

ECEY6005- Sustainability in Early Years.





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Introduction

Welcome to my early year's sustainability scrapbook, a vibrant record of for early years to connect with, whilst being able to protect and cherish the natural world. Early childhood is the perfect window to cultivate eco-friendly habits , and this scrap book captures my personal journey of lifelong respect for the earth . this scrap book captures my personal journey of sustainability and helped myself and my children bond closer and learn more about the nature around us . I hope everyone enjoys reading this scrap book and feel influence to take part in being sustainable for the future generation.



“
Nature and children are natural playmates; they're both wild and messy, unpredictable and beautiful.
”

Mark Hoelterhoff

John Muir Award



John Muir (1838–1914) was a Scottish-born American naturalist, author, and environmental pioneer. The John Muir Award was created in 1997 by the John Muir Trust, which itself was founded in 1983 in Dunbar, Scotland—the birthplace of John Muir himself. The John Muir Award is an inclusive, non-competitive environmental award scheme which focuses on celebrating and protecting wild places. The award is open to people of all backgrounds but requires participants to meet four core challenges: firstly, the need to Discover a wild place, Explore its wilderness, Conserve it through practical action, and then Share experiences. Meeting all these challenges encourages a deeper connection to nature and allows for personal responsibility.

My contribution towards my own John Muir Award was creating a hedgehog house for the hedgehog that often visits my nan's garden. In order to build a hedgehog home and complete our John Muir Award, we became part of the John Muir Award Family Scheme (2011). This gave us the flexibility of being able to complete it over a certain period of time. They recommended that each of my family members contribute 6.25 hours to succeed in the project. To satisfy the "Discover" challenge, I went out at night with my eldest child with torches to look for signs of hedgehogs. Unfortunately, we did not see any, but we left some food out overnight. When we checked the next morning, the food had gone, giving us a positive sign that there may be hedgehogs nearby. Showing my nan the area, she noted that she often puts food out before bed and it disappears by morning. For the "Explore" challenge, we conducted in-depth research into what hedgehogs eat and what they like their habitat to be. Our next stage was "Conserve," where we all worked together to build the habitat. We were lucky enough to source all the resources we needed; we used bricks for the base, and worked together to collect leaves and twigs. Once the base was built with bricks and secure enough, we put the twigs alongside the leaves on top to create a camouflaged cover. The final process was to "Share" our creation, which we have done by creating this scrapbook and showing it to our lecturers.

Discover the Area

Although I currently live in Newport, I was lucky enough to have grown up in Ceredigion. I lived in a village called Penrhyn-coch and visited my chosen area to explore—which is my nan's house—every weekend during my childhood. Unfortunately, I do not visit as frequently as I would like to due to commitments with work and my children's weekend activities, but when we do visit, we take full advantage of nature and its resources. My nan's house is located around a ten-minute drive away from a coastal town where there is various wildlife around. Seasons mean a change in wildlife and nature.

Local nature reserve located in the town of Aberystwyth famous for its bluebells.

Bluebells are highly sustainable for nature as they act as a vital early-season lifeline for pollinators, protect forest soil from erosion, as well as serving as an indicator of healthy, undisturbed ecosystems.



Picture taken from Google, accessed 4th July 2026.



Picture taken from Google, accessed 4th July 2026.

River Aeron is a 23 mile waterway that flows out into Cardigan Bay. This river sustains a natural population of brown trout, sea trout and salmon. It also provides resources for other animals such as ducks, herons and dragonflies.



Picture taken from Google, accessed 4th July 2026.

Wildlife in the Area- Grey Squirrel



Grey Squirrel :
Originally native to North America , the grey squirrel was introduced to the United Kingdom during the Victorian times in the late 19th century, during this era they were classed as fashionable additions to the country estates. With their signature silver grey fur, white bellies and incredibly bushy tails they made their self at home , proving themselves to be master forages and adaptable survivors .



They are natural acrobats , they have the ability of being able to leap up to three metres horizontally and plummet nine metres without sustaining an injury.

