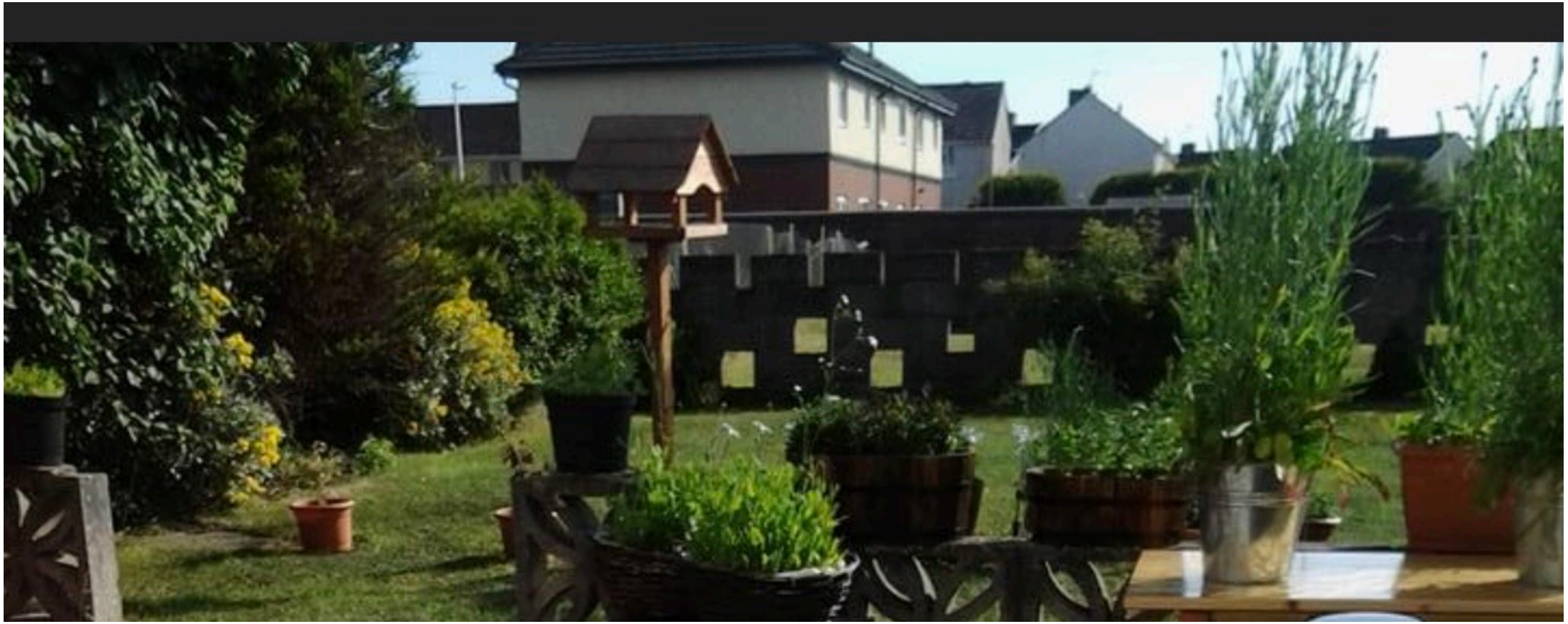
My Garden, My Happy Place.



Where I Live.

I live in a town called Port Talbot, and I have lived here all my life (47 years).

Growing up I lived one road away from Aberafan Beach, this is shown by the red dot on the map. Most of my younger years were spent playing down the beach and in the park that was on the seafront.



The blue dot on the map represents where I live now. As you can see, I am still not far from the beach, but unfortunately, I do not visit it as much as I used to. However, I am sure that you will agree that my back garden is big enough for me to enjoy, and it has become my happy place.

My Garden,

My garden has become a place where I can go after a long day in work to relax and unwind. Sitting in the sunshine (when it comes out, I am in Wales after all) or under the umbrella if it is raining, lets my mind wander and I can de-stress.



The John Muir Award

Even though I spend a lot of time in my garden, Taking part in the John Muir award for my last university module, has opened my eyes to the many different insects and birds that share the garden with me.







