

Regaining Paradise? Sustainability in the Early Years



Module code: ECEY6005

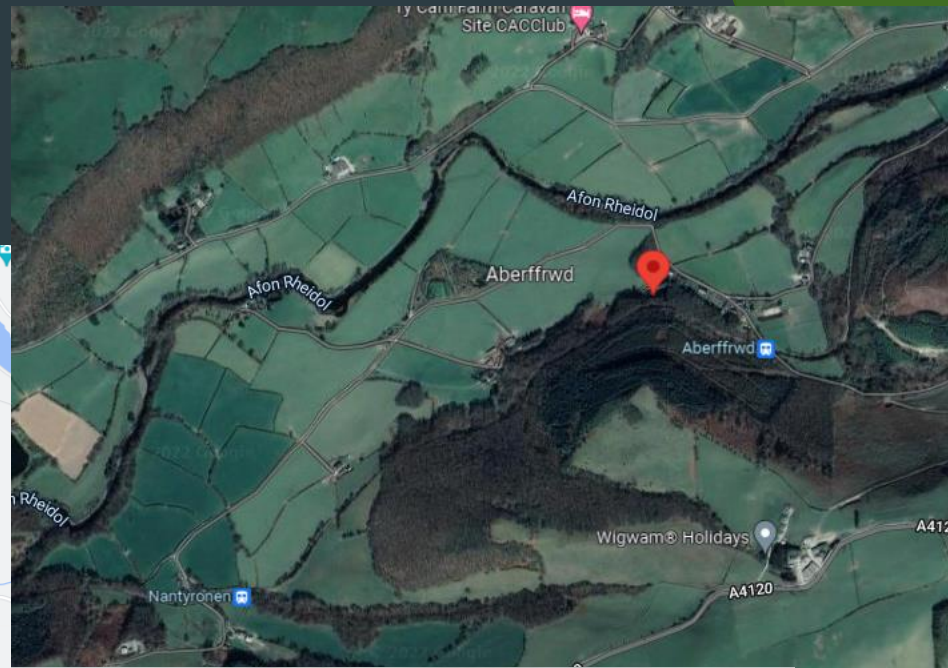
Student Number: 1901537

John Muir Award

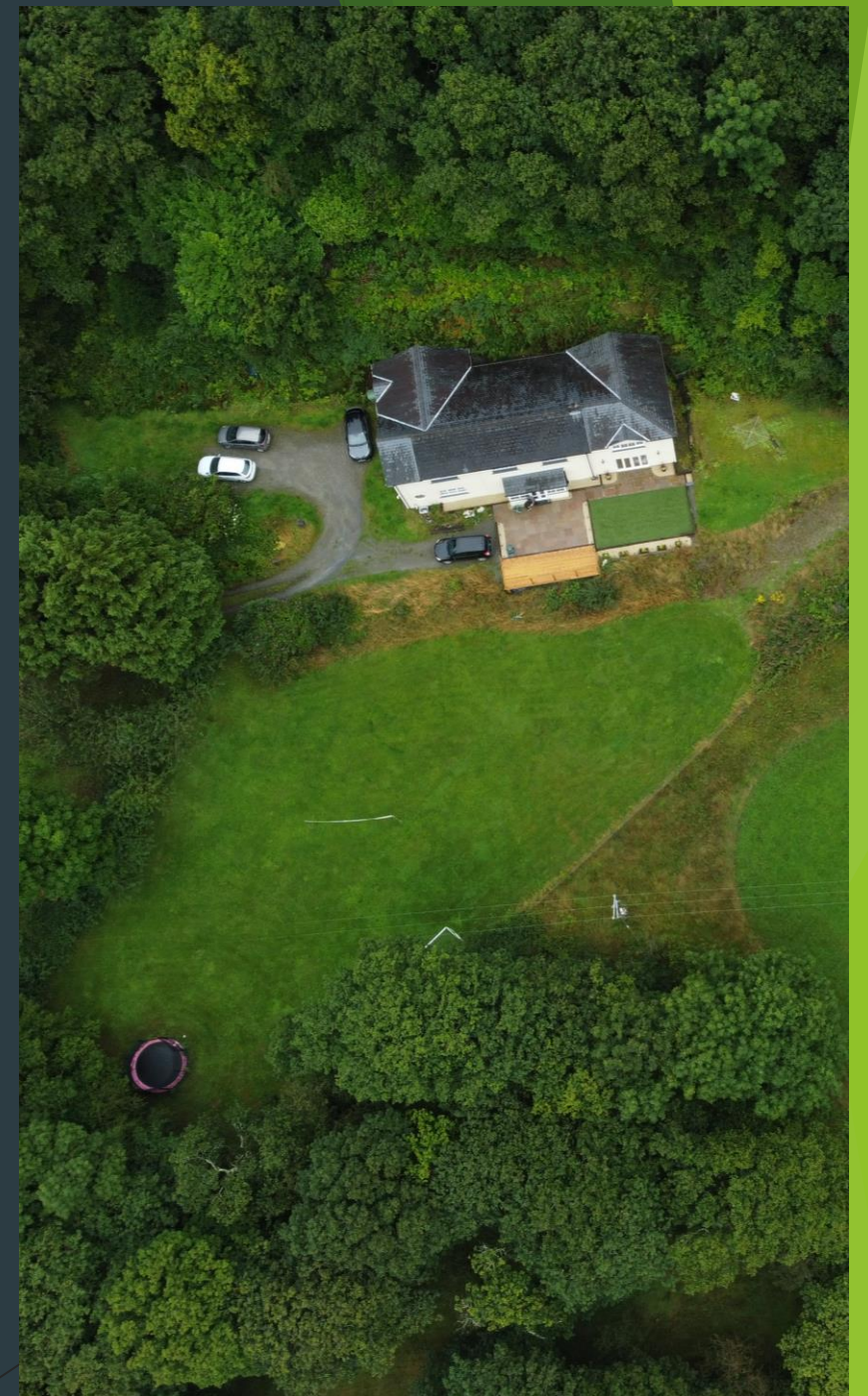
Where is my Area?



The area I have chosen is my home in Aberffrwdd, it is a small village in the countryside and a place I love to come back to and relax. I have big forestry at the back of my house and a big field at the front of my house, it is a very peaceful environment with plenty of animals, plants, and trees.



Aerial Images of my area and the forestry.



When looking at my area I found a variety of different trees and bushes.



When looking at the different trees and bushes
I found many different heights and textures.

I had:

- Great Laurel
- White Willow
- Oak Trees
- Holly
- Fern Trees
- Redbay
- Ash Trees





What is in my garden? Un-natural recourses

Recourses found in my garden that are not natural:

- Decking
- Pebbles and slabs
- Swing
- Goal post, trampoline, and badminton net
- Lights
- Rocks
- Astro turf grass

What did I notice about my area?

I noticed that my area has been neglected over the years and I have not appreciated the beauty of the outdoors and have not conserved the area as I should have. I realised that there were not enough flowers for the insects in my area as well as this the flowers and plants I did have were very green and not very appealing. There is no colour apart from the occasional flower growing here and there and so I decided that my area needed more colourful flowers to encourage different bugs to come and explore, such as wasps, bees, butterflies and so forth. In order to do this I needed to choose an area where I could plant my flowers and these are the areas I considered.

- My field
- Forestry
- Bank
- In plant pots up the top by the decking

What is in my Garden?

Natural resources



Resources found in my garden that are natural:

- Flowers
- Grass
- Weeds
- Trees
- Dirt
- Bugs
- Plants

These have all grown naturally without me doing anything to help them.

After Looking at the trees and bushes I decided to look at what plants and flowers I had in my garden and found many different textures.