They can smell food under snow , in fact they can easily locate buried nuts beneath a 30 centimetre blanket of snow by using their powerful sense of smell.

Here is some pictures of the cheeky squirrel that visits my nans bird feeders daily and also takes guard position on the bird feeder not allowing the birds access to their food.

They do not hibernate, they stay awake all winter and rely on their hidden food areas to survive .

Wildlife in the Area – Birds .

Blue Tit- The blue tit is a small energetic garden bird which is easily recognised by its vibrant blue cap , yellow belly and white cheeks . They are an acrobatic bird which is famous for hanging upside down from twigs and feeders to forage for food.



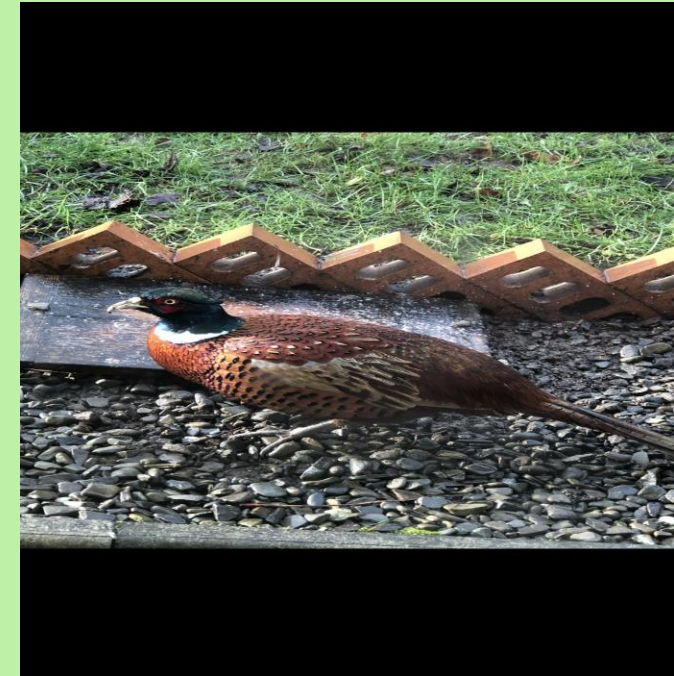
Robin- the robin is the United Kingdom official favourite bird . It is instantly recognisable by its orange red breast and cheerful all year round song. A robin visits my nan's garden a couple of times a day , in which robins are associated with being the presence of a loved one , my nan lost her husband many years ago but this robin could be the presence of my grandad.



Pigeons-Pigeons are classed as one of the most resilient and intelligent birds in the world. They navigate by using the earth's magnetic field, the position of the sun, and low frequency infrasound allowing them to find their way back to their nests from 1,300 miles away . As they are one of the biggest birds that visit the garden they do tend to scare away some of the smaller birds.



Pheasants-pheasants are large, long tailed game birds who are famously known for their explosive noisy take offs when startled. The male pheasants are usually the brighter coloured . Here is a picture of a visiting pheasant who came for a forage for food that we had left on the floor. , they are easily startled so we stayed as quiet as we could.



Wildlife in the Area-Rabbits

Rabbits live in large underground communities named warrens, which can cover up to over two acres of land which can protect them from predators such as foxes. To be able to survive rabbits have 360 degree vision and their ears can rotate at a 180 degree angle allowing them to detect danger, this also helps them reach escape speeds of up to 45 miles per hour. They are most active during the twilight hours of dusk and dawn, and to maintain their dental health they constantly chew on grass to wear down their forever growing teeth. As cute as they are they can cause some damage in gardens. My nan's garden especially has been targeted by rabbits and they have taken a particular liking to a few of her favourite flowers.



