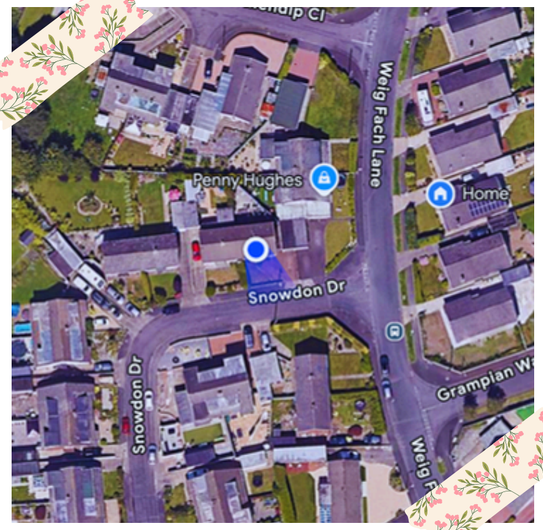
Sustainability in the Early Years

ECEY6005

Nia Hughes
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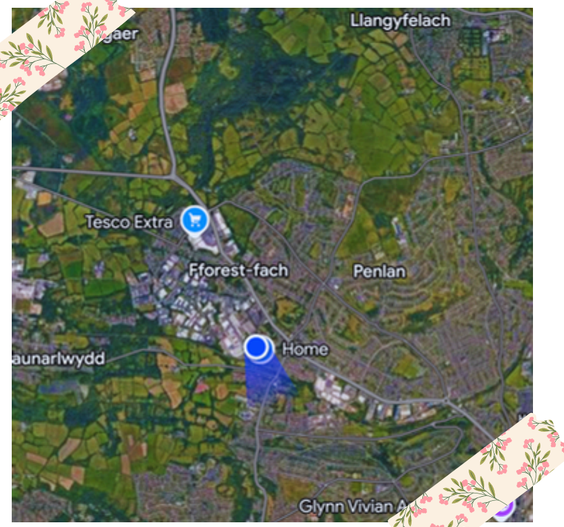




Discover

For the John Muir award I have chosen to explore my garden. My garden and my house is located in a quiet estate in Fforestfach, Swansea. I may not have the biggest or most extravagent gardens, but my garden is special to me. It is a place that holds many memories during my time growing up. I remember playing 'what's the time Mr Wolf' with my nan, planting Forget Me Nots with my mum and my little dog Willows favourite place to sunbathe. I have chosen this area as it is filled with laughs, memories and most importantly love.

Fforestfach has an interesting history. The area developed during the industiral period of Swansea and Fforestfach was well known for it's connection to coal mining, brickworks and local industry. Over the years, Fforestfach has transformed into a residential community whilst still retaining connections to green spaces and connection to the surrounding countryside. Today, Fforestfach is a busy subrub but still maintins elements of nature and pockets of nature and it is where I call home.



Discover



Fforestfach, My Home.

Fforestfach, the place I know,
Where Swansea's history still can show.
Coal miners worked with strength and pride,
Helping their community far and wide.

Through changing years, the town has grown,
Yet kindness here has always shone.
Neighbours care and lend a hand,
Together strong, together we stand.

No matter where I choose to roam,
Fforestfach will always be my home.



Discover





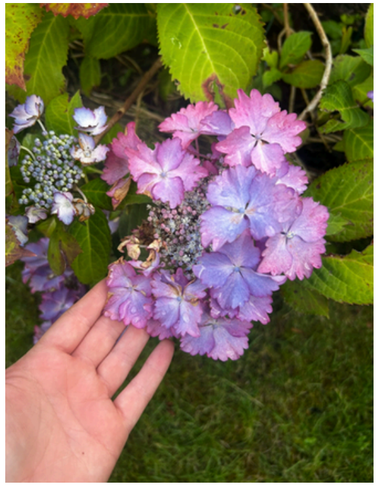
My garden has changed a lot over the years. As I have grown up, different plants have been added, while others have died or been replaced. Flower beds have changed shape, and new plants have brought different colours and wildlife into the garden. Looking back, I can see how the garden has evolved alongside me, reflecting different stages of my life and the changing seasons.

