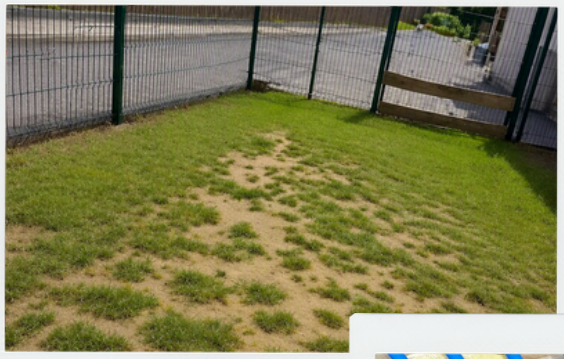
Our Setting's Community Garden: From Ideas to Blooming Spaces



2024



2025



2026

Inspired by John Muir's belief that nature teaches us through quiet transformation, our garden grew year by year into a space where children learn to care for the earth through hands-on experiences.

Images : Rachael's Playhouse, 2026

Discover:



Here is a photo of our side garden at Rachael's Playhouse in May 2024. We were gifted this plot of land, which is located right next door to our setting. When we first saw the area, we immediately began thinking about how we could use it to promote sustainability within our setting.

This marked the beginning of our journey. We started developing the garden step by step, turning the space into a useful and purposeful area for our children and families.

Explore:



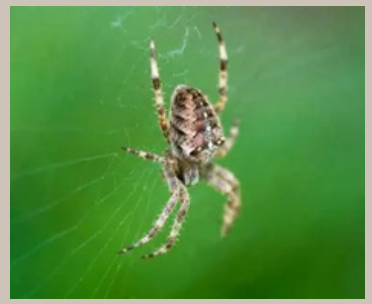


Image: National Geographic (2024)



Image: National Geographic (2024)



Image: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (2024)



Image: Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) (2024)



Image: Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) (2024)



Image:Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (2024)

When I looked closely at this little patch of grass, I spotted tiny creatures exploring the area. I saw ants moving through the soil, woodlice hiding under the dry patches, and a few worms wriggling when the ground was damp. Around the edges, I noticed snails and slugs, and a small spider tucked between the blades of grass. Even a couple of blackbirds landed nearby, pecking around for food. It was lovely to see how much life was already here before we began transforming the space.

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." — John Muir

This quote supports the idea shown in our garden development that every creature, plant and habitat is interconnected. As our scrapbook demonstrates, even the smallest patch of grass contained ants, woodlice, worms, snails and blackbirds — reflecting Muir's belief in the deep connection between living things.

Conserve:







Firstly, we began by purchasing potted herbs to start our garden. Herbs were an easy and practical choice because they grow well in small spaces and give children simple sensory experiences through smell and touch, which supports early learning.
The Royal Horticultural Society (2023) explains that sensory plants like herbs help children engage more deeply with the natural world, making them ideal for beginner garden projects.



- Basil
- Corriander
- Thyme
- Rosmary
- Parsley
- Chives
- Spring Onions





In 2024, we began growing a range of fruits and vegetables to offer to our children and families. As our setting is located in a deprived area, we wanted to ensure all parents and carers had access to healthy and nutritious produce. Providing fresh fruit and vegetables supports children's wellbeing, and organisations such as the Food Foundation (2023) highlight that access to affordable, fresh produce is essential for improving health outcomes in low-income communities







Cauliflower



Lettuce



Kidney Beans



Rhubarb



Radishes



Sage



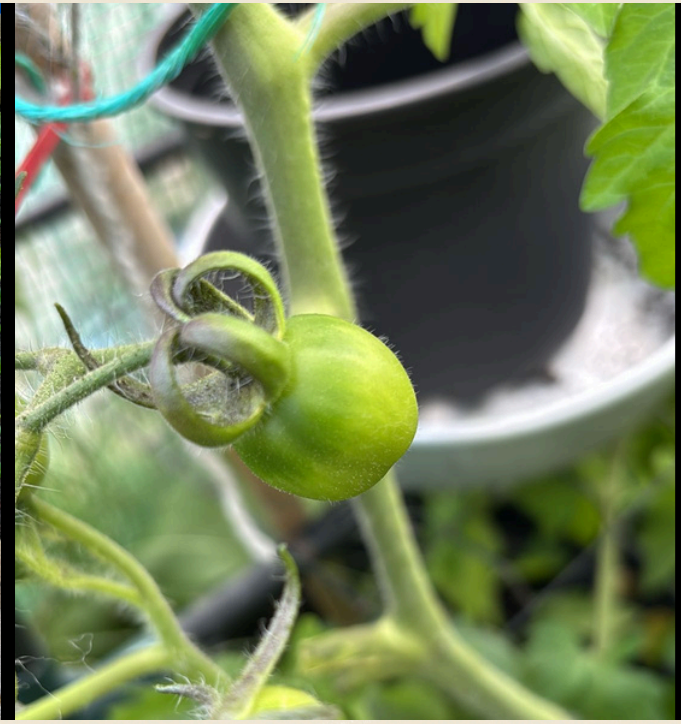
Peas



Kale & Herbs



Spring Onion



Tomatoes



Hydrangea



Lavender



Bacopa



Sunflower



Wax Begonias



Leafy Hosta



Black-eyed Susan Vine



Clematis



Rosemary



Gold mop False Cypress



Cornflowers, Oxeye Daisy



May 2024



June 2026

Here you can see how this small patch of land has grown into a fully developed enabling environment where we promote sustainability and encourage children to explore and care for nature. As the space developed, creatures such as woodlice (Natural History Museum, 2024) and visiting blackbirds (RSPB, 2024) continued to use the area, showing how our changes support local wildlife as well as children's learning. Our community garden is now a thriving part of this environment, where the children help care for the plants from seedlings all the way through to harvest time. When our fruit and vegetables are ready, we gather them together and place the produce by the front door for parents and carers to take home, giving families the chance to enjoy the fresh food their children have grown and strengthening our sense of community.

