

John Muir Award
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There are an estimated 24 million gardens across the UK. This space would form an area for wildlife larger than all our National Nature Reserves.

Together we can change the natural world for the better. Hedgehogs, bats, sparrows, songthrush and stag beetles are all declining species in the UK.



I am happiest when I am outdoors. I have always loved my garden. I think this love came from growing up in a large active family in a happy home with a beautiful garden. My dad enjoyed growing anything edible, he wasn't as interested in the pretty flowers. Dad passed away when my children were small however they remember watching the birds feed from the bird feeders my dad had made. They would use books to help discover the different types of birds that visited the garden, one of my daughters first words was in fact 'Wood pigeon'.

I now have my own home and my garden is very special to me. My garden has a variety of beautiful trees which until until now I haven't really explored as much as I should have. The John Muir award has encouraged me to discover, explore and appreciate further my own natural surroundings. My garden feels even more special now.

Tree's in my garden...

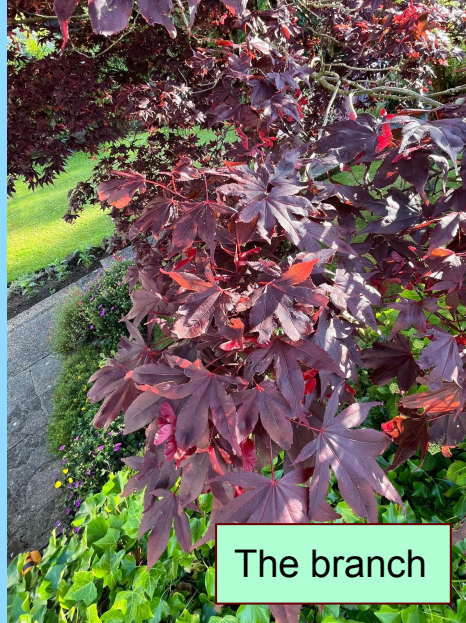
Tress photosynthesize, releasing oxygen into the air and absorbing carbon dioxide, helping to filter air pollutants and improving air quality.

Acer Palmatum - Japanese Maple

This is a beautiful tree with pretty shaped leaves. Its colour changes with the seasons. As you can see, right now it is a deep maroon colour. Its dense foliage provides shelter for wildlife and supports insects which become a food source for birds and other wildlife.



The tree

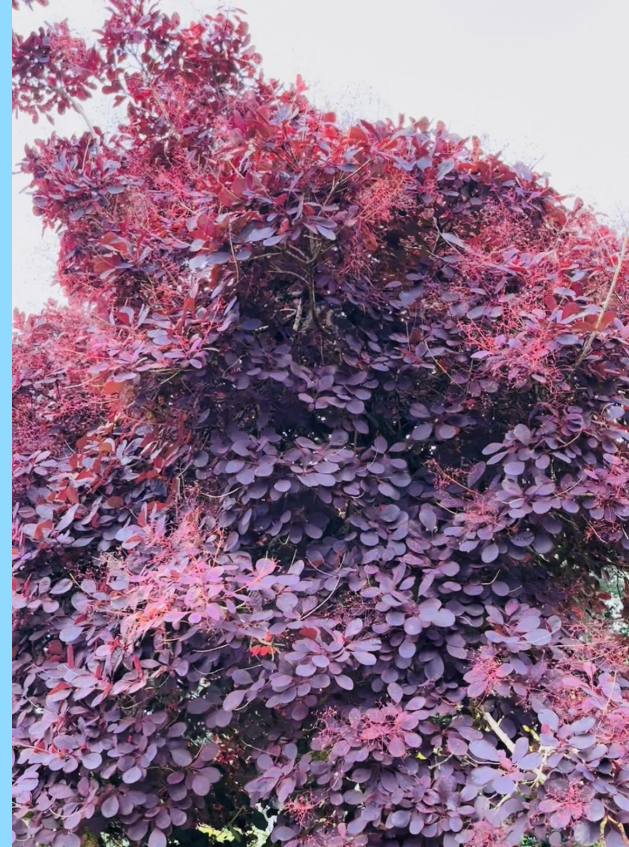


The branch



The leaf

Cotinus Coggygria - royal purple smoke tree was originally native to China. Its dark purple foliage adds another beautiful element to the garden, small flowers blossom on the tree in small fuzzy like blooms. This tree is attractive to look at and also plays an important role in supporting wildlife, contributing to a healthy environment.