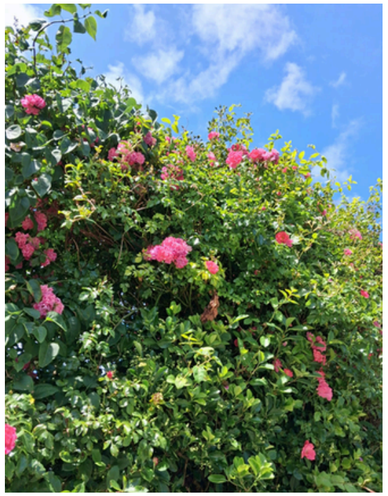




Explore

I have discovered a variety of different flowers, trees and shrubs within my garden.







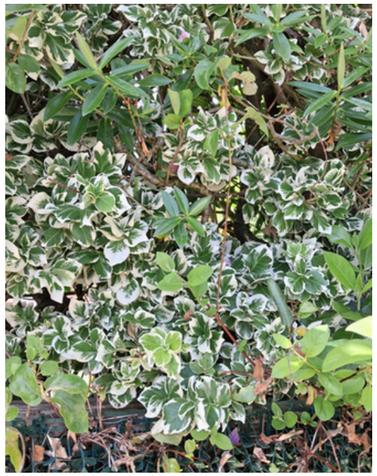




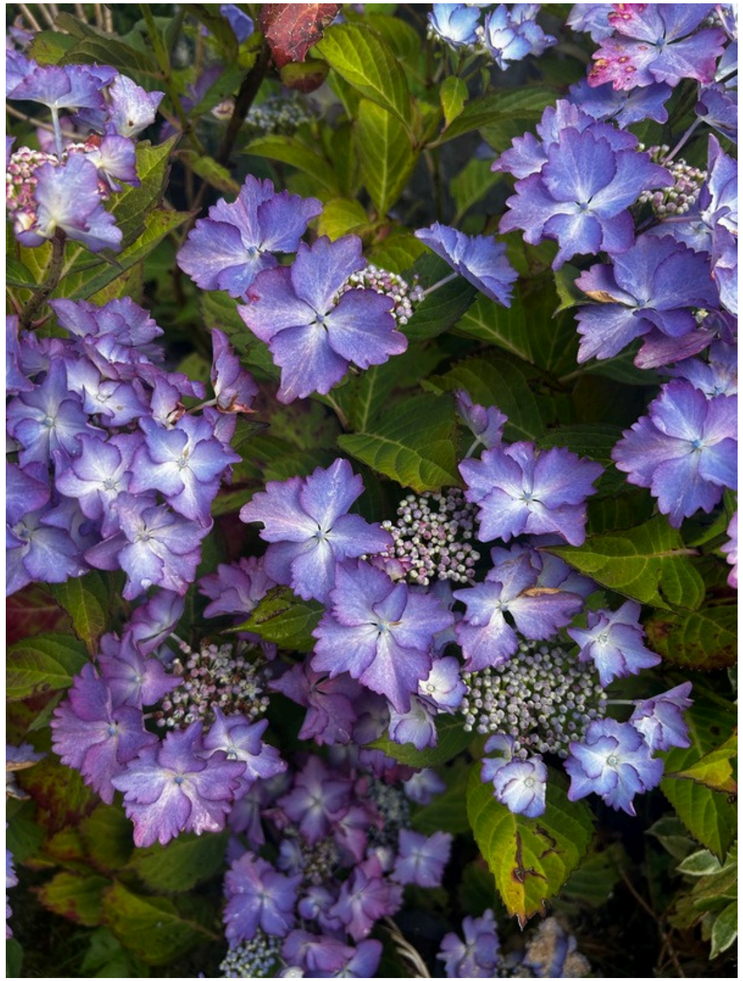








Explore



Lacecap Hydrangea

The Lacecap Hydrangea has beautiful flat flower heads with tiny flowers in the centre and larger flowers around the edge. I enjoyed looking closely at the different parts of the flower because I hadn't realised there were so many tiny flowers making up one large bloom.

