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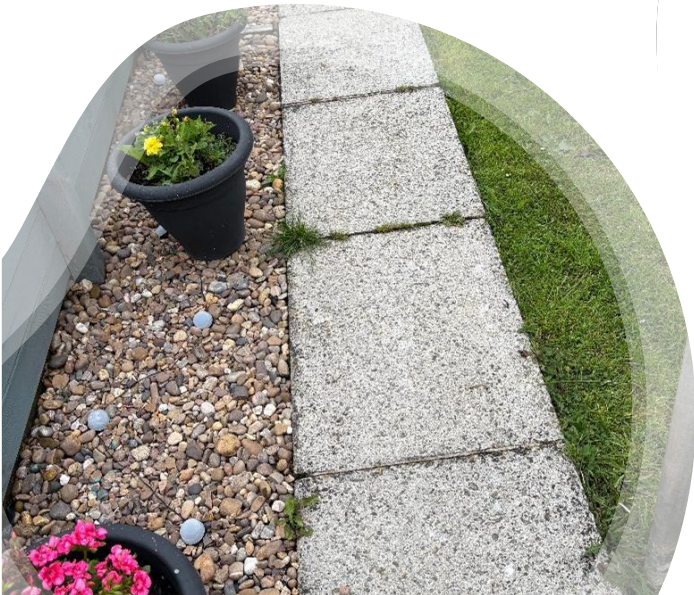
ECEY6005

Sustainability in Early Years

Our Garden



Discover



I chose my garden as the focus for my John Muir Project because it is our special place where we feel safe, happy and connected as a family. It has been wonderful to watch my daughter grow, learn and discover new things there over the years. Our garden holds so many fun filled memories and whenever I look outside I smile as I remember them all.

I can picture us on warm summer days playing together, planting flowers and enjoying picnics on the grass. We were surrounded by the beautiful sounds of birds singing in the trees and the gentle buzzing of bees as they move from flower to flower. I often think back to 2020 when the world stood still and our garden became our whole world. Every day brought a new adventure as we searched for insects, watched birds and squirrels and even welcomed a frog that decided to join us in the paddling pool.

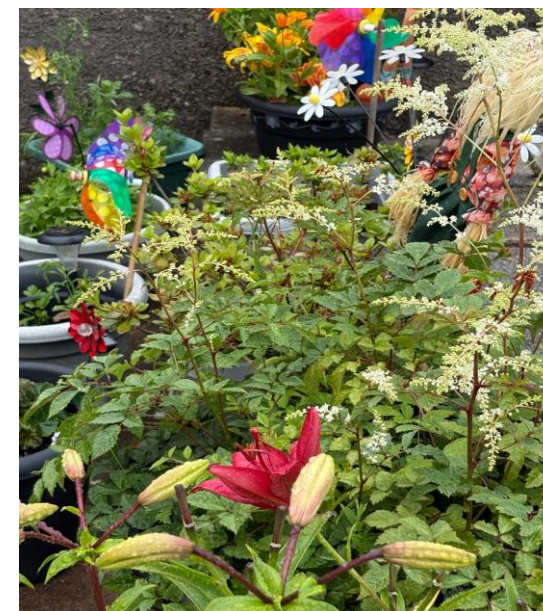
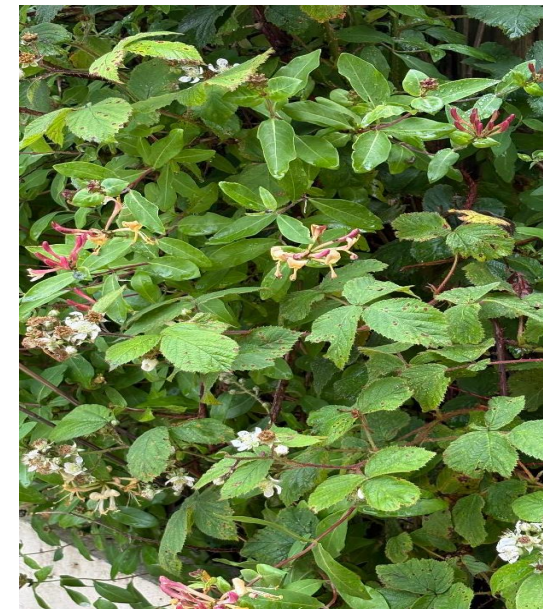
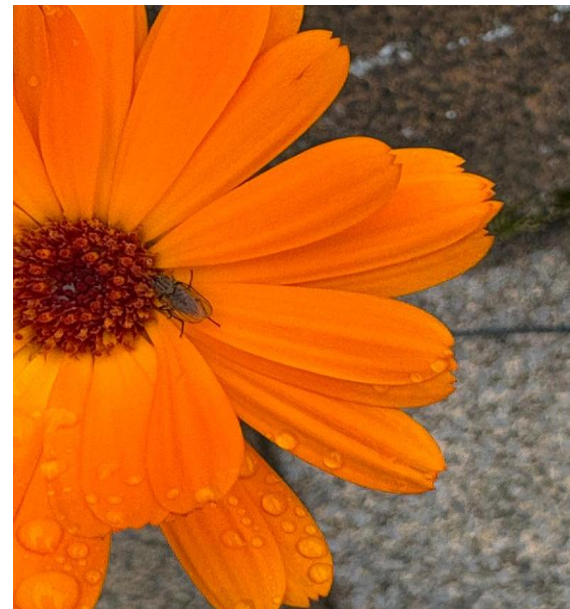
Our garden will always be my favorite place because it is more than just a garden it is where some of our happiest family memories were made. It is a place filled with love, laughter and togetherness and it will always hold a special place in my heart.

