

**John Muir Award -
Discover,
Explore,
Conserve,
Share.**



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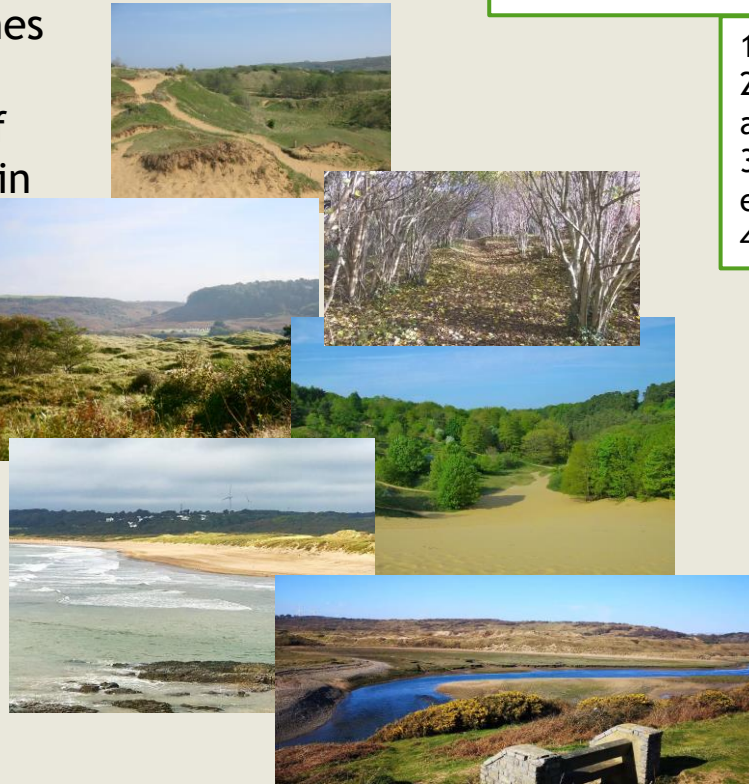
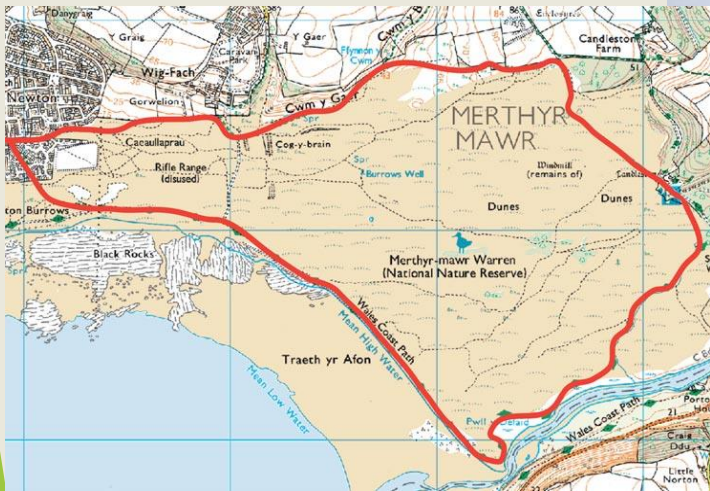
Tell me and I'll
forget.
Teach me and
I'll remember.
Involve me and
I'll learn.

