EAEE6005C

Sustainability in the Early Year

Student Number: 1906617

Introduction

The John Muir Award encourages people of all backgrounds and ages to connect and care for wild places (Muir, 2014).

In looking up the John Muir award I began to reflect on possible opportunities of discovery. I reflected on my own childhood and decided to explore the open spaces around my home for inspiration.



Discover

Swansea is situated on the South Coast of Wales. I feel very lucky to live within 5 mins walk public gardens and woodland areas. I take many walks in these areas with my dog and my children.



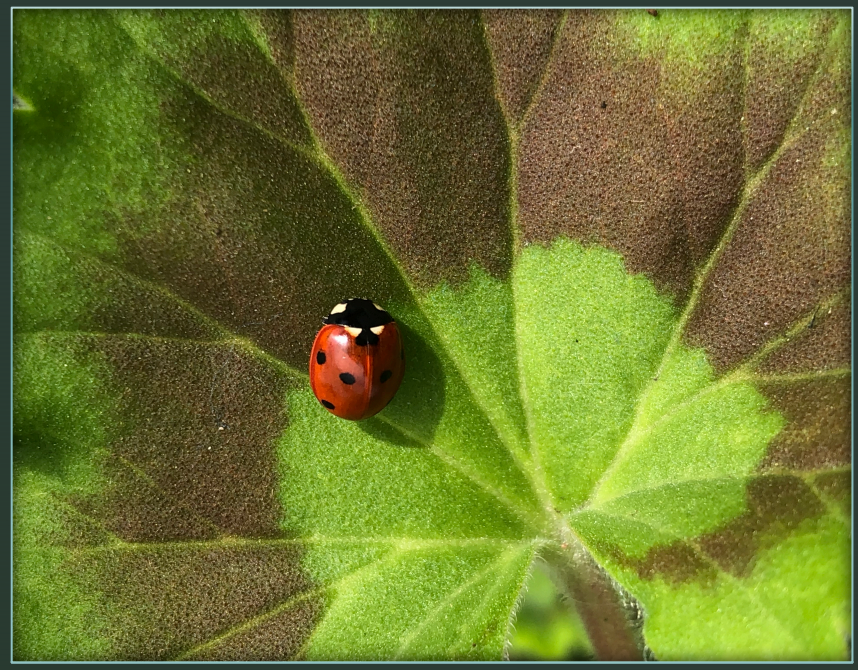


Where we live is beautiful, but how can I make a difference?

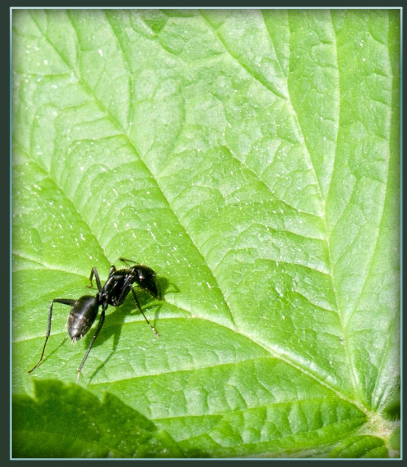
Discover

My garden holds special memories to me, its where I remember I spend the most amount of quality time with my family.

On a sunny evening in June, I decided to sit in my back garden and observe my surroundings. I asked my children to join me and was amazed to see how enthusiastic they were just to watch, wait and listen. We were apart of nature and there was an awakening of our senses, what had always been there was now somehow so much more obvious. We observed an ants trail running straight across the grass and up a nearby tree, the children were amazed to see the teamwork the ants used in order to take a leaf up the tree. It sparked questions of curiosity, do ants talk to each other? Do they have feelings? Are ants stronger than humans? This absolutely amazed me, we had never explored any conversation like it before and I relished in how I was able to open up their minds to thinking and questioning the world around them.







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Exploring

Now I was inspired and the more we looked the more we saw, we listened to the sounds of birds, my children recognized the sounds of a pigeon in the nearby wood, however we were unable to recognize the other sounds of bird's songs and thought this could be something we could do more often, and we could even make it into a game of finding the bird making the noise. We noticed two different species of beetles on the grass and a ladybird on a nearby plant. Our observations lead us into chatting about how we could develop our garden to support the natural wildlife. At the furthest part of our garden, we have an untouched area where we have allowed it to over grow down to us not been gardeners and not knowing what to do with it. This is where we decided to plan a project to support natural wildlife.





Beetles

Around 40% of the UK's insect's species are beetles. Many **beetles** are helpful to have in your garden as they will eat pests like aphids, slugs and maggots.



Ladybirds

Ladybirds are good for your garden as they eat aphids and pests. They are also food for many birds, being an important part of the animal food chain.

