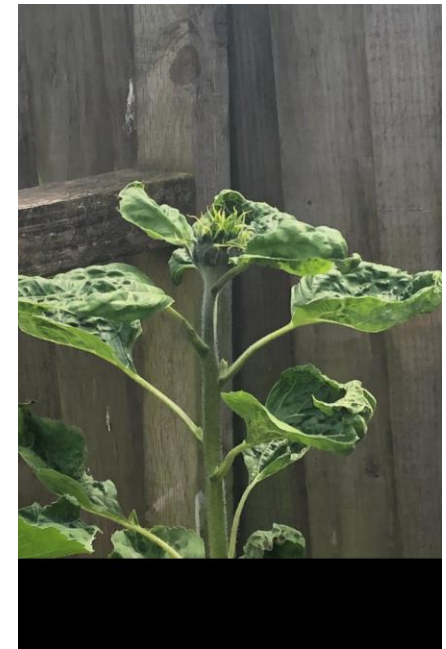


Discover

- For this assignment I wanted to use a space that would seem easily accessible to most people, which is why I chose my garden. Most of us have some form of garden, large or small, or have access to someone that has a garden, however, how many of us have taken the time to explore the wildlife in our gardens? I for certain have not. I am fortunate enough to have a large garden which is surrounded by fields and farmland at the rear.

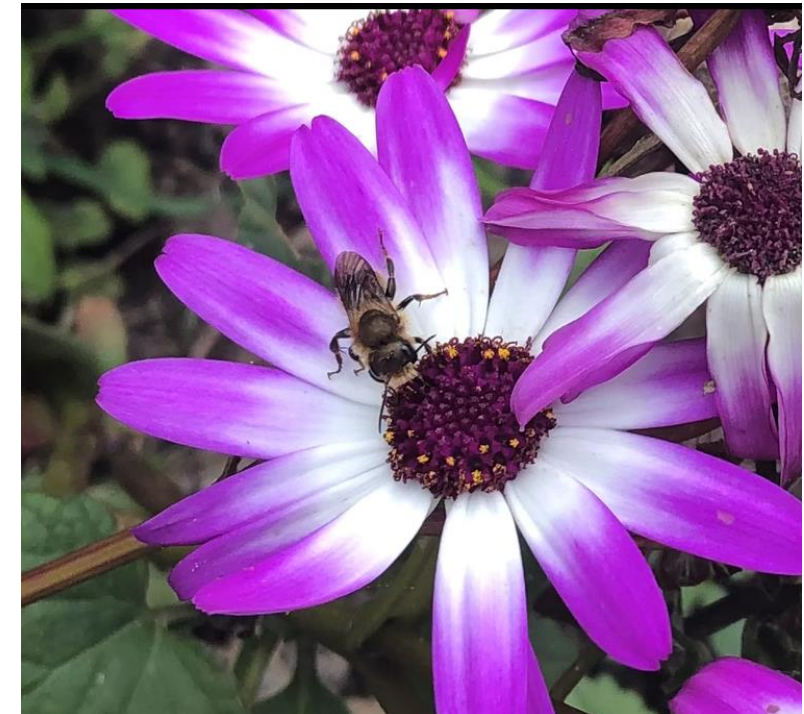
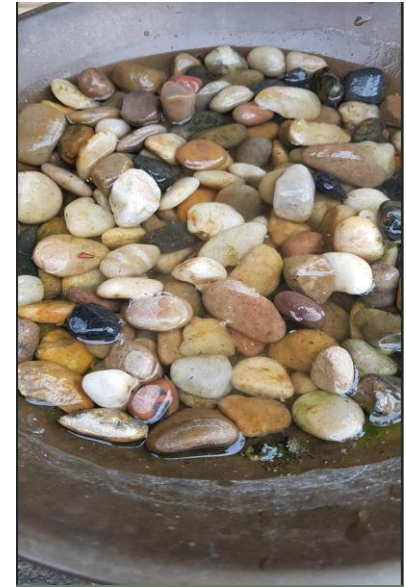
Exploring the area.