‘When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world’. – John Muir



My garden has many potted flowers including honeysuckle that climbs freely along the walls adding colour and life to the space. As I water the flowers each day I often notice bees busily moving from one bloom to another collecting pollen. I love taking a moment to stop and watch them as they work. The gentle buzzing sound they make is one of my favourite sounds in the garden and always makes me feel calm and connected to nature. I enjoy seeing how focused they are as they visit each flower and it amazes me how such small creatures play such an important role in helping plants grow.

On warm sunny day's the garden seems to come alive with the sound of bees humming around the flowers. Watching them has helped me appreciate nature even more and reminds me how important it is to create spaces where wildlife can thrive. Seeing the bees return year after year makes me happy and I feel proud that my garden provides them with a place to feed and flourish.





Did you know

Bees are some of the hardest workers in nature. They help pollinate many of the foods we eat such as apples, broccoli, squash and almonds. In fact, one in every three bites of food we eat is thanks to pollinators like bees. They also help wildflowers grow which provides food and shelter for lots of other wildlife. Without bees many of our favourite foods would be much harder to grow. That's why these tiny insects play such a big role in keeping our gardens, countryside and food supply thriving.

Explore

Since moving into my home almost ten years ago I have admired this beautiful tree growing in my garden without ever knowing what it was. I enjoy watching its white blossoms appear in spring and its bright red berries brighten up the autumn months but I never thought to identify it. Taking part in the John Muir Award has encouraged me to look more closely at the nature around me and learn about the wildlife in my own garden. Through this experience I discovered that the tree is a Rowan also known as a Mountain Ash. It has been exciting to finally put a name to a tree that has been part of my daily life for so many years and it has helped me appreciate even more the insects, birds and other wildlife that it supports. I found out that the Rowan or Mountain Ash is one of the most beautiful native trees in our countryside. In spring its clusters of white flowers attract bees, hoverflies, butterflies and many other pollinating insects. By autumn the tree is covered in bright red berries that provides important food sources for birds such as thrushes and blackbirds.

Beneath the Rowan grows a rich layer of wild foliage, creating a sheltered habitat for insects, small creatures and other wildlife. While exploring this area I even spotted a frog hiding amongst the plants showing how valuable this miniature ecosystem is. The Rowan tree supports a wide variety of life making it an important and fascinating part of the natural environment.



