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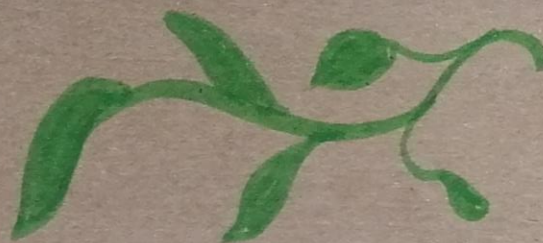
Regaining Paradise?

Sustainability in the Early Years



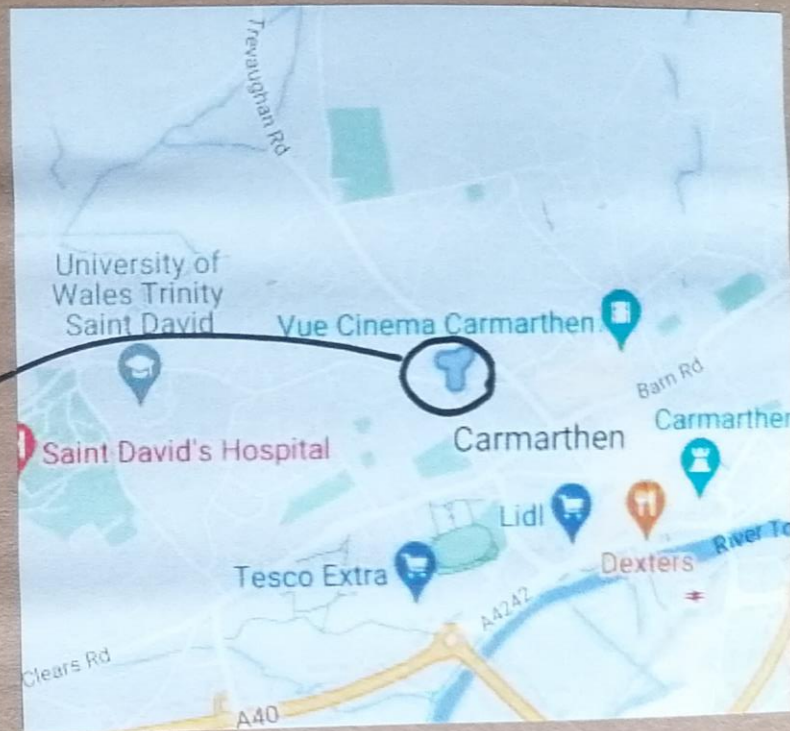
The John Muir Award

Discover

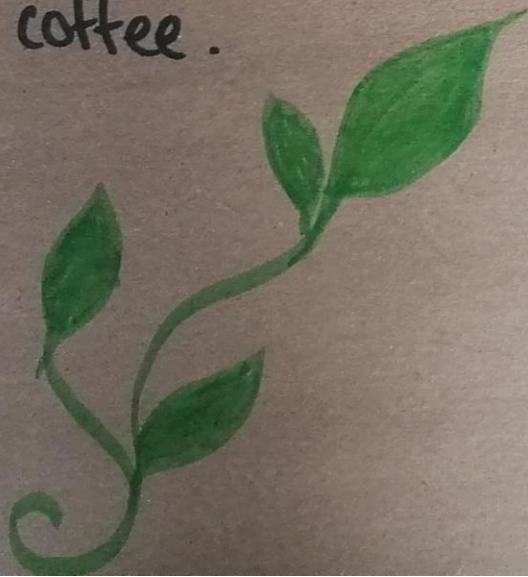


The place I have chosen to focus my Award activity, is my garden.

I live in a cul-de-sac in Carmarthen town and love nothing more than unwinding in the garden with a cup of coffee.



I love that my children can play in the safety of our garden, away from the potential dangers of traffic we have not far from our front door.



Explore



I sat in my garden one morning
and engaged my senses.

I could hear the sweet
song of a black bird



I could hear Jackdaws,
as if bickering on my
rooftop



The squawking of seagulls communicating with each other would take over every now and then!



The chirping of sparrows sat in my shrubs was pleasant to hear

The whistle of a red Kite can be heard often from my garden. The sight and sound bring me comfort, as it was a bird that my late father was fond of.



I could hear the cooing of a wood pigeon, a rather familiar sound in Carmarthen town!



I could hear the rustling of leaves and grass as they danced in the breeze



I could hear children playing in neighbouring gardens.

I could hear the calming buzz of bees as they rapidly beat their wings.

