

Creating a Wildlife-Friendly Garden

A John Muir Award Portfolio



"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

- John Muir



Welcome to My Journey



A garden feature designed to provide flowers and water for visiting wildlife

I decided to do my John Muir Award in my own garden to prove that real conservation can start right at home.

By watching local wildlife, spotting different plants and animals, and making small changes to help habitats, I learned that even a small city garden can be important for nature.

During my project, I worked through the four John Muir Award challenges: Discover, Explore, Conserve, and Share.

“My garden gives me a sense of calm, pride, and a real connection to nature. It means even more to me knowing that wildlife can find a safe place here.”



Discover • Explore • Conserve • Share



Discover my garden

Looking beyond what I saw every day.

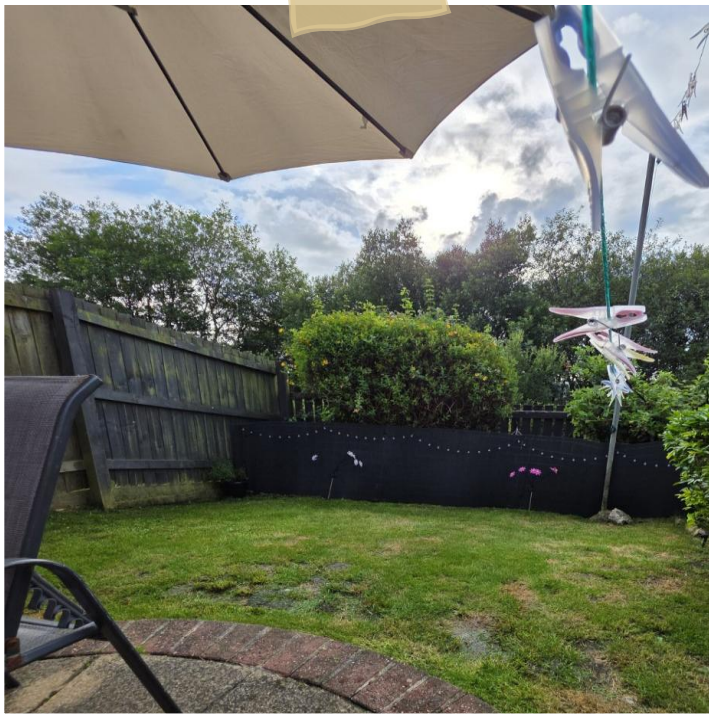


When I started this project, I noticed that I had often missed the wildlife already living in my garden. Taking a closer look, I saw birds at the feeders, insects on the flowers, and thick shrubs offering shelter. I also saw that each part of the garden created its own habitat, all of which helped support more wildlife.



My First Discovery:

"I realised that nature was always around me. I just needed to slow down and pay attention to it."



"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."

-John Muir

Explore

Looking more closely at the habitats within my garden.



When I started paying more attention to my garden, I noticed that each area supported its own kind of life. Thick plants near the fences provided animals with shelter, flowers attracted pollinators, and shady spots retained enough moisture for tiny creatures. By looking closely, I realised that every part of the garden played a role in the bigger ecosystem.

Exploring More Closely:

When I slowed down and paid attention, I started to notice details I usually missed.

"Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world."

-John Muir



Conserve

Making My Garden More Wildlife-Friendly

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While working on the conservation component of my project, I implemented practical measures to help wildlife in my garden. I planted many types of nectar-rich flowers to bring in bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. I also kept the bird feeders filled so birds always had food and used colourful plants to give animals more places to hide and feed. These small steps showed that even simple changes in a family garden can help support biodiversity.

Making a Difference:

Making space for wildlife in my garden has given it a real sense of purpose. I've come to see that conservation really comes down to the small choices we make each day.

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

-John Muir



Supporting Wildlife

Creating a safe and welcoming garden for nature.