The Ivy

I enjoy the Ivy and particularly the Hydrangeas in the garden. They are aesthetically pleasing which can help improve mental health and well being. provides close shelter for a variety of wildlife including birds, small mammals and insects. Berries provide a foodsource for birds whilst flowers provide nectar for insects, bees and butterflies whilst also providing better air quality.





Brambles – There is much to admire about brambles, mainly their resilience and the way they bring so much wildlife into the garden. The bramble is one of the most wildlife-rich habitats that you can have in the garden. It provides nectar for some species of butterflies and moths, fruits for some species of birds and hiding places for small mammals such as hedgehogs and dormice. Insects visiting the flowers for food include bumblebees, honey bees, solitary bees, hoverflies, wasps, butterflies, flies and lacewings, many will nest or reproduce on the leaves or in the stems. In spring, nightingales, robins, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds, warblers, finches, whitethroats and long-tailed tits will nest for safety nest for protection from predators. It is not only us humans who enjoy the berries of the bramble bush. Dormice, wood mice, foxes and badgers will eat the fallen blackberries. Crows, woodpigeons, flycatchers, nuthatches, finches, starlings, thrushes, blackcaps, waxwings, pheasants and moorhens all enjoy a blackberry



The black berries have not appeared on my brambles yet. They are expected any time now so I got the picture from Wildlife Trust.



My garden

Behind my garden is Clyne Woods which boasts Oak, Birch, Beech, Ash and Sycamore trees providing habitats for Badgers, Foxes, Bats, Butterflies, Beetles, frogs and toads. Woodpeckers, Owls, and Songbirds such as Blackbirds, blue tits, Great tits.

Squirrels

We enjoy being visited by agile, acrobatic squirrels in our garden. We wanted to find out a little more about them.

Grey squirrels are originally native to North America and are very common in the UK, it is estimated that there are 2.7 million grey squirrels in the UK, and their population continues to grow. The expansion of grey squirrel populations has negatively affected populations of our native red squirrel; its population is estimated at 140,000.

This may be due to the facts that grey squirrels are more adaptable to various habitats than red squirrels who prefer coniferous forests. Grey squirrels are larger and consume a variety of food including nuts, seeds and fruit. Squirrelpox is a virus that is fatal to red squirrels but is carried by grey squirrels without causing them any harm. Squirrel pox is a major factor in the decline of the red squirrel.

Bees



Early bumble bee - smallest of bumble bees. Bright orange tail, lemon yellow bands, all habitats. Pollinators of soft fruit and long tubular flowers. Queens seen on rhododendrons. Under ground nests, fewer than 100 workers in colony



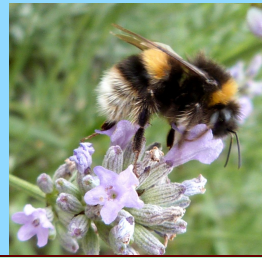
Garden bumble bee - in garden. Large fluffy looking white tail. Nests in colonies of 100 workers, underground. long tongue, likes foxgloves and honeysuckle



Common cader bumble bee - fluffy, gingery bumble bee. Nest in colonies 200 workers, ground, mossy lawns



Red tailed bumble bees - black with big red tail. Nests under stones underground. Female larger



Buff tailed bumble bee - the biggest of the bumble bees. Nests underground in groups of up to 600 bees. Eats from open daisy like flowers. Yellow colour near head and on abdomen. Queen has a buff coloured tail, workers have nearly white tails. Males have black hairy faces.



White tailed bumble bee - black and yellow with a white tail (lemon yellow with bright white tail). Nests in gardens or wood (Red tail and common the same). Queen emerges from hibernation in spring, starts colony by laying eggs that hatch as workers. Males and old queen die in autumn, new queen hibernates

All pictures are taken from Nature Spot.