The flowers attract bees and butterflies. The leaves also provide shelter for insects, helping to support a healthy garden.

Explore



Japanese Aralia

The Japanese Aralia has large, shiny leaves that give the garden a tropical feel. I liked how different its leaves looked compared to the other plants, making it one of the most interesting shrubs I found.

Its late-season flowers provide nectar for bees and other insects when fewer plants are flowering. Later in the year, its dark berries can be eaten by birds.

Explore



Cranesbill (Herb Robert)

Herb Robert is a small wildflower with delicate pink flowers and soft green leaves. It grows naturally in different parts of the garden and often appears without being planted. I enjoyed finding this plant because it showed me that wildflowers can be just as important as garden flowers.

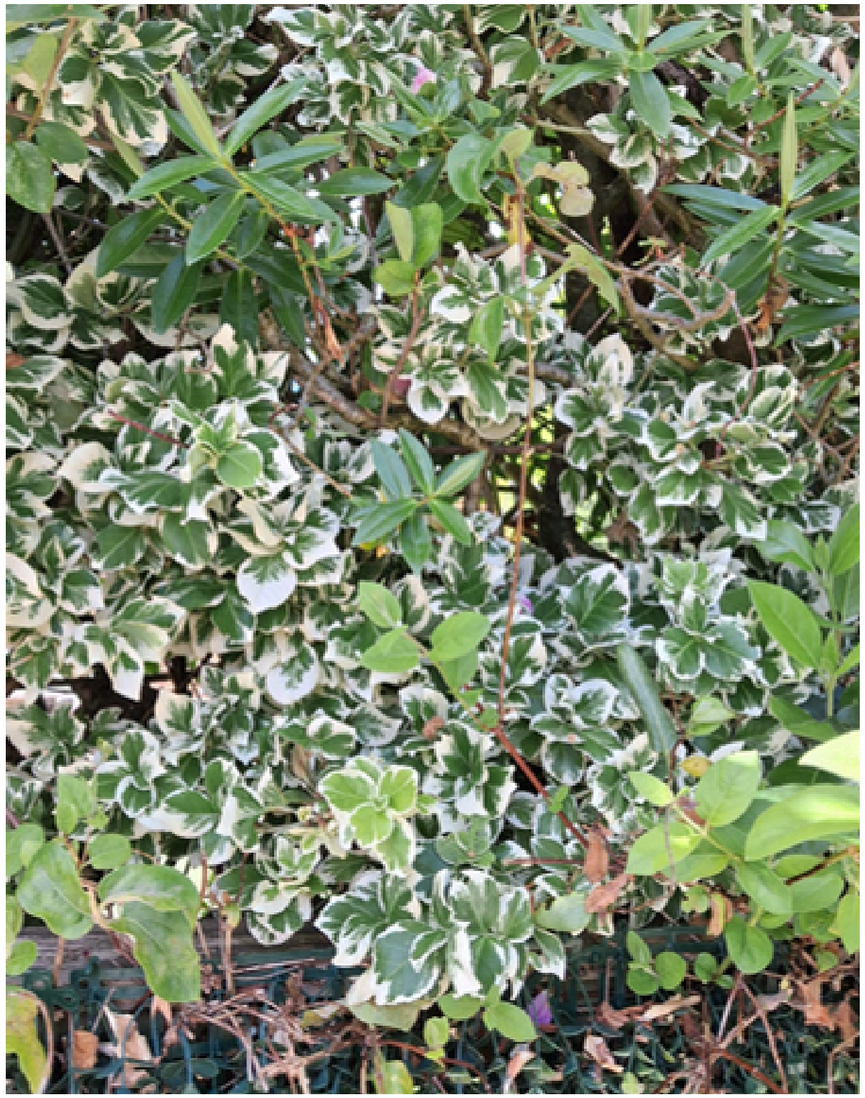
The flowers attract bees, hoverflies and other insects. It is a useful wildflower that helps support pollinators throughout the growing season.