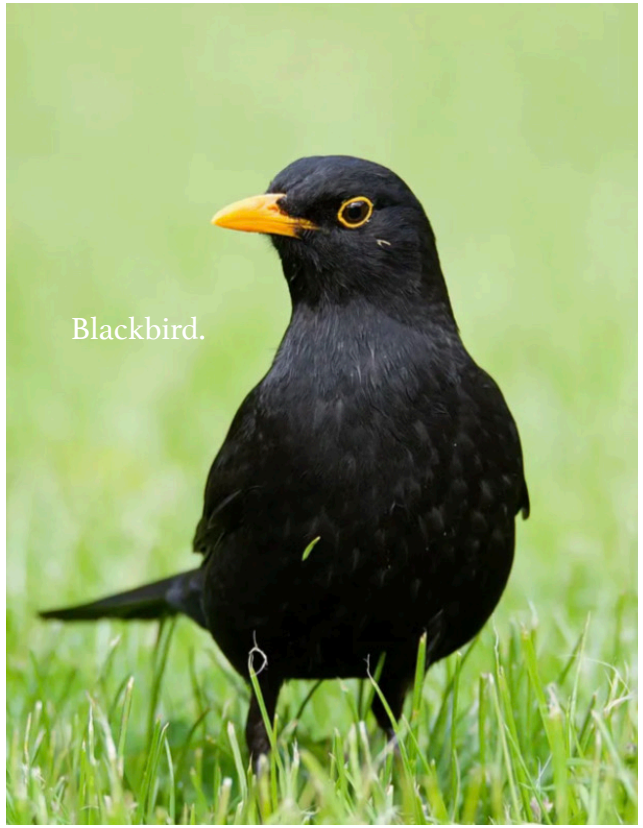
Discovery.

Even though I enjoy sitting in my garden, taking part in The John Muir award has given me the motivation to get out of my comfy chair, and discover what goodies there are to discover. I Have a bird feeder in my garden that I fill all year round, but what I did not have was a bug hotel. I discovered that when I was moving my plant pots around, there were insects living under the pots. I decided to buy two bug hotels and try to introduce the insects to them so they would not be disturbed every time I moved a pot. I also discovered a patch of garden, around my tree that I could pant more seeds or flowers, for the benefit of the bees. My husband had previously taken a cutting from a rose bush in our front garden, grew it in one of my pots and replanted it by the tree, I am keeping my fingers crossed that in the future it will grow into a big rose bush which will be perfect for bees.















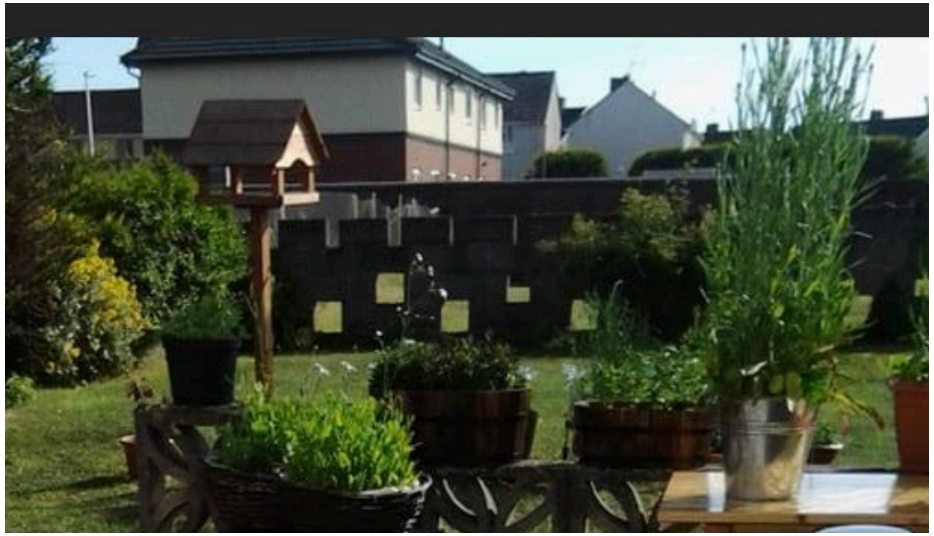


Explore.