Explore

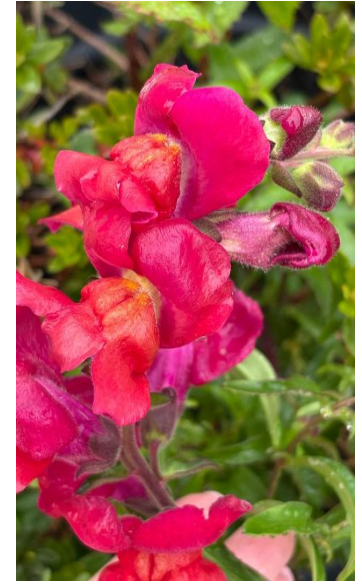
While researching my Rowan tree for the John Muir Award I learned that the moss and algae growing on its trunk are important for wildlife. The moss holds moisture and provides a home for tiny insects and spiders while the algae growing on the bark are a sign of clean air. Before doing this research I had never realised that these small plants played such an important role. Learning about them has helped me appreciate how even the trunk of the tree supports nature and creates a habitat for many small creatures in my garden.

"Between every two pine trees there is a door leading to a new way of life." John Muir





Insects I discovered
in my garden



The wildflower area at the back of the garden is a beautiful place full of colour and life. Bright flowers bloom in shades of yellow, purple, pink and blue creating a stunning display. On warm days, a sweet floral scent fills the air while bees buzz gently from flower to flower. The colourful flowers attract many different types of butterflies which flutter gracefully through them adding even more beauty and movement. The area feels peaceful and idyllic, making it a wonderful place to relax, enjoy nature and watch wildlife thrive.

Wildflowers are very important for the ecosystem as they provide food for bees, butterflies and other pollinators by giving them nectar and pollen. These insects help plants grow and reproduce. Wildflower areas also provide shelter for insects and small animals which helps support birds and other wildlife. The roots of the plants help keep the soil healthy and prevent erosion. By supporting many different species wildflower areas help create a healthy and balanced environment. They not only help wildlife but also add beauty, colour and lovely scents to the landscape.



A poem written by myself and my daughter

Buzz, buzz, buzz, it's me,
The nosiest little bumble bee!

I zoom around from flower to flower,
Collecting nectar every hour.
But if I see something new nearby,
I simply have to stop and fly by.

I love to see what's going on,
From early morning until dawn.
I'll peek at hats, bags and shoes...
Being nosy is what I choose.

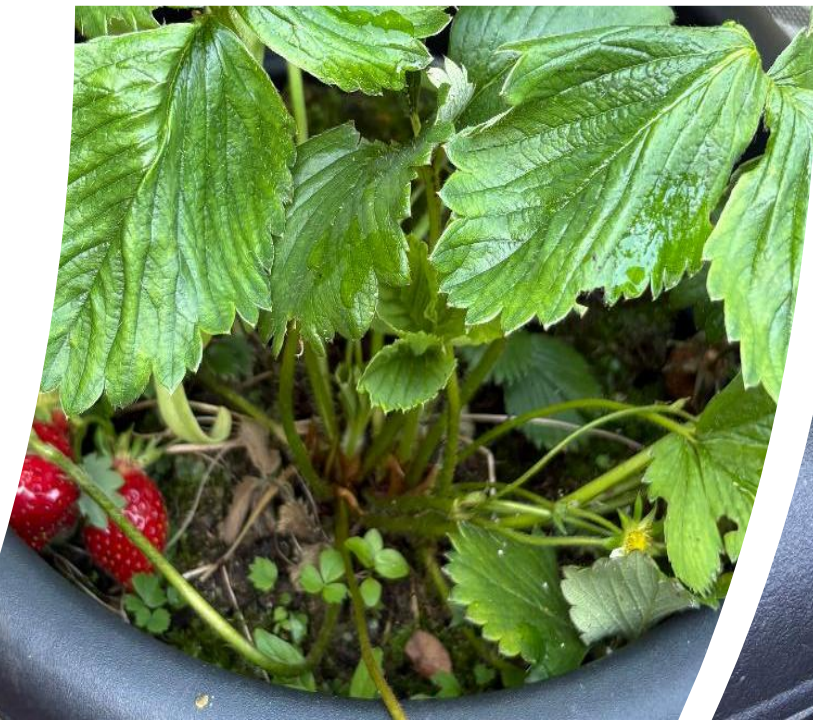
People spot me and run away,
Waving their arms in great dismay!
But don't be scared, I'm just saying,
Hello! What are you doing today?