Conserve

Honey suckle

We went to our local garden centre and purchased a Honeysuckle plant. The pretty Honeysuckle plant will contribute to the aesthetics of our garden, positively impacting our wellbeing, whilst essentially contributing to sustainability in several ways:

Honeysuckle flowers are rich in nectar, which attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

Honeysuckle also provides habitat and food for various wildlife. We hope our Honeysuckle will act as a wildlife hotel. Its nectar-rich, scented flowers attract moths which are preyed upon by bats.

New shoots attract aphids which feed hungry blue tits and ladybirds.

Its climbing stems provide nest sites and material for birds and small mammals like dormice, whilst its berries feed everyone from song Thrushes to squirrels

Honeysuckle is enjoyed by bumblebees and butterflies, It is integral to the lifecycle of the White admiral butterfly specifically as it offers both a safe place for egg-laying and a valuable food source for the caterpillars.

The berries provide a food source to a variety of wildlife including birds and squirrels.

Birdfeeders

The numbers of once-common birds have dropped dramatically due to increased development, intensification of farming, and habitat loss.

House Sparrows have decreased by 71% !!

BLUE TITS - We were fascinated to see blue tits in our garden and wanted to find out how we could encourage them to visit. We found out that blue tits are highly active eaters, eating about 100 times a day. Baby blue tits predominantly eat caterpillars. Adult blue tits also enjoy eating insects, spiders, nuts and seeds.

We made bird feeders to provide nuts, seeds and mealworms for the summer time. In the winter when there are fewer insects around we will make fatballs to help keep them strong and warm.

We will provide a range of food sources and safe haven, in the hope of encouraging more birds into our garden.



This picture of a blue tit is from RSPB Website.



Look what we made! A cheerio hooped birdfeeder.



Bee hotel/nectar cafe

We planted a variety of flowers that we hope will encourage a wide variety of bumble bees and butterflies. Bumble bees are important pollinators but are under threat due to development, agricultural intensification and climate change.

We hope to provide a suitable home so that the butterflies and bees will feed from the nectar of the flowering plants. . moving from flower to flower, pollinating as they do so.



Share

My Garden, my world - A Poem

*I listen to the birdsong as I step onto the dew,
an early morning chorus, a choir just for you?*

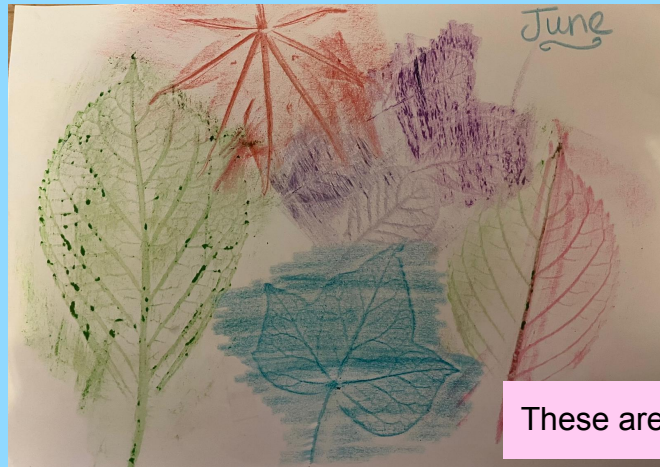
*The chirps and whistles, tweets and trills,
from the birds perched nearby.*

*The sound of the wind blow throught he trees
as the sun rises in the sky.*

*I feel content, It's my happy place
My own piece of the world, my natural space.*