- As you can see, the garden has a long lawn, perfect for children to play, however, is it the perfect habitat for wildlife? The garden had been quite bare for some years, this spring I decided that I wanted to fill the planter with flowering shrubs and seasonal flowers, in the bid to introduce pollinators to the garden, encouraging bees to visit.
- I filled my area with hardy geraniums, pericallis, lavender, sunflowers, wallflowers and a Hydrangea.
- I discovered that the planter was full of life, I found worms while turning the soil, slugs, snails, little insects, and many spiders.
- Without insects our lives would be significantly different.
- Did you know? The colour of the Hydrangea flowers depends on what soil composition you have?



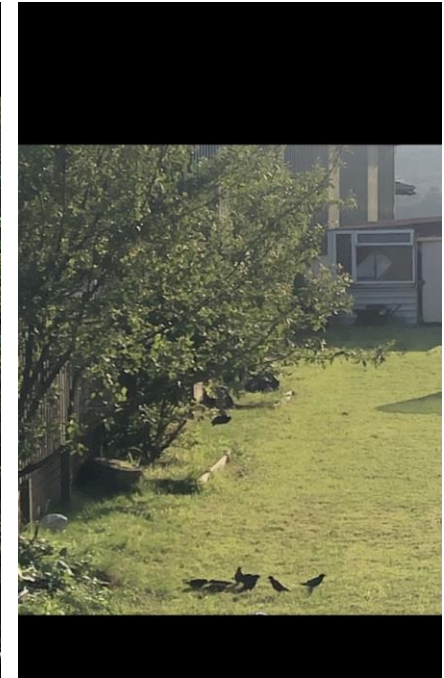
Bees

- While exploring the garden, I captured a few visitors, honey bees and bumble bees.
- I discovered that 1/3 of our diet relies on honey bees.
- Sadly, over the last 15 years bee colonies have been disappearing, with 90% of bees disappearing from some regions (National geographic, no date).
- To support bees, we can introduce flowers in our garden that are rich in nectar, such as lavender.
- In my garden I have introduced a bee bath, it is important that water is available for bees to provide sustenance.



Birds

- One of my favourite sounds is bird song at the start of the morning. However, I had never taken the time to truly discover what type of birds I had visiting my garden. Over the last few weeks, I have introduced bird feeders into the garden which has proved popular amongst the local flocks.
- During this time, I have witnessed:-
- Robin
- Swallows
- Hedge Sparrow
- Black bird
- Starlings
- The birds seek shelter in the trees and hedgerows in between feeding.



Migratory birds and resident birds.

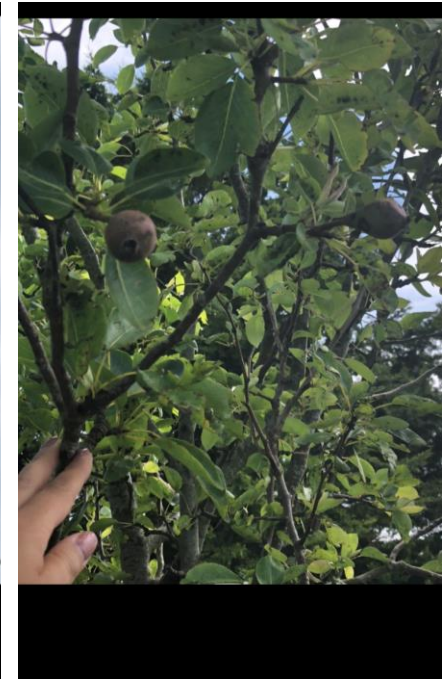
- Swallows: Swallows are migratory birds that spend the winter in Africa, as far as the south cape (Allen et al. 1996). Returning to Britain between March and May to take up territories in less urban areas to build their nests.
- Robin: We're all familiar with Britain's national bird the Robin, however, I was not aware that robins are resident birds and are joined by paler northern European migrants in the winter. I have also discovered that these European birds are less confiding and more skulking than Britain's birds, perhaps this has to do with the continuing massacre of migrant birds in southern Europe (Allen et al. 1996)