I help the flowers bloom and grow,
Much more than most people know.
So if you see me buzzing free,
Just smile and wave at little old me.



STRAWBERRIES and potatoes

We are really proud of our home grown strawberries and potatoes. My daughter loved helping me plant them and we both enjoy watching them grow a little more each week. It was exciting to see the first strawberries appear and to know that the potatoes were growing under the soil. Growing them together has been a great way to teach my daughter where our food comes from and why growing our own food is important. She has learned that growing fruit and vegetables at home is more sustainable because it reduces food miles, creates less packaging waste and is better for the environment. We cannot wait to harvest them and enjoy eating them together. The flowers on the strawberry plants also attract bees and other pollinators which help plants grow. Growing our own food has been a fun and rewarding experience helping us spend quality time together outdoors while learning how to care for nature and live more sustainably.



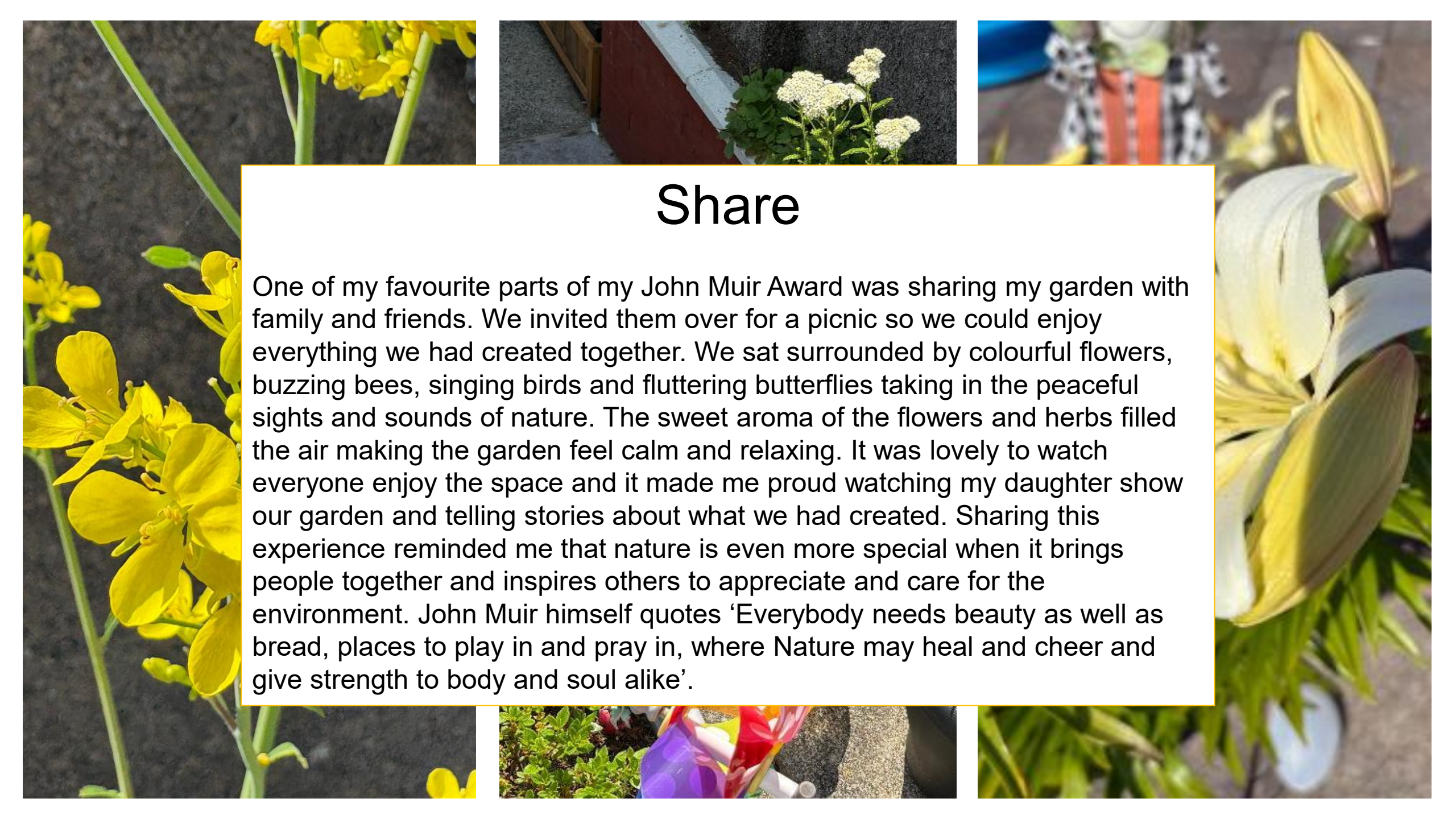
Conserve

To help conserve wildlife I decided to add bird feeders and a bird bath to my garden. I conducted some research to help me find out the benefits and found that these simple additions to my garden provide birds with a safe place to find food and fresh water especially during hot weather and in the winter when these can be difficult to find. Since adding them I have noticed more birds visiting my garden which has been exciting to watch. By providing food and water I am helping to protect local wildlife and encouraging more birds to use my garden as a safe habitat. This also helps restore nature by creating a space where wildlife can thrive. Looking after birds in this simple way has shown me that even small actions can make a big difference to conserving nature and supporting biodiversity.



One of my favourite parts of adding the bird feeders and bird bath has been watching the birds with my daughter. We often see little brown and black sparrows visiting throughout the day happily hopping around the garden looking for food. We have also been lucky enough to see a pair of doves that visit together regularly, they always seem to stay close to each other which is lovely to watch. Sometimes the little birds chirp noisily at one another almost as if they are arguing because one will not move over to let the other have a turn at the feeder. My daughter and I