Explore

Euonymus Fortunei 'Emerald Gaiety'

Emerald Gaiety is a compact evergreen shrub with green leaves edged in white. It grows neatly and keeps its colour throughout the year. I liked how fresh and colourful it looked.

It provides year-round cover for insects and small animals. When it flowers, it attracts pollinators, and any berries that develop can provide food for birds.



Explore



St John's Wort

St John's Wort has bright yellow flowers that bloom during the summer. The flowers are easy to recognise. I thought the bright yellow flowers really stood out against the green leaves and added lots of colour to the garden.

The flowers are popular with bees and other pollinating insects because they produce plenty of pollen. Its thick growth also gives insects and small animals places to shelter.

Explore

Oriental Lily

This bright pink Oriental Lily is one of my favourite flowers in the garden because it really stands out when it blooms in summer. The flowers are large and colourful with six petals and long stamens covered in pollen. I enjoyed taking close-up photos because the detail in the flower is amazing, especially in the sunshine.

The lily attracts bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects that feed on its pollen. Seeing insects visit the flower showed me how even one plant can help support wildlife. It also adds bright colour to the garden, making it a welcoming place for pollinators.



Explore



Flamingo Willow

I was drawn to this tree because of its unusual leaves. I hadn't realised how beautiful its leaves were until I stopped to look closely.

The Flamingo Willow provides shelter for insects and small birds among its branches. It also supports caterpillars, which become food for birds, helping nature in different ways.

I especially love this tree as me and my mum planted it in honour of Willow our dog.

Explore

Chestnut Tree

This is the biggest tree in the garden and one of the first things I noticed during my exploration. Its wide branches and large leaves provide lots of shade on sunny days.

The Chestnut Tree is like a home for wildlife. In autumn it produces conkers.



Explore



I chose to explore my own garden because it is full of different plants, trees, shrubs and flowers that change throughout the seasons. Before starting this project, I walked past many of these plants without really noticing them. By taking time to look closely, I discovered how much wildlife and plant life can be found in a small outdoor space.

Willow used to love going out into the garden to sunbathe and smell the flowers. Since she passed away I lost my love for the garden but since taking part of this award it has made me realise how much I still love my garden. It will always remind me of Willow.



Explore

I had the support from Google Lens to identify the name of each flower, tree and shrub. I am lucky that my grandmother Patricia spends alot of time in our garden. Recently she has been taken ill and unable to venture out to the garden but usually she enjoys watching the nature and wildflie that these plants support. She enabled me to write about how beneficialy these plants are to nature and wildlife.



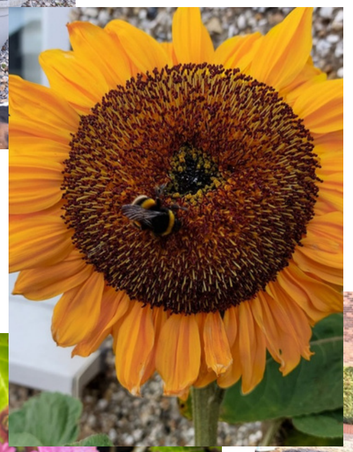




Conserve

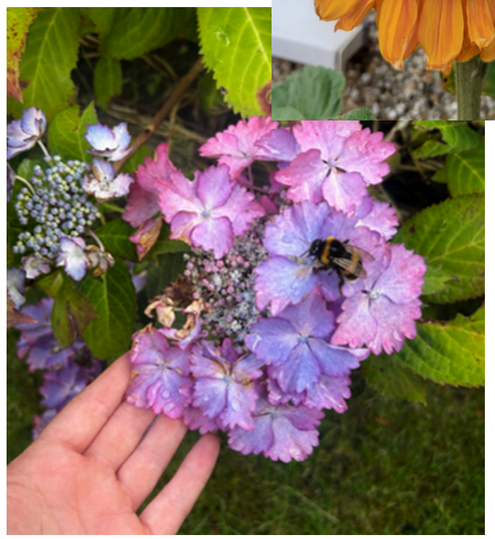
After exploring my garden and learning about all the different plants and wildlife, I wanted to help protect and care for the nature around me. I realised that even small actions can make a difference and help create a healthier environment for wildlife.