Source: (Bing, no date)

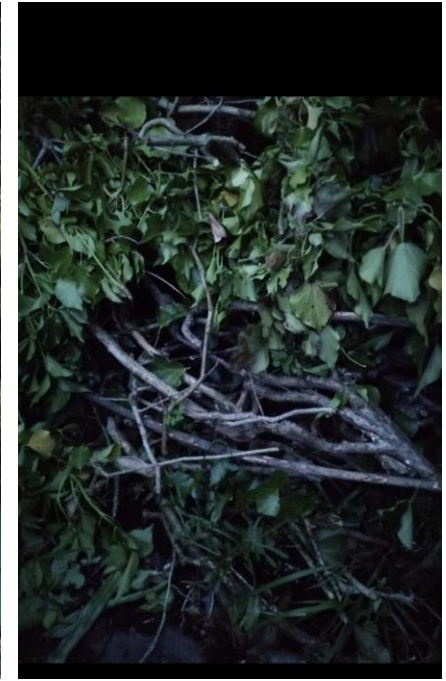
Edibles.

- I discovered I have fruit trees in the garden. These trees were infant trees when I first moved, however, on closer inspection I discovered that they are in fact fruit trees, a pear and plum tree. This is the first year these trees have produced fruit, this will provide food for the birds, insects and us as a family.
- We also grow Pumpkins in the garden and have a little patch of wild Strawberries growing.
- In a bid to become more sustainable, as a family we have decided to start to grow some of our own Vegetables, as part of this award, we researched what was the best vegetables to grow in June, we have now planted carrots and beetroot. Next year we plan to also include potatoes, tomatoes and cucumbers.



Hedgehogs.

- Down the bottom of our garden is a little neglected, it is where we leave our cuttings. While exploring this area I expected to find more insects as it was the perfect natural bug hotel. However, I was thrilled to discover a Hedgehog.
- Attenborough (2014) states that 50% of the Hedgehog population have disappeared in the last 25 years.
- I researched how to provide a safe shelter for my Hedgehog, I came across the RSPB (no date) website which gave a guide on how to build your own Hedgehog house, and with the help of my partner we build this house and placed it down near where we had found it. The RSPB (no date) state that Hedgehog houses should be put in place during spring and summer, ready for autumn hibernation. However, he/she does prefer the natural home in the twigs and leaves.
- What do Hedgehogs eat? Hedgehogs eat snails, slugs and other insects. I learnt that you could feed Hedgehogs, however it must be dog or cat food which is not fish based, or crushed dog or cat biscuits.



Ideas for the future.

- During exploring the garden for the John Muir Award, I have introduced ideas to help conserve the wildlife in the garden. I have introduced more nectar rich plants for the bees, a bee bath to provide sustenance. While also introducing bird feeders to help supplement the birds.
- We built a Hedgehog house to provide shelter for our resident Hedgehog if it chose to use it and left the cuttings at the bottom of the garden where he/she now resides. I have removed any litter that I have found in the area, as this could cause harm to the Hedgehog or any other animal if they were to ingest it.
- To become more sustainable as a family we are now beginning to grow some of our own vegetables.
- After researching about the benefits of no mow areas, I have decided to designate an area following the length of the garden, no become a no more area, we have prepared the grown and sown wildflower seeds in hopes that this no mow area will become a pollinator heaven for been and butterflies, while providing a safe natural habitat for insects closer to the ground.
- Over time we have seen a few frogs in the garden, however, we do not have a body of water that would support their habitat. Because of this, we have made plans to introduce a wildlife pond. The Wetlands Trust (no date) states that the most important thing you can do for your garden is to create. It is a vital habitat for wetland wildlife like dragonflies and frogs.



Source: (WWT, no date)..