While exploring in my garden to find out where the best place for me to place my bug hotels, I found that birds were living in bushes that I have along half the length of my garden, I knew that there were birds in my tree, as that is where I put my bird feeder. As I gently looked into the bush, I realized there were a few nests, I am not sure what the birds are, but I guess that they are small. In January 2023 I took part in my second RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, this gave me the knowledge to identify the birds in my garden within the four days, I counted the 2 Collared Doves that frequently visit my garden, 2 Blackbirds, 2 Magpies, 8 House Sparrows and 16 Dunnocks.

Conserve.

I feel very lucky to have a garden, so to me the logical thing to do is to try and conserve it, Not only for myself but for the birds and insects that also use it. Climate change has been a problem for a few years and as you can see between the two photos of my garden, it went from lush and green to dry and brown. I conserved water by not watering the grass and only using it sparingly on my potted flowers





Continuing with conserving, I decided that I wanted another bird feeder for my garden. I did not want another plastic one, so I decided to ask my 6-year-old nephew to help me make homemade ones. We decided to use the cardboard from the inside of toilet rolls, pinecones that had been gathered by my nephew from the floor by nearby trees, peanut butter and bird seeds. As you can see, my 3-year-old pug wanted to help too.

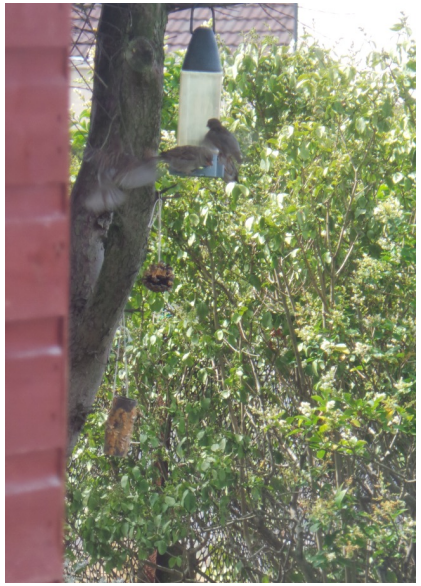












My nephew then placed the bird feeders onto my tree, for the birds to enjoy. He then asked if he could fill the larger cones that were already on the tree, with the left-over peanut butter.

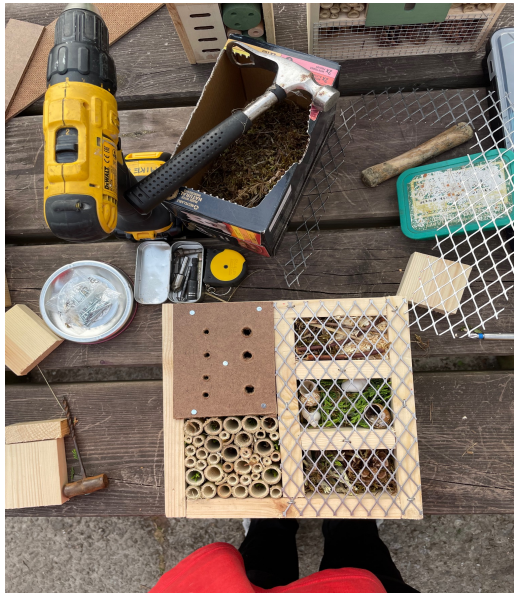
Conserving with my husband

When my husband came home from work the day my nephew and myself made the bird feeders, my husband decided he wanted to join in with the activities and offered to make a homemade bug hotel. He used left-over wood from a previous project, he cut up the grill of an instant BBQ, we collected leaves and twigs, used a pinecone that was left over from the bird feeders and kept the sawdust from the cut wood. My husband also made the bug hotel to fit into a hole in our garden wall.