Benjamin Franklin

Discover

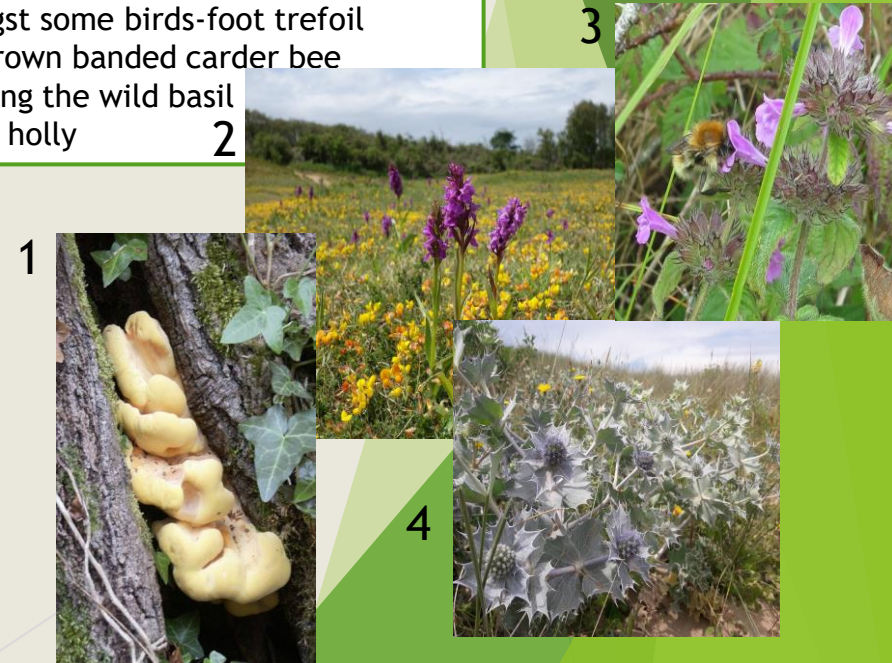
Merthyr Mawr Warren Nature Reserve

Merthyr Mawr Warren is an area rich in diversity. Conserved for its biodiversity you can walk from the Ogmore river along the beach through the sand dunes and into the woods. Deer roam free here and adders hide in the grasses of the sand dunes, warming themselves in the heat of the sun.



1. Slow worm
2. Rabbits
3. Adder
4. A Comma in some brambles
5. A Glow Worm
6. Long Horned Bee in its nest
7. A Nut Hatch

1. Chicken of the wood fungus
2. Common spotted orchid amongst some birds-foot trefoil
3. A brown banded carder bee enjoying the wild basil
4. Sea holly



Discover

Recently handed back to Merthyr Mawr Estate, the conservation projects that were instigated by Natural Resources Wales continue. Paths are monitored for erosion and diverted to conserve the area and make it safe for the public. The solar powered weather station provides vital information on weather patterns and regular litter picks occur keep the river-banks and beaches clear of litter washed up by the tide



Our family enjoy the beauty of the Warren and regularly walk through to the beach which can only be accessed by walking along the designated paths. To appreciate them from the saddle, I have to purchase a pass from the Estate and ensure I keep to the bridal paths. There is nothing better than riding early in the morning and catching sight of the kingfishers, cormorants and maybe if I'm lucky a deer or two.



Discover

These are the woods next to my house. They have been classified as an ancient wood and are cared for by a group of volunteers, The Tremains Woodland Rangers. They work alongside Bridgend County Borough Council biodiversity team and are responsible for maintaining the woodland, monitoring the sustainability of the environment and organising events to encourage children to become involved in sustainability activities. The wood has been awarded the Green Flag



The Keeper of the Woods.
Carved from a tree that had to be felled due to the storms making it unstable



Tremains Ancient Wood



Installation of wildlife cameras caught a cheeky blue tit having a closer look



Much of the woods was impassable until bridges and paths were created, most using resources from the woods.



The Rangers encourage schools and families to take part in nature activities

Discover

My garden is south facing so has the sun throughout the day. It has been a family garden that has provided a place for my sons to play safely, explore and have fun. They have grown up and left home so it was time to make the garden more sustainable.



The garden is frequented by the wildlife from the woods and field behind the house therefore it was an ideal place to ensure that it had everything to meet their needs



Explore

This Pieris flaming forest is a bee magnet. They love the small bell-shaped flowers.



Growing broad beans for the first time. The slugs were attacking them but I didn't want to use slug pellets, so my friend recommended porridge oats. They worked.



There are three azaleas that bloom in the Spring. Perfect for newly emerging bumble bees and the lavender is popular with all species of bee.



I rescued the fir tree. It was a Christmas decoration covered in fake snow and looking very sorry for itself. I put it into a bigger pot, and it is thriving. It will provide a home for spiders.



Butterfly heaven. Some of the plants that provide food and a nursery



My herb garden



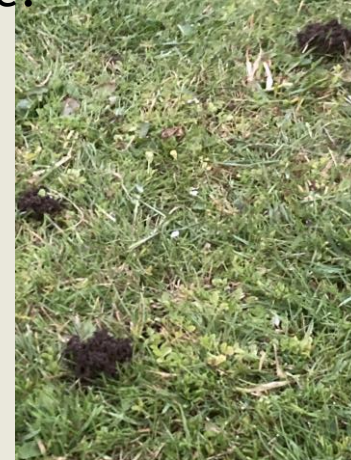
Thyme, chives and sage, rosemary to come as it pairs well with the thyme. Amongst the willow is mint, parsley, applemint and geraniums.



Explore



This plant was at the front of the house and looked as though it had died. The leaves had turned brown and brittle and the earth in the pot had receded but I didn't want to give up on it. I brought it round to the back garden, repotted it and watered it. Over the next few days tiny buds started to appear and it began to thrive again. If you give nature a chance it will survive.



The worms certainly like the lawn which is good news for the blackbirds and thrush that visit.

Explore

This area of the garden, behind the garage, was an ideal place to make an area that was safe to encourage more insects into the garden and to incorporate features such as a compost heap, a small pond and a sheltered place for bugs to inhabit.