My Untouched Garden



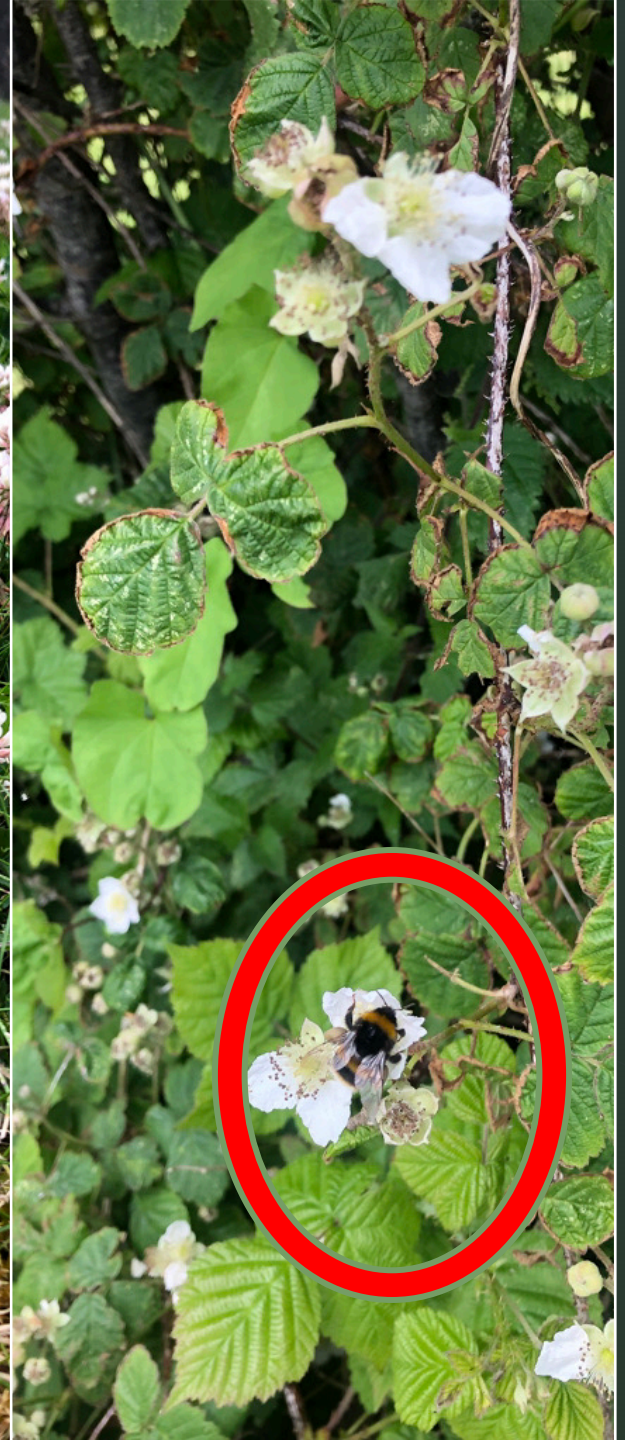






My untouched garden was full of brambles and weeds and my children, and I discussed options of clearing it away. However, at that moment I was struck with inspiration... my daughter noticed a bumble bee disappearing into a flower head on the bramble bush, she was extremely excited to see this and we again we decided to watch, listen and observe. Our observations lead us to counting how many flowers the bee stopped at to collect pollen and the longer we stood the more bees we saw. It again opened discussion from my daughter asking how many flowers a day do bee stops at? Do bees eat their own honey? If we cut down the brambles where will the bees go?





Explore

Clover

We found out that bees are particularly attracted to clover, it is a great source of nectar. Clover can play an essential role in supporting the ecosystem and great way to maximise gardens for bee food diversity.

Bramble Bushes

Research shows each bramble flower secretes lots of nectar for bees!

Bee Poem

Oh, to be a bee, your so busy all day
Serving your queen, there's no time to play
You work so hard gathering nectar
Little do you know you make our lives better
Transferring pollen from plant to plant
Fertilizing them gives them a chance
Because of you, our plants grow seeds
How can a tiny animal fulfil our needs
You shall be cared for we will show you our respect
By leaving you alone and supporting the ***John Muir Project***

By Maria Toshack



Art

Our passion for bees turned into a craft activity.



Conserve

- Finding an exhausted bee in the grass was fascinating. I found out that they can rest up to 30minutes and providing them with a small spoon of sugared water can help give them that boost to get them going again. To my amazement this actually worked, and this little bee flew off shortly after drinking.
- Sharing information with my children, family, work colleagues and pupils transferred important information how and why we should help save bees.

Lavender

Lavender has both pollen and nectar and because of its purple colourings it attracts bees like magnets.



Plant Pollinators Logo

The RHS launched the **Plants for Pollinators** logo in 2011, this is to encourage gardeners to plant these flowering plants which are packed with pollen and nectar.





Allowing my children to get involved gave them ownership and hands on experience.





Reflection

I soon realized that clearing my garden was not needed although it may not have looked well kept, making the discoveries of how it was contributing to our eco system gave it new importance and meaning. Adding lavender to my garden added more flowering plants that the bees could use to survive and thrive from.



Sharing my enthusiasm and knowledge for how important bees are important to our future developed curiosity and interest in my children to protect them in the future.

Even a shopping trip became a place where you could bee hunt!

The John Muir project has had an impact on my own thinking and my children's from this we have encouraged other family members to try and get involved in developing an aspect of their own garden to support local wildlife .