In my area I had:

- Broadleaf Plantain
- Daisies
- Dandelions
- Broadleaf Arnica
- Starved Aster
- Lesser Celandine
- Oxlips



When looking at these flowers I noticed that there were bugs that were attracted to the plants



Wasps and bees are attracted to these plants because they feed on the sweet, high-energy nectar produced by the flowers. Because of this I have decided to plant some more plants in my area in order to help the bees and wasps in getting the energy needed from the flowers.

Forestry or bank



The problem with planting flowers on the forestry or bank was that there were thorns and leaves which were difficult to clear due to the area being on a slant, and the ground was not suitable to plant flowers in, meaning this area also had to be ruled out.

My Field



The field I have is a great space for my little niece and pets to run around and explore however the problem I had with planting flowers in my field was that it gets mowed frequently and so the flowers would be destroyed. I had to rule this area out.



The area I decided to plant my plants



I decided to plant my flowers at the bottom of my field, the reason behind this was because all my previous pets have been buried here, but the area has become overgrown.

I did not like the thought of my previously loved pets being forgotten in this way and so thought it would be good to add some life into the area by adding flowers. As well as this it would help educate my niece on life lessons and how to keep memories alive.

I knew the area would be a good location for the flowers as there is a lot of dirt to plant them. Although my area is at the bottom of my field it is in a corner that is never mowed meaning the flowers would not be destroyed. However, before planting any flowers I needed to clear out the space.

Exploring my chosen area

Worms and bugs live in the area I have chosen within the dirt. As well as this 3 of my loved pets are buried there so that they remain close to us as a family and their home where they lived among us.

My family uses the space around this area, however, have not used this specific area in a long time as it has become overgrown. If cleared my family could use and enjoy this area and it would benefit them as they may feel comfort knowing they are keeping the area clear and tidy. As well as this it would benefit my little niece as it would give her more freedom to run freely around the garden without having to worry about getting too close to the thorns and nettles and getting hurt.

As well as this area benefiting my family it also benefits the bugs and insects living in the area as it gives them plants and flowers to explore. These plants and flowers may help them by giving them a source of food or shelter.

Conserve - What I did



I began by clearing the area with hedge cutters, and clippers and removed the thorns and nettles so that the area was more kid-friendly.

I then cleared the leaves with a rake until I was left with a nice big area of dirt ready to plant my flowers and plants to help the bugs and us as a family to remember our loved pets.

Planting the flowers

I decided on bright colourful flowers to represent the bright and colourful personalities that each one of my pets had and also to add some colour so that when people visited the area it would make them feel happy rather than sad when looking at the overgrown area.

I felt as though this also helped to educate my niece and help her in remembering that every life is important and should not be forgotten.

Planting these flowers brought me a sense of peace as I felt as though I was remembering and still looking after my lost pets.



Whilst planting the flowers I noticed that there were a lot of worms in the ground living among the dirt, I tried not to disturb them whilst planting the plants. After planting the flowers I noticed that bugs and insects had come to see what was there. Pictured below is a bee that was attracted to the flower and came over to explore 10 minutes after planting it.

I found that the bees loved the Primroses that I planted in the area. According to Almanac (2022), bees can not see the colour red but are drawn to purple, blue, white, and yellow, which explains why the bee liked the primroses that I planted as they are white and yellow. Knowing that bees liked these colours I decided to plant two bunches of purple flowers which benefits the bees and wasps.

<https://www.almanac.com/best-flowers-bees#:~:text=A%20bee%E2%80%99s%20flower%20preference%20depends%20on%20the%20length,short%20tongues%20go%20for%20daisies%2C%20asters%2C%20and%20sunflowers.?msclkid=d38eff36bf2a11ecada28553f7faa6f5>



The Final Look



I had to work around the stones placed on the floor which are put there so that we know where each animal is buried and so that we do not disturb them when planting flowers. Planting these flowers has given the area some life again and has transformed the area from an overgrown dull sad-looking corner to one that everyone can explore and appreciate.

I decided not to plant too many flowers as I thought it would be nice to come back to the area and plant some more flowers with my family so that we can all remember our loved pets together.