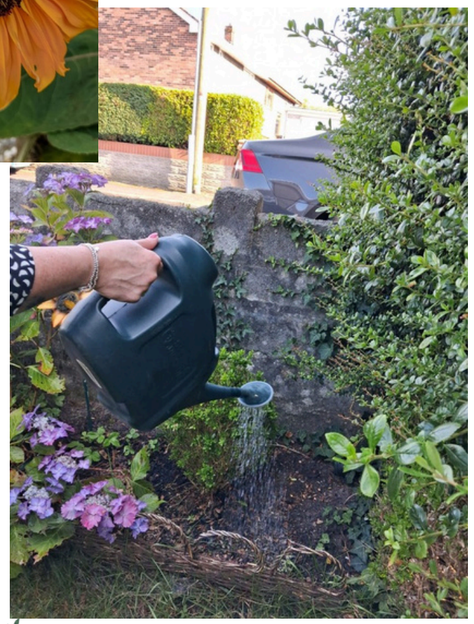






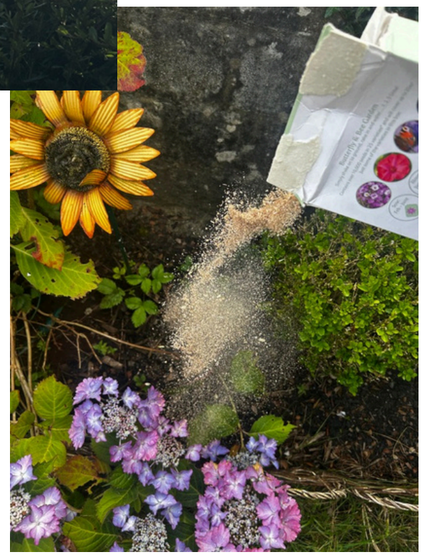






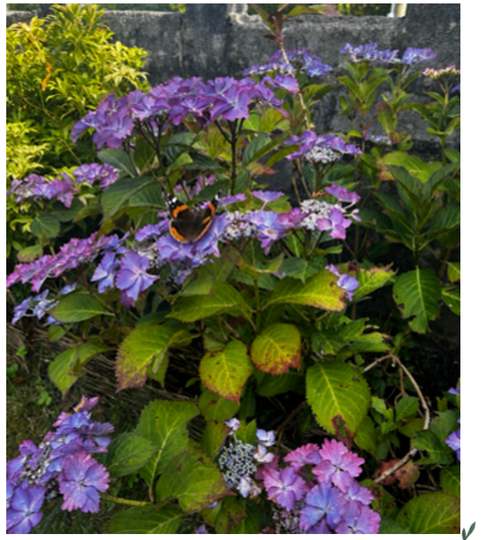






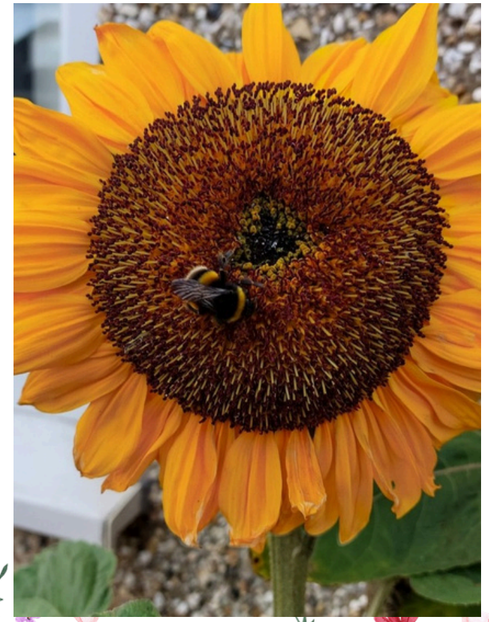
Conserve





The first thing I did was plant flowers that attract bees and butterflies. During one of our John Muir Award lessons, Paul Darby explained that bees are especially attracted to purple flowers, I found out that this is because they can see colours like purple and blue very well. This made me think more carefully about the plants growing in my garden and how they can support pollinators. After learning this, I noticed a bee feeding on the purple Lacecap Hydrangea in my garden. I managed to take a photo of it, and it was exciting to see what Paul had taught us happening in real life. It showed me that choosing the right flowers really can make a difference for wildlife. I also had the opporutnity to see another bee on a sunflower and my mum had a photo on her phone of a beautiful butterfly on the purple LAcecape Hydrangea.



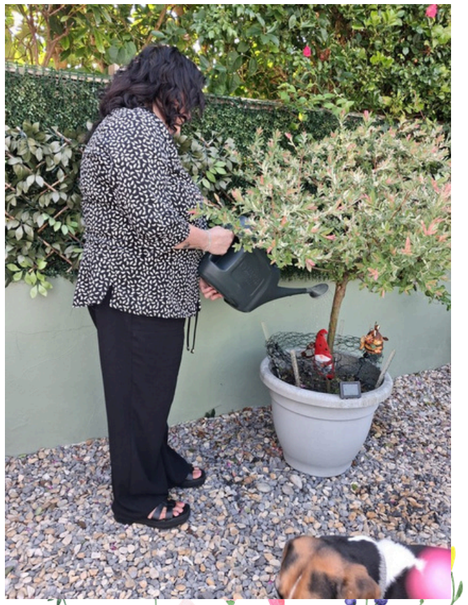


Conserve



One way I helped was by watering the plants, especially during warm, dry weather. After we had planted the flower seeds for the bees and butterflies, i ensured that i watered the area to promote the growth of the flowers. Keeping the plants healthy means they can continue to grow, produce flowers and provide nectar and pollen for insects such as bees and butterflies. Healthy shrubs and trees also provide shelter and nesting places for birds, making the garden a safe habitat for them too.





While spending time in the garden, I had also noticed many small brown birds - possibly Hedge Sparrows visiting the bushes and trees. Watching them made me realise that my garden is not just full of plants–it is also a home for many different animals. I attempted to take photos of them for this scrapbook but i sturggled to get clear photos of them.



Conserve



This project has taught me that conserving nature doesn't always mean doing something big. Simple actions like watering plants, leaving wildflowers to grow and choosing flowers that attract bees and butterflies all help create a better habitat for wildlife. I now appreciate my garden much more because I understand that it provides food, shelter and a safe place for bees, butterflies, birds and many other creatures. I hope to continue looking after my garden and making small changes that will help nature thrive in the future.



Conserve



Conserving My Garden

I water flowers when the days are dry,
Watching petals bloom beneath the sky.
Each drop of water helps them grow,
Creating places where wildlife can go.

Paul taught us bees love flowers of purple hue,
A lesson I found to be completely true.
On my Lacecap Hydrangea, a busy bee fed,
Just like Paul had explained and said.

