Wild Things
in my Garden

Exploring, discovering and
caring for nature
right outside my door.



Name: Cristiane Ribeiro de Freitas (2417935)

Module: Regaining Paradise?
Sustainability in the Early Years (ECEY6005)

Date: July 2026

1

Meet my Garden

Moving to Swansea in Wales introduced me to a quieter and often greyer landscape, and somewhere between work and family life, I gradually lost that sense of connection. The garden behind my house became background scenery rather than a place of meaning.





Growing up in Brazil, my relationship with nature felt instinctive and unavoidable. It was loud, vibrant and woven into everyday life.

2 Discovery

The garden was not dramatic or far away, but that is what made it meaningful. I had walked through it so many times without really noticing what was there. When I started to slow down and look more carefully, it began to feel different. I noticed birds singing in the morning, snails and slugs in the grass, flowers, bees, a hedgehog, and even a fox passing through the neighbouring garden. What once felt ordinary began to feel alive and full of small changes.















3 Explore



On one occasion, I noticed a seagull from my window, reminding me that even an urban garden can attract wildlife in unexpected ways.



Watching the slug move across the garden reminded me that every living creature, no matter how small, has a place in a healthy ecosystem.



Each morning, the birds filled the garden with song, making it feel alive before the day had even begun.

Explore

Photographing the bees encouraged me to slow down and notice their unique colours and markings, helping me appreciate the garden more thoughtfully.







As I spent more time observing the bees, I noticed they repeatedly returned to the same flowers rather than visiting every plant. This encouraged me to look more closely at their behaviour and appreciate how certain flowers are especially important for supporting pollinators.

Did you know?

One bee can visit up to 1,000 flowers in a single day!

Explore



At first, it just looked like another green shrub. As I became more curious, I discovered it was Savin Juniper and realised it was quietly providing shelter for birds and helping make the garden a safe place for wildlife.

Savin Juniper



An evergreen conifer with scale-like leaves and small, berry-like cones that turn dark blue when mature



The more I observed the bees, the more curious I became about the flowers they preferred. Discovering they were blackberry flowers helped me appreciate the connection between pollinators and the food we enjoy.

Elleaf Blackberry



A thorny shrub with arching canes that produces small white flowers in summer followed by blackberries in late summer and early Autumn.

4 Conserve

By this stage, the garden felt less like a background space and more like a place that needed care. Watching the bees helped me see how much wildlife depends on small things, such as flowers, shelter and quiet corners. It made me think more carefully about how simple choices in the garden can either help nature or make it harder for wildlife to thrive.



Placing a solitary bee hotel in the garden was one way of supporting the bees I had been observing.

As I learned more about solitary bees and their role in pollination, I began to understand how important small habitats can be in supporting wildlife.













Putting out bird seed was a small action, but it came from a growing awareness that the garden was already supporting wildlife and could offer even more with a little care.

Preparing pots and seeds for pollinator-friendly planting became part of this change in attitude. It felt like a small way of helping the garden better support the wildlife already living there.

5 Nature in Action

It was not only about adding something new but about learning how to care for the garden in a way that respects the creatures already depending on it. The more I observed, the more difficult it became to dismiss the garden as ordinary, and the more important it felt to respond to it with care.





A visiting pigeon foraging in the grass, showing how gardens can provide valuable feeding opportunities for wildlife.



Solitary bees were observed entering the bee hotel, demonstrating that it offers a safe nesting habitat.

A robin regularly visited the bird feeder, showing that the garden provides a reliable food source.





Garden Visitors:
Robin, Blackbird, Blue Tit, House Sparrow.

6 Share

The garden no longer felt like a place I simply passed through. It had become somewhere I noticed, appreciated and wanted to share with others.



Standing barefoot on the grass made that change feel physical as well as emotional. It reminded me that reconnecting with nature does not always need to be dramatic or far away. Sometimes it begins by paying closer attention to the place closest to home.





Seeing my husband and daughter stop to observe the bees reminded me that the garden had become more than just an outdoor space. It had become a place to learn, explore and enjoy together.

Share



Painting the bee hotel with my daughter sparked curiosity about bees and their importance in our garden.





I also shared the experience with a friends by talking about what I had observed and what I had learned about bees and pollinators.

7 What I Learnt

Before doing this work, I would never have imagined that my own garden could change the way I think about nature. It had always been there, familiar and ordinary, yet I had not understood how much life it was holding. Spending time with it more intentionally brought that into view. What I had taken for granted slowly began to feel layered, active and worth protecting.

Reading about John Muir added another dimension to that change. What drew me in was his belief that people are not separate from the natural world but deeply connected to it. That idea felt increasingly true the more time I spent in the garden. The bees moving between flowers, the birds arriving in the morning, the snails hidden in damp corners, all of it made the space feel less like something I owned and more like something I was sharing.

That shift in perspective affected the way I responded. Putting out bird seed, creating a bee hotel, and thinking more carefully about how the garden is managed no longer felt like minor tasks. They became ways of responding to what I had begun to notice. Care did not come first. It grew out of attention, and from that point it became difficult not to act.

I also came to understand that wildness is not defined only by remoteness or scale. A place does not have to be vast to matter. This small garden, bordered by roads and everyday routines, still provides food, shelter and movement for other living things. Recognising that completely changed the value of the space for me. I am leaving this experience with a quieter but much deeper respect for the natural world around me. What was once part of the background now feels significant. I notice more, question more, and feel a greater sense of responsibility towards the life already present there. More than anything, this has shown me that looking after wild places begins much closer to home than I once thought.

“It’s the little things citizens do. That’s what will make the difference.”

— Wangari Maathai