Wildlife in the Area- Hedgehog

Hedgehogs- Hedgehogs are also known as the gardener's friend due to their diet in particular of insects that like to ruin gardens, these insects include slugs, beetles and caterpillars. When faced with danger hedgehogs do not run away, instead they roll into a tight ball protected by an armour of around 5000-7000 hollow spines that drop out and grow back just like human hair. Their name originated from the Celts, as they forage through hedgerows and make snort-like noises. Now that we have created a safe place for the hedgehogs, hopefully they feel safe enough to visit their hedgehog hotel and we may even get lucky enough that they may hibernate or even birth in our homemade build hedgehog house.



Wildlife in the Area-Insects

Bumblebees-Bumblebees are large fuzzy insects which are famous for their distinctive yellow and black colours. Bees are responsible for pollinating one third of the food humans eat.



Beetles-beetles make up to one quarter of all known species on earth. they enrich soil nutrients by burying and decomposing animal waste like dung. Many beetle species pollinate flowering plants whilst foraging for nectar and pollen.



Ladybirds-Ladybirds bright colours warns birds that they do not taste nice .a ladybird breathes through tiny holes at the sides of their bodies. They are a great cleaner of gardens as they devour up to 5000 aphids.



Butterflies- Butterflies taste food by using receptors on their feet . Before they can fly they must be able to absorb solar heat.