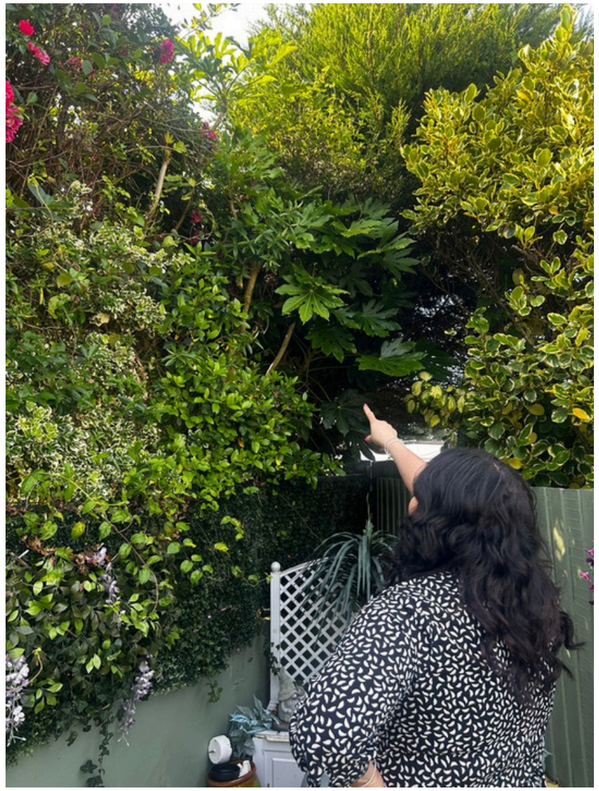


The hedges and trees give birds a home,
Safe places to rest, sing and roam.
They search for insects among the leaves,
Finding shelter beneath the trees.

I've learned that small things can make a change,
Helping nature in every range.
By caring for my garden every day,
I'm helping wildlife in my own small way.

Share

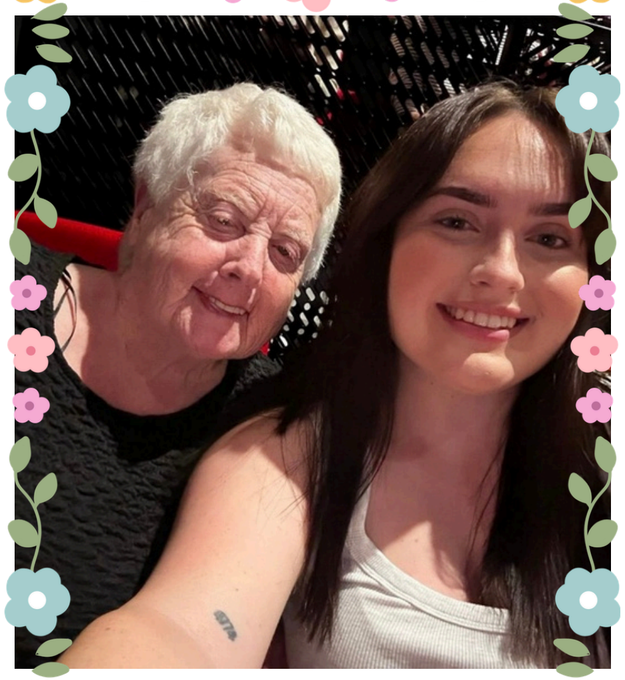
One of the best parts of this project was being able to share my experience with my mum. As we explored the garden together, we spent time looking at all the different flowers, shrubs and trees that I had identified. It was nice to show her what I had learned about each plant and explain how they help support bees, butterflies, birds and other wildlife. We both realised that although we see these plants every day, we had never really stopped to appreciate them properly before.







Share



While we were exploring, we talked about how important it is to look after the garden. We agreed that we will continue taking care of it together for my nan. Looking after the garden feels like a way of helping her while also making sure the wildlife continues to have a safe and healthy place to live.

The garden also holds lots of happy memories of our dog, Willow. Spending time outside reminded me of all the times she used to run around and enjoy being in the garden with us. Caring for the garden now feels like a way of remembering her as well as looking after nature for the future.












Overall, this project has helped me slow down, notice the beauty of nature and appreciate the wildlife that lives right outside my door. Taking part in the John Muir Award has been an amazing experience. Before starting this project, I thought of my garden as simply a place with flowers and trees, but I now see it as a thriving habitat full of life. I have learned that even small actions, like planting flowers, watering plants or leaving wildflowers to grow, can have a positive impact. I will continue caring for my garden and hope to encourage others to appreciate and protect nature too. This has been a rewarding experience that I will remember for a long time.