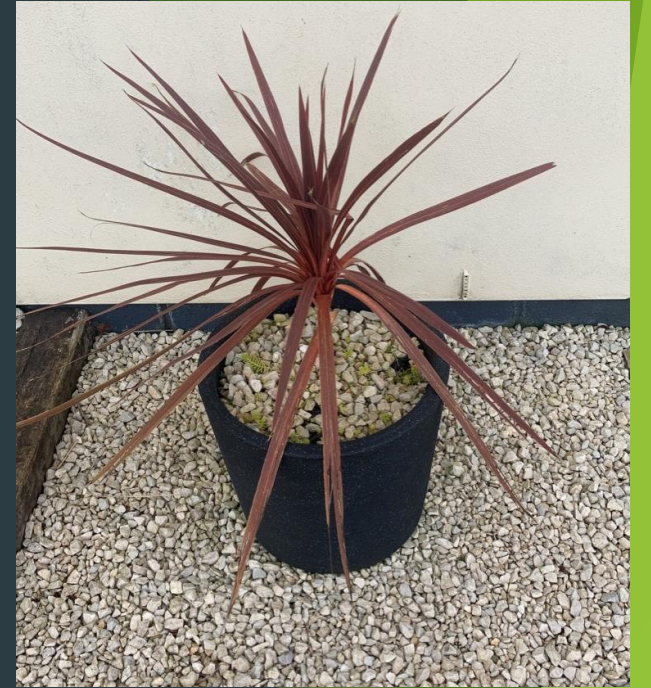
Now that I have planted some flowers around my garden my area now allows me and others to do plenty of things, these are things like;

- Run around the field
- Explore the bugs living in the area
- Plant flowers and learn about the different plants and flowers that there are and how they can help different insects
- Appreciate previously loved animals and give us a place to remember them
- A place for my niece to learn about natural and unnatural resources and the difference between them
- Relax in my area and appreciate the different colours and textures.
- Water the flowers and plants
- Draw, take or paint pictures of the bright colours added to my area.

Flowers for the insects

As well as planting flowers down the bottom of the garden I also decided to plant some up the top by the decking. Because the area of the decking is not suitable for planting plants I bought some flower pots in order to put some compost in and plant some flowers. I then added some pebbles on top so that it matched the area I had. Not only does this help the bees and wasps and other insects but it also meant I could give my little niece a pot in which she could make her own and plant what she wanted too, giving her some real hands-on experiences that would educate her on life and what is needed to keep things alive.

This also helped brighten my garden up a little and gave the insects and bugs a place to explore.



The final product



I really liked how my area turned out and feel as though it adds to the area whilst still fitting in with the scene. I will continue to look after my area by watering the plants and flowers and helping them to stay healthy.



How I use to view my area!

My drawing represents how I use to view my area, it was overgrown and messy, and Impossible to plant anything. The only colours I could see were brown and many different shades of green. I could not get to the corner as there were brambles, thorns, and nettles in the way and it was difficult to look at, and know where to begin clearing it.



How I now view my area!

I now see my area as a nice big canvas for me to be able to improve and explore.

I've cleared all the thorns, nettles, and brambles and have planted some nice flowers that have added some colour to the corner. I can now also see the tree we previously planted for our pets and the stones that are placed there to remember each one.

I have a clear area to work on and access to the whole area so that I can plant flowers all around, it looks a lot better already.



Reflection

On reflection, before I started the John Muir Award I never appreciated nature and all that it could do. I found myself being reliant on unnatural resources to make my area exciting and intriguing. However when I took a step back and looked at what was within my area and how each plant, flower, or tree grows I really appreciated the natural aspect of it and how important it is for us to conserve the area and make the most of the natural resources around us.

As well as this it has helped me reflect on other mammals' lives and how important each living thing is whether it is a bug, insect, pet, flower, plant, tree, or so forth, each living thing should matter and it should not be down to us as humans to decide what gets to live and die, we should try and help each living thing in any way that we can.

I now know that I will be better educated and more aware of the natural things surrounding us and will appreciate the beauty of being able to go outside and explore the environment around me.