How we promoting sustainability in our Setting:



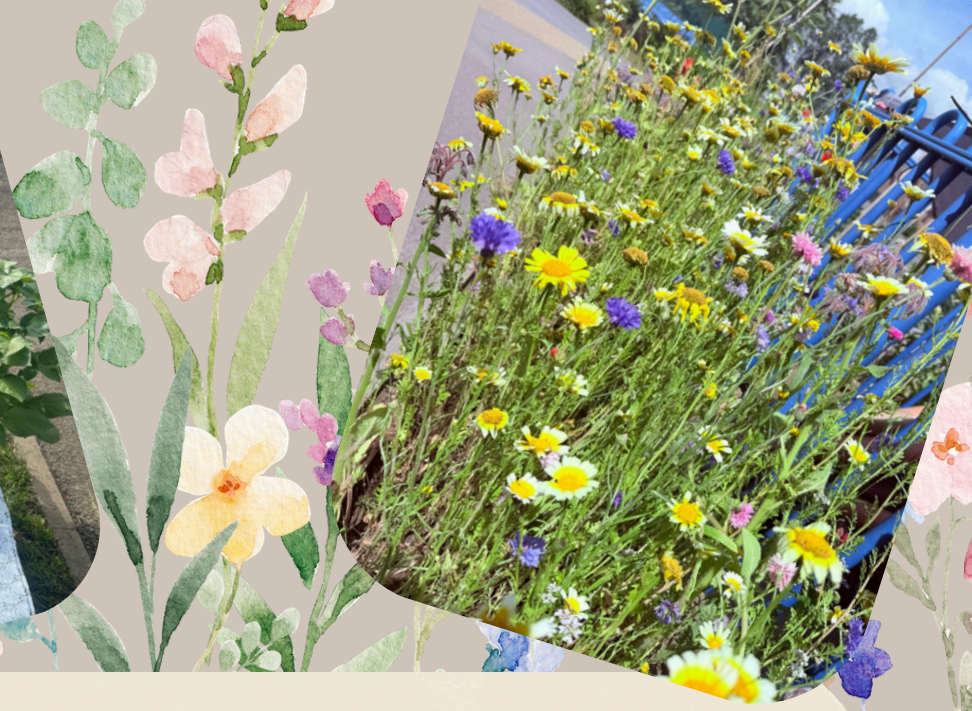
We invited parents to join this Together Time session, strengthening our partnership with families and demonstrating how sustainable practices can be embedded both at the setting and at home. Their involvement allowed children to share their learning, talk confidently about planting from food-waste scraps, and recognise that caring for the environment is a shared responsibility across the whole community.





We do this planting activity as part of our wider commitment to sustainability at the setting, providing children with meaningful, hands-on experiences that deepen their understanding of how living things grow and how their own actions contribute to caring for the environment. By involving children in planting, nurturing and harvesting produce, we promote early environmental responsibility and support the development of key skills such as problem-solving, collaboration and respect for the natural world.





Painting with watercolours while following the shadows of the plants supports children's understanding of sustainability by encouraging them to observe natural processes closely and recognise how sunlight, growth and environmental change are interconnected. This low-impact, creative activity demonstrates that natural resources can inspire learning without relying on disposable materials, helping children develop environmentally responsible attitudes from an early age. Such experiences align with guidance emphasising the importance of outdoor learning in fostering environmental awareness (Early Education, 2021) and support the Curriculum for Wales' focus on developing ethical, informed citizens who care for the natural world (Welsh Government, 2022).

John Muir's philosophy aligns with the Curriculum for Wales' focus on developing ethical, informed citizens who care for the natural world. By encouraging children to observe, nurture and protect our community garden, we embed Muir's values into everyday practice.



At the setting, we strengthen children's understanding of sustainability by providing a bug house, a bird bath, and a floral garden designed to support bees and butterflies. The children helped us to care for these areas and were actively involved in constructing the bug house, giving them ownership and a practical role in supporting local wildlife. Through observing how different species rely on safe habitats, water sources and pollinator-friendly plants, children develop early awareness of biodiversity and learn that their actions can positively impact the natural environment. These hands-on experiences help them recognise that caring for wildlife is an important part of acting sustainably.



Bird Bath

Butterfly and Bee Garden



Bug House

A Garden Built by Little Hands

In our little setting, a quiet garden comes alive, Where once lay tired soil, new seedlings start to thrive. The children gather round us, their hands and voices bright, Learning how small acts of care help nature set things right.

They shape the bug house proudly, with twigs and bark and thread, Building shelter for the tiny lives that need a place to tread. They fill the bird bath gently, watching visitors descend, Seeing how a simple kindness helps the wild world mend.

Our flowers call the butterflies, our herbs invite the bees, A living, breathing classroom shaped by sunlight through the trees. Together we protect it each child, each voice, each hand Discovering that sustainability grows from knowing and loving land.

As seasons move around them, the children start to see How every creature, plant and seed shares one ecology. Through tending, building, watering, they come to understand That caring for the earth begins with small acts close at hand.

A poem inspired by the gentle, interconnected view of nature reflected in John Muir’s writings.