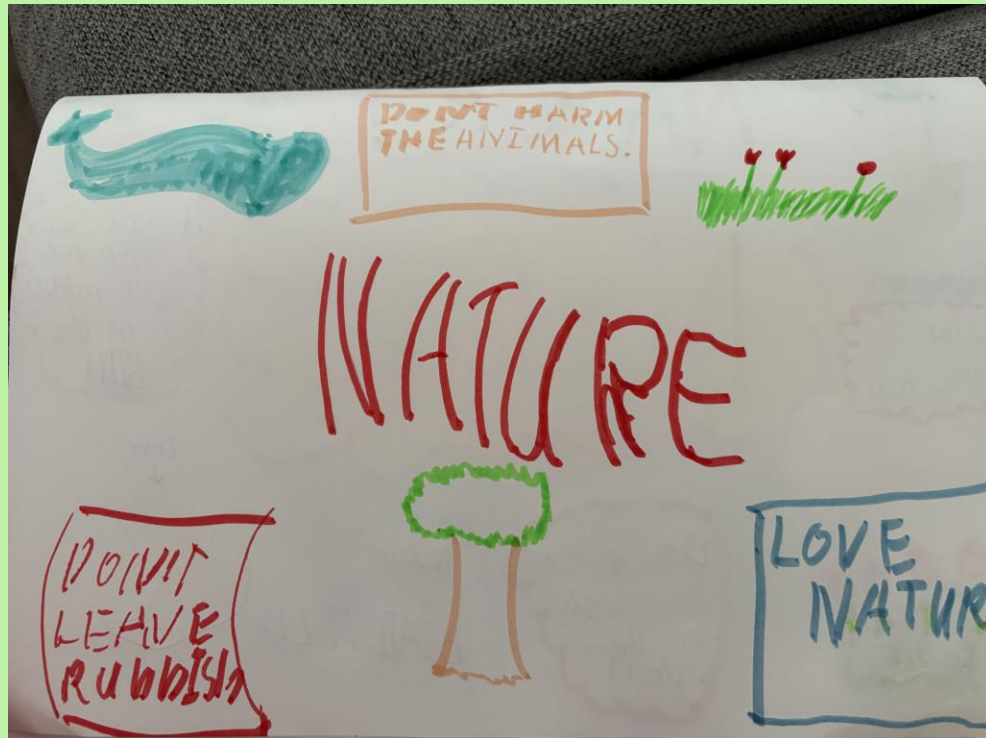
Sustainability



My nan's garden is the perfect area for sustainability and protecting nature and the earth. Growing **vegetables** is the perfect way to create a restorative link **between environmental sustainability and early-years** development. Creating this **vegetable-growing area** in my nan's garden naturally enriches the local ecosystem by eliminating chemical pesticides, **building** healthy topsoil, and **providing** a diverse sanctuary for **pollinators** such as **bumblebees** and butterflies. Promoting **vegetable** growing for **early-years** learners allows them to explore using their sensory skills. As the children dig into the soil, plant the seeds, and tend to **the** sprouts, **they** naturally absorb foundational concepts in biology. It helps develop their fine motor skills as well as **their** patience and **responsibility** skills. Allowing children to watch a tiny seed sprout into **nutritious** food sparks deep **curiosity** and a lifelong respect for nature. This foundational connection encourages **eco-friendly** habits and fosters **the early** generation of mindful, **environmentally conscious** citizens. Below are pictures of my nan's **vegetable** patch, where she has a **mixture** of things growing: potatoes, rhubarb, and **the carrot seeds we** helped plant. In the greenhouse, she has some tomato plants growing.

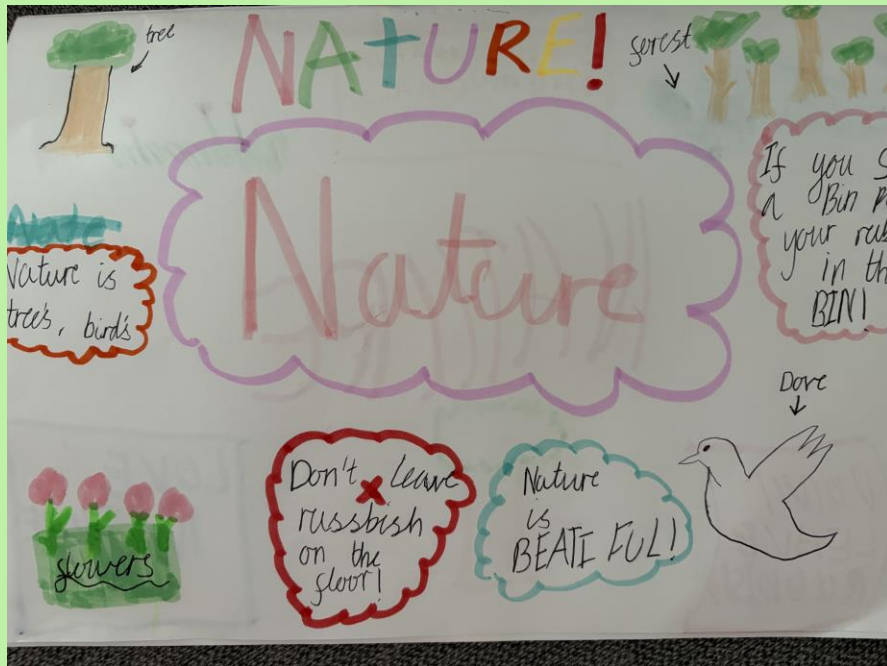


Nature through the eyes of my children.



This is my son who is eleven's thoughts of what comes into his mind when focused on the word nature. The key elements he links nature to is recycling and ensuring we care for the animal in the wildlife . As he is in his last year of primary school, he has learnt more about sustainability to help the earth and what steps we can all do to help as well as the negatives of not helping save the earth. In school he has outdoor learning once a week which allows him to take part in activities such as planting , recycling and using natural materials to create things such as bug houses. He also helps in the house with recycling items.

Nature through the eyes of my children



This is my eight year old's image on what she believes nature is . She has a strong belief that we should care for the planet and do everything advised to care for the planet. She is a member of the school council so she strongly promotes recycling in school . she also has the opportunity in school to take part in outdoor learning where they do a variety of activities based around helping the environment and planet. She also eagerly helps at home with things such as the recycling and looks after the wildlife that are around .

Nature through the eyes of my children.



This is my five year old's perception of what nature means to her. She told me that she had drawn a beach as that is her favourite place to be outside in nature. She also puts a message on the picture of rubbish meaning to take your rubbish home with you or leave it in the bins that are located around the beach. Her message to get across to people is do not leave rubbish as it is dangerous for the animals that live near the beach.