Hedgehogs regularly visit the garden to search for slugs and worms of which there is an abundance, so this seemed an ideal opportunity to create an area for them to take shelter during the day.



The area is sheltered from the worst of the weather and receives equal amounts of sun and shade.



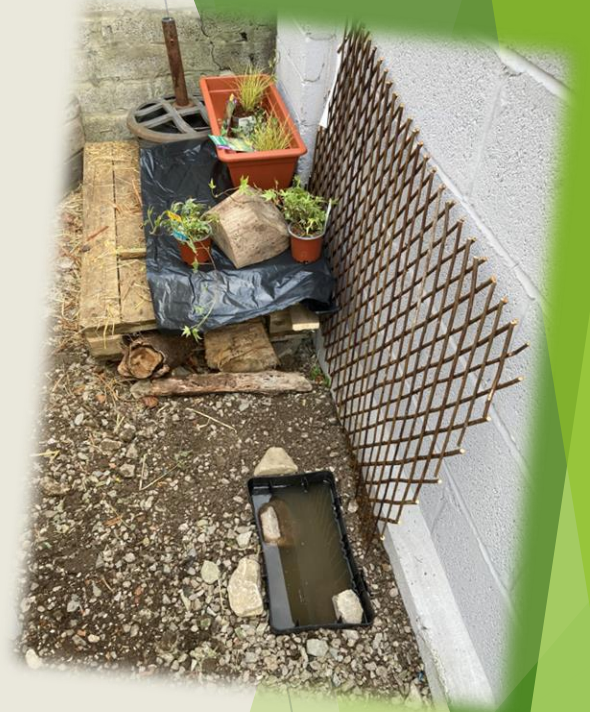
Frogs have been spotted so a compost bin would give them a safe place to shelter and a small pond with rocks to perch on would provide water for them and the hedgehog.

Explore

After clearing the area and ensuring any bugs living under the rubbish were transferred to a safe place, I built the bug hotel from old pallets.



There was an old dead tree stump in one corner so this was an ideal place for the compost bin. This would hopefully attract worms and by layering brown and green waste would break down into compost that could be reused in other areas of the garden



The pond was the bottom of an old tack box filled with rainwater and contained rocks for frog resting places and a way out for a thirsty hedgehog.

Conserve

The bug hotel contained rocks, sticks, rolled up cardboard and straw along with recycled plastic bottles filled with bamboo canes.



The finished compost bin. A lid will help with the composting process and a gap left at the bottom for creatures to venture in



I recycled some straw from the livery yard and placed it under the bug hotel. I am certain that someone has moved in already.



Conserve

From this



To this



Spiders and other insects like ivy so that is in the hanging basket and in the pot. There is a lattice fence for the ivy to climb up and provide a home for insects.



The wood chippings are the branches of trees in my father-in-laws garden. This will give a home to woodlice and other small insects including beetles.

Conserve



The gate is to stop the dog from disturbing any creatures that might be living in the area



The bird box is on the sheltered side away from direct sunshine and is perfect for birds or bees.



The bug hotel is covered with an old bin bag and held in place with roof tiles to protect it from the rain and wind

Conserve

The wood pigeons are quite acrobatic in their attempts to access the seeds and nuts.

Some opt for the easier option and clean up the fallen seeds.



Greenfinch, bullfinch, sparrows and collared dove love the mix of seeds.

Whereas the blue tit and magpie prefer the fat balls



The song thrush
And blackbird
are early risers
and enjoy the
fat juicy
worms.



This cheeky squirrel
enjoys the peanuts.



What Next?



A large raised bed to grow our favourite vegetables. Carrots, peas and salad leaves are the easiest to grow so ideal for beginners like us. Hopefully, we can use the compost from our compost bin.



Using potato sacks means that after the potatoes are harvested, the compost can be used for the vegetable patch. Staggering planting means crops of potatoes over a longer period.



A mini wild flower raised bed against the wall. This position will give the sun for most of the day but shade later in the afternoon. A magnet for butterflies, bees and a whole host of insects.



Natural Life



Take a moment to notice
The beauty of the trees.

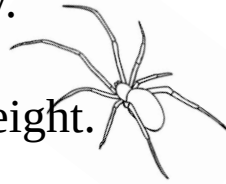
Sit and take a look
At the dancing leaves.

Note the little child
Laughing, playing with a toy.



Always so full of energy;
Humongous amounts of joy.

Don't crush the insects,
Who are 1/1000ths of your weight.



They may creep up your path,
But don't decide their fate.

Life's not about avoiding storms.
Instead, dance in the rain.



The Earth is so beautiful;
Why must we cause it pain?



Take time off your busy schedule
To glance at the starry night.

Because nature is genius.
So pretty, such a sight!



Miranda A.