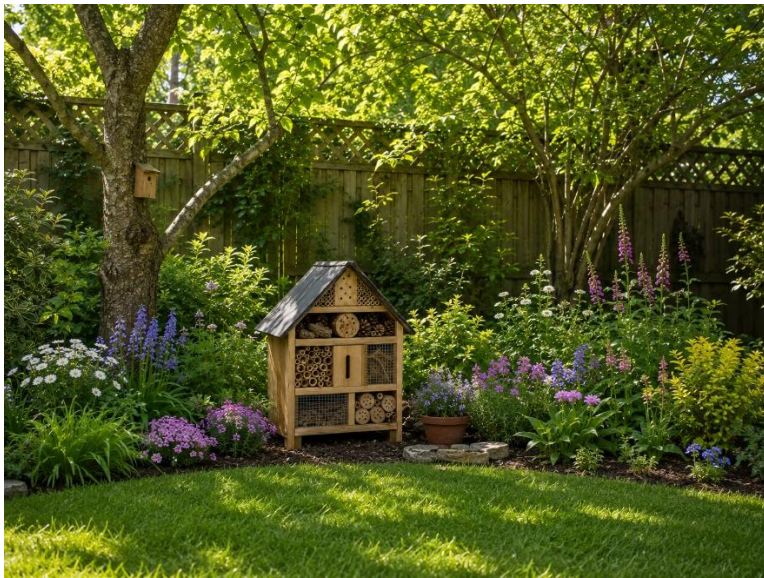


## Exploring My Garden: A Small Natural World at Home

### Where have I chosen?

For my natural area exploration, I have chosen my personal garden at home. Although it is a smaller outdoor space compared to a woodland or park, my garden provides an opportunity to observe nature closely and discover how living things change over time. My two children and I have enjoyed developing this mini beasts and wildlife house to support the growth of nature and show the children kindness is looking after creatures.

The garden includes areas of grass, plants, flowers, soil, outdoor containers and spaces where insects and small wildlife can be observed. It is a natural environment that changes throughout the seasons, providing ongoing opportunities for exploration, investigation and learning.



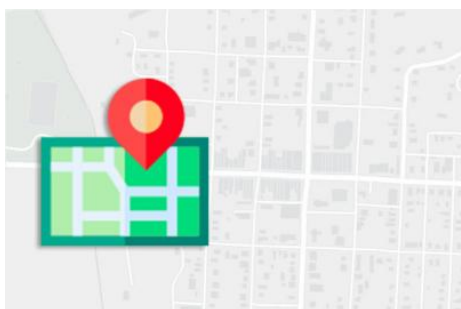
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### Page 2

### Location of my natural area:

My chosen natural area is my own garden, located at my home address.

📍 **Location: Swansea**



Choosing a personal garden means the natural environment is easily accessible and can be explored regularly. Unlike a one-off visit to a park or woodland, a garden allows changes in nature to be observed over time, such as plants growing, weather changes and seasonal wildlife activity.

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### **Page 3: Why Did I Choose This Area?** 🌱

I chose my personal garden because it demonstrates that valuable opportunities for nature-based learning can be created in everyday spaces. Children do not always need access to large outdoor areas to develop curiosity and understanding about the natural world. Even a small garden can provide meaningful experiences where children can observe, investigate and ask questions.

A garden encourages children to become active participants in their environment. They can explore natural materials, care for plants, observe insects and notice changes across different seasons. This supports the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) principle of providing enabling environments where children can explore, create and develop confidence through meaningful experiences (Department for Education (DfE), 2024).

I also chose this area because it represents a familiar and secure environment. Familiar places can help children feel confident to investigate independently while developing a stronger connection with nature. Also provides opportunities for family projects and encourages strong relationships between adults and children to engage in nature sharing interests in the outdoor environment.



## Page 4: What Can Be Discovered in My Garden? ✿

My garden provides opportunities for children to discover:

### 🌱 Plants and Growth

Children can observe seeds developing into plants, investigate different types of leaves and learn what plants need to survive.

### 🐞 Mini-beasts and Wildlife

Children can search for insects such as worms, butterflies, bees and beetles while developing respect for living things.

### 🍂 Seasonal Changes

Children can observe how the garden changes throughout the year, including new growth in spring, flowers in summer, falling leaves in autumn and changes caused by colder weather.

### ☁️ Weather and Natural Elements

Children can investigate rain, sunlight, shadows, wind and how weather affects plants and animals.

### 🪵 Natural Materials

Sticks, stones, leaves and soil can become resources for creative and imaginative play.



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## **Page 5: Early Years Learning Opportunities** 🌍

A garden environment supports children's development across all areas of learning.

### **Understanding the World**

Children develop knowledge of plants, animals, habitats and environmental responsibility. Gardening activities encourage children to understand growth, change and caring for living things.

### **Communication and Language**

Exploring outdoors provides opportunities for conversations, questioning and introducing new vocabulary such as "root", "stem", "habitat" and "insect".

### **Physical Development**

Gardening activities such as digging, planting, carrying water and collecting natural materials support coordination, strength and confidence.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Caring for plants encourages responsibility, patience and respect. Children can develop confidence by making decisions and solving problems independently.

### **Creativity**

Natural materials encourage open-ended creativity. For example, children may create pictures with leaves, build structures from sticks or develop imaginative games using outdoor resources.

Research highlights that play in natural environments supports creativity, wellbeing and children's ability to explore through meaningful experiences (Whitebread et al., 2017).



## Page 6: Reflection on My Garden Discovery 🌻

This project has demonstrated that nature-based learning can happen in everyday environments. A personal garden provides children with opportunities to observe carefully, investigate changes and develop a relationship with the natural world.

As an early years practitioner, I would use this space as a starting point for child-led exploration. Rather than directing every experience, I would encourage children to follow their interests by asking open-ended questions such as:

- "What do you notice?"
- "I wonder why this plant has changed?"
- "How could we care for this area?"
- "What creatures might live here?"

The garden also highlights the importance of sustainability and helping children understand their responsibility towards the environment. By involving children in

planting, caring for wildlife and observing seasonal changes, practitioners can encourage respect for nature from an early age.

Overall, my garden demonstrates that high-quality learning environments do not always require large outdoor spaces. With thoughtful planning, even a small natural area can become a place of discovery, curiosity and meaningful learning.