On hearing the buzz of the bees, I went to find them.

I found so many on a bramble that I have left grow that I could not count them all.



I love bees and welcome them to my garden.

Their importance to our survival is incredible.

I was surprised to see many different types of bee in my few minutes of observing.



Other insects I could see
in my garden were...

woodlice



earwigs



Ants



Beetles



Spider



Spider

A collection of rose petals gathered
from the ground in my garden.



One petal from
each of my roses.

Smell them,
the yellow rose usually
has the strongest
perfume.

Whilst exploring my garden, searching for insects, the overwhelming sweet smell of roses struck me.



Their petals are vibrant, attracting pollinators.



House sparrow

I have more than ten rose plants in my garden. Many of them have protective thorns coating their stems.

I have other colourful flowers that
are in blossom at the moment.
These are what I could see



Whilst dead-
heading
the fuschia,

I am known
to eat their
delicious
berries.

if the birds don't get them first!



This astilbe reminds
me of our old house, as
it was the first plant
we bought to go in our garden.



Although I have small areas of colour in my garden, the majority of what I could see is green.



Ivy laden walls and trees provide sheltered homes for insects, spiders and birds.



I like to leave my garden grow a bit 'wild' even though it may be seen as messy to others.



When we bought our house, there was an enormous tree at the bottom of the garden.

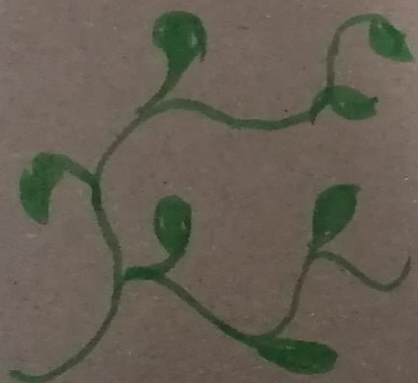
We were advised to cut it down for safety reasons, I still feel the guilt of taking away the home to so much wild life to this day.

However, it's remains are now covered in ivy, which is entwined with cobwebs.

Birds frequently fly in and out, indicating that they nest there.



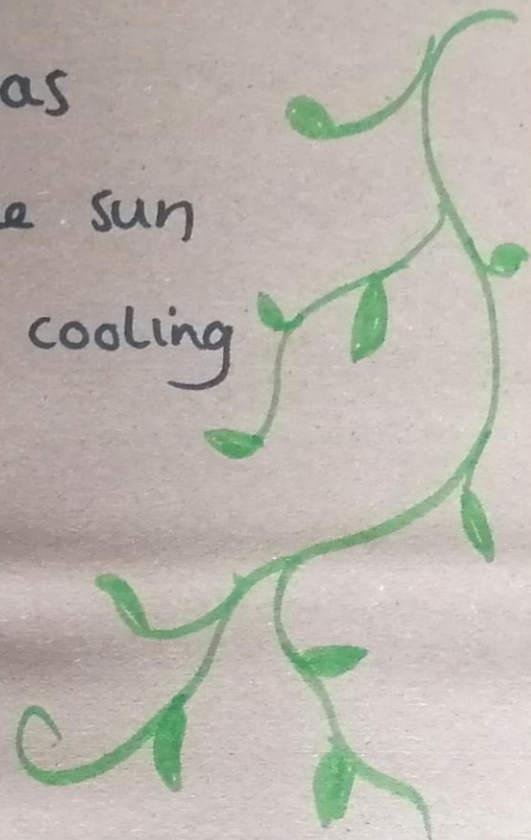
The pile of logs we now have houses a hedgehog, and provided shelter to a young jackdaw not able to fly yet.



Whilst sitting in my garden, it was blissful to feel the heat of the sun on my skin and the soft breeze cooling me down.

I could occasionally feel the faint tickle of an insect landing on me.

In true Welsh fashion, my time in the garden would not be complete without the patter of raindrops upon my head.



Conserve

Whilst exploring my garden, it came to my mind that I had not seen any butterflies.

In previous years I have seen....



White cabbage butterfly



Red admiral



Holly blue

A butterfly made by my daughter
from fallen leaves and petals collected
from our garden



A butterfly made by my son from
fallen petals and leaves collected
from our garden.