always smile and giggle as we watch their funny behaviour. These special moments have helped us feel more connected to nature and reminded us how important it is to create safe spaces where wildlife can feed, drink and thrive. As John Muir so beautifully said, 'but in every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks'. Watching the birds together has shown us that even the simplest moments in our own garden can bring joy, wonder and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.





Share

One of my favourite parts of my John Muir Award was sharing my garden with family and friends. We invited them over for a picnic so we could enjoy everything we had created together. We sat surrounded by colourful flowers, buzzing bees, singing birds and fluttering butterflies taking in the peaceful sights and sounds of nature. The sweet aroma of the flowers and herbs filled the air making the garden feel calm and relaxing. It was lovely to watch everyone enjoy the space and it made me proud watching my daughter show our garden and telling stories about what we had created. Sharing this experience reminded me that nature is even more special when it brings people together and inspires others to appreciate and care for the environment. John Muir himself quotes 'Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike'.

Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough was born in 1926 and grew up in Leicester where he developed a love of nature from an early age. As a child he enjoyed exploring the countryside, collecting fossils and wildlife and learning about the natural world. These early experiences inspired his lifelong passion for nature and led to his successful career as a broadcaster, biologist and environmentalist. He is a British TV presenter and nature expert and has spent many years making documentaries about animals and the environment. His programmes have helped people understand how important the natural environment is and why it must be protected. Furthermore, David Attenborough has taught people about problems such as climate change, plastic pollution and animals losing their habitats. Like John Muir he believes that everyone has a responsibility to care for nature and encourages people to improve their local environment by planting flowers and trees, creating spaces for wildlife and helping insects such as bees and butterflies. His work has inspired millions of people to protect nature and make the world a healthier place for future generations.