During this project, I hoped my garden would be more than just a pretty place. I chose flowers that offer nectar for pollinators, kept bird feeders filled to help local birds, and made sure there was fresh water in hot weather. I also started making bee cups and added more wildlife-friendly spots to boost biodiversity. These simple steps showed me that small efforts can really help support nature.

My Reflection:

Seeing more wildlife visit my garden has been one of the most rewarding parts of this project. Each new flower and every bird that stopped by showed me that even small changes matter.

Nature Note:

Flowering plants add colour to our surroundings and give bees, butterflies, and other pollinators the nectar and pollen they need. This helps keep ecosystems healthy.

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

-John Muir

Night Visitors

Creating a safe haven for hedgehogs.



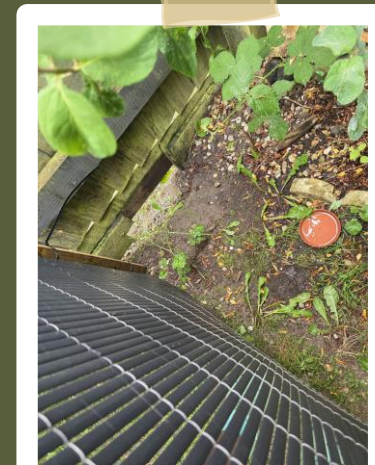
Nature Note:

Hedgehogs often travel more than a mile each night as they look for food and mates. If gardens are connected with small holes in fences, it helps them move safely from one area to another.

"I feel proud knowing that wildlife has a safe place in my garden. Seeing the hedgehogs return showed me that conservation does not always require a big effort. Sometimes, it starts with a small garden and a simple act of kindness toward nature."

One of the best parts of working toward my John Muir Award has been watching hedgehogs visit my garden more often. Hedgehogs play an important role in the UK's biodiversity, but their numbers have declined significantly due to habitat loss, roads, and barriers such as fences.

I made my garden more wildlife-friendly by putting out fresh water and extra food, and by creating a safe path through my fence for hedgehogs. Watching them come back showed me that even small steps in conservation can really help.



*"When we try to pick out anything by itself,
we find it hitched to everything else in the
Universe."*

-John Muir



Sharing my learning and inspiring others to care for nature.

Completing my John Muir Award has changed how I see nature. I've learned that conservation isn't just about large forests or nature reserves; it can start in our own gardens and local areas. By watching wildlife, creating habitats, and reflecting on what I've seen, I now appreciate biodiversity much more and understand why it's important to protect it. As an Early Years practitioner, I want to help children become curious about and respectful of nature. I aim to give them chances to watch wildlife, care for living things, and see that even small actions can help the environment.

Looking Ahead:

This experience has motivated me to keep working on my garden and to show children and their families that sustainability can start right at home.

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread."

-John Muir

Share



My John Muir Journey

Reflecting on what I have learned.



Before I started this project, I thought of my garden as just a relaxing spot. Taking part in the John Muir Award has helped me see how much wildlife and how many habitats are actually there. Watching nature closely made me realise that every flower, insect, bird, and hedgehog plays an important role in the ecosystem.

What means the most to me is knowing my garden gives wildlife a place to find food, water, and shelter. This experience has made me even more committed to looking after nature and reminded me that conservation starts with small, daily choices.

I want to keep improving my garden so more wildlife can thrive. I also hope to inspire the children I work with to value and care for the nature around them.

"Knowing that wildlife has a place of safety in my garden makes me incredibly happy and reminds me that even the smallest actions can make a difference."

- My John Muir Journey

"The mountains are calling and I must go."

-John Muir



A photograph of a garden. On the left, a dark green wooden fence runs along the edge. In the center, a large, dense green bush stands. To the right, a clothesline is visible with a pink clothespin attached. The ground is covered in green grass. In the foreground, a portion of a dark metal chair is visible on the left, and a brick path leads into the garden.

"Every garden has the potential to become a sanctuary for wildlife. We simply have to choose to care."

Thank you for sharing my John Muir journey.