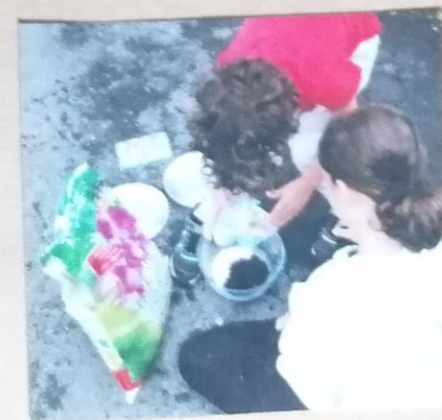
In order to attract butterflies to my garden, I enlisted the help of my children, and made seed bombs.

We chose seeds of flower that attract butterflies



The method that we followed from the National Trust, called for flour and soil, water and seeds

mix 10 parts soil
and 1 part flower





Add some water and
mix to a sticky, doughy
texture.

roll into
small balls



roll the balls
around in the seeds,
until they are covered

leave the seed
bombs to dry.



As the seed bombs will take time to grow, we purchased some flowers to plant in the garden.

Here is what we chose.....

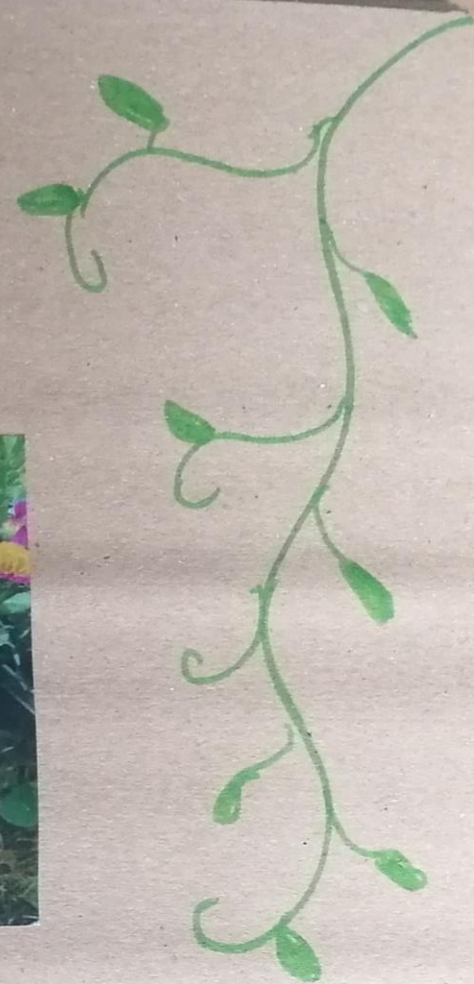


My daughter remembers trying to catch butterflies from a buddleia, while at a friends house when she was five years old. This influenced her choice.



My son remembers finding caterpillars amongst nasturtiums at his grandmothers house. This influenced his choice.

It is claimed that the other plants attract pollinators, such as bees and butterflies.



The children constructed a wigwam from bamboo canes a few months ago, to use as a den.

We thought it would be perfect to grow the sweetpeas and nasturtiums up it.



In order to attract more birds to my garden,
my son and I came up with the idea
of making a bird box.



We found scrap
wood in the
garage.



We measured and
cut some more



We cut the wood
and screwed it
together

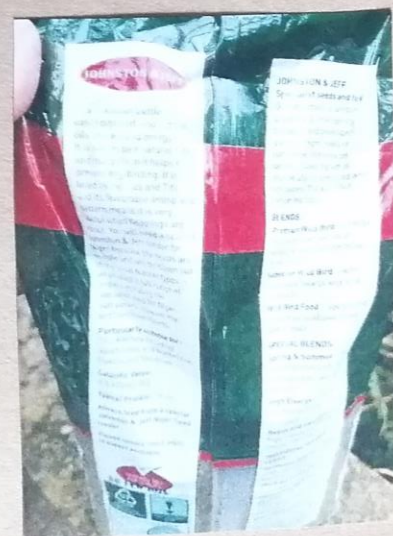


The finished box,
fixed in place.

Whilst exploring my garden, I could hear and see a few different types of birds. However I did not see any blue tits, which are the second most sighted birds in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

I purchased some niger seeds, which are supposedly a favourite of tits and finches.

Hopefully my garden will attract a larger variety of birds now.



Share



Throughout my time working towards the John Muir Award, I have been sharing my observations and ideas of conservation with my family and friends.

My children's knowledge of sustainability has improved through undertaking the activities in this scrapbook.

The seed bombs that we made have been shared with our neighbours, engaging them in conversation about biodiversity and how to promote sustainability.

I am also sharing my experience with my lecturer and module team.