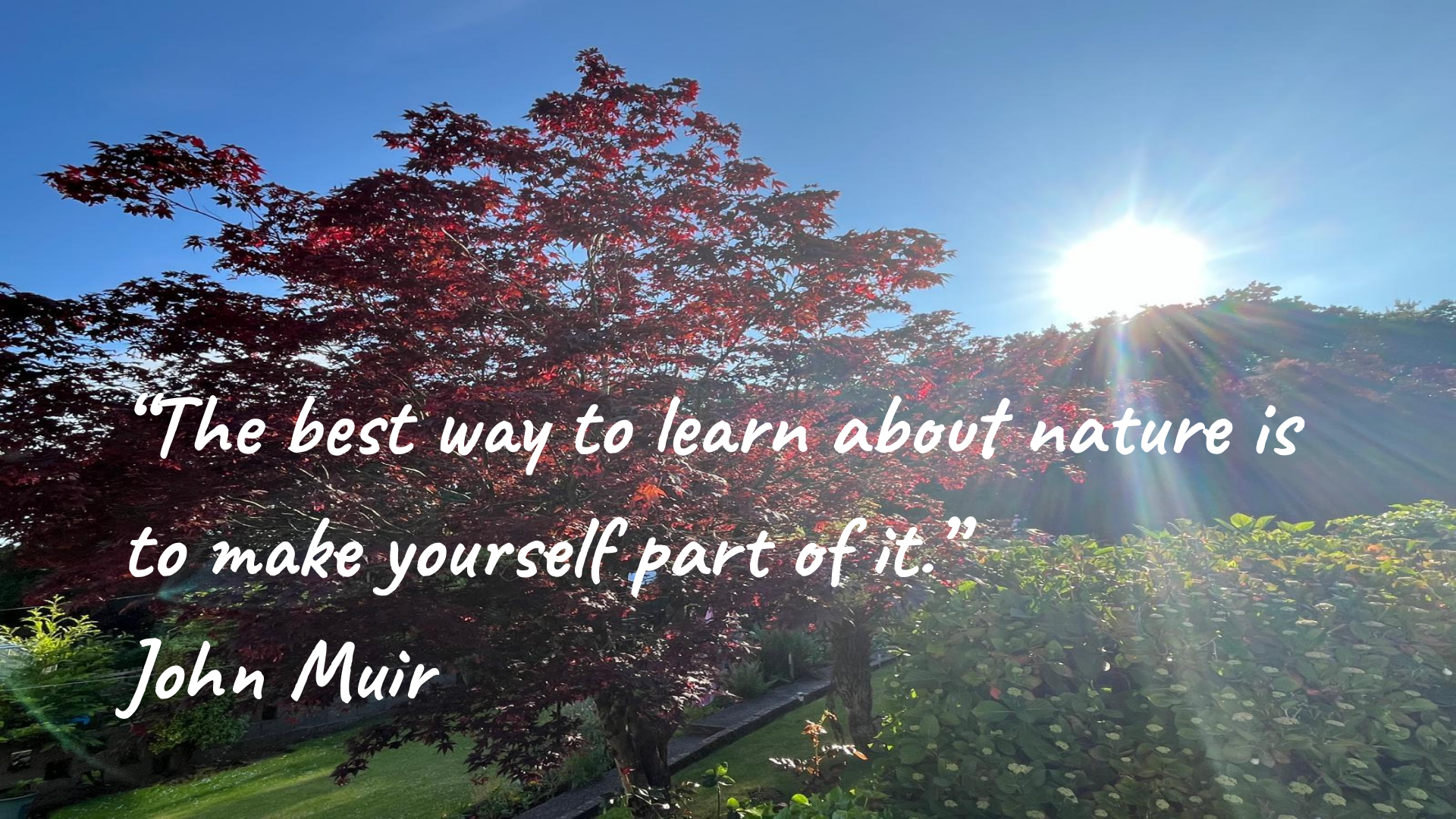


*The flowers, the trees, the birds and the bees .
They aren't just there to aesthetically please
The natural world is a wonderful thing
We must strive to improve with the knowledge we bring.
Let's look at the world through the eyes of a child
When the best part of learning was out in the wild.
It's clear, we all have the chance to make change
To positively impact the world and engage.
With respect and with love we must now sustain
What we have is the right to improve and maintain,
By working with nature with passion and zest
We can help bring the world right back to its best.*



These are the leaf rubbings from my garden.

This is a poem I have written about my garden. I will share this with friends and family as well as on social media.



*"The best way to learn about nature is
to make yourself part of it."*

John Muir