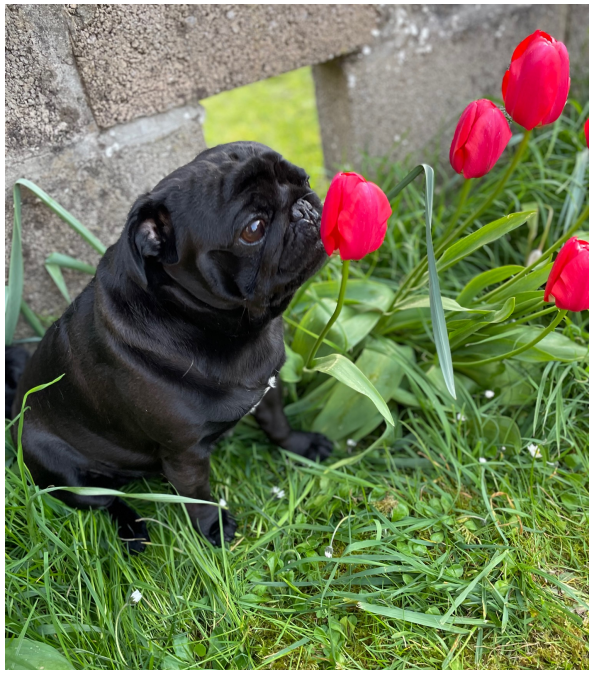


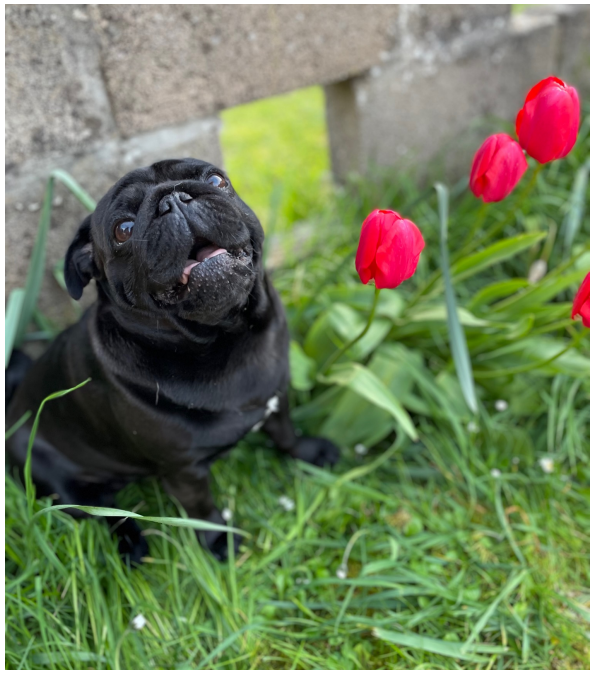


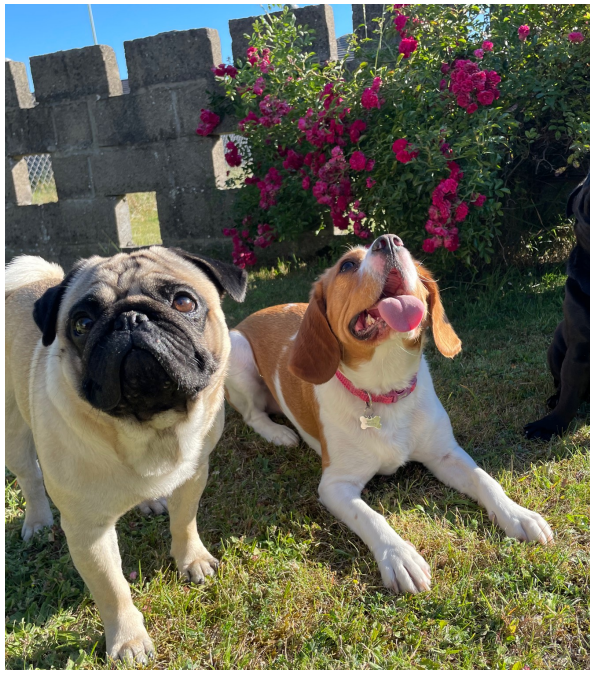


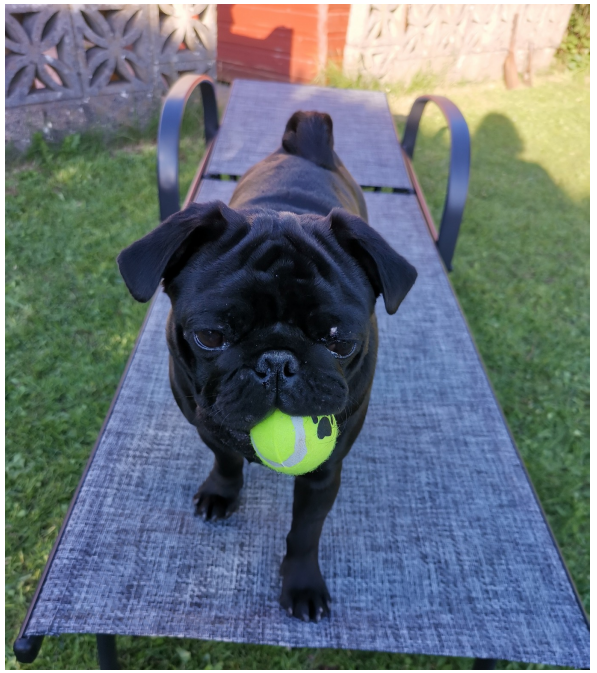














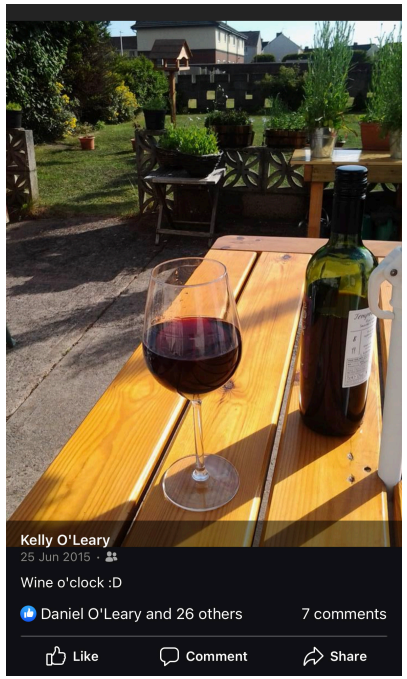
Share.

As you have seen in the previous phots, I like to share my garden with other members of my family, whether its my nephew helping with home made projects, my husband doing woodwork or other family members having a get together. Sharing my garden is good for my wellbeing, but I think that sharing my garden with my dogs is the best way to make me laugh and make me happy.









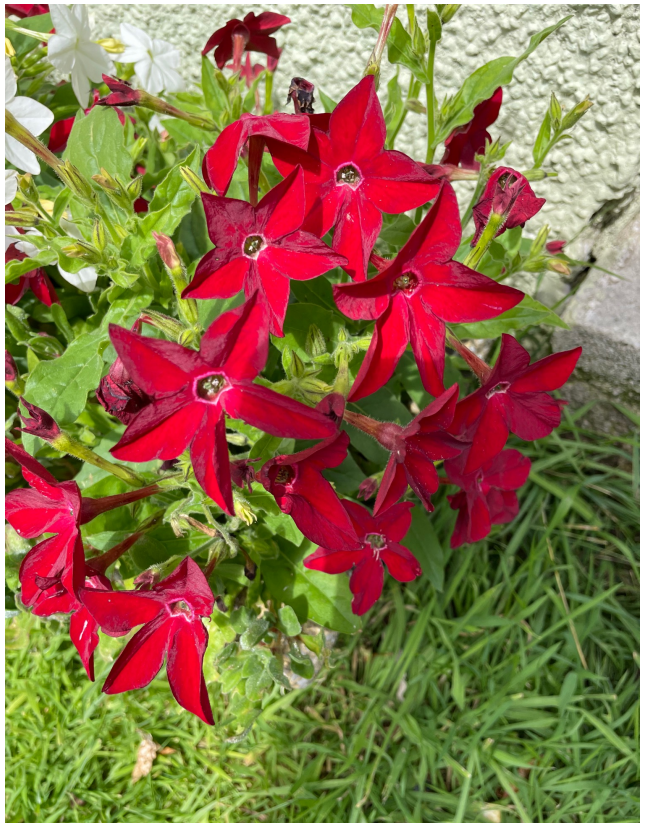


I also like to share my garden to use it to host parties on special occasions, I sometimes use the space to put up a tent for friends to use who can't drive home or for myself and my husband in the summer when it is too warm inside.









Reflection

Using what I have learned through the John Muir Award, I will make more of an effort to keep up the conservation of my garden. I will look for seeds that are to be planted at different times of the year to ensure flowers all year round. I am currently looking into another project with my nephew, for making bee bars, where bees can have a drink without getting trapped in the water and I will keep using my garden as my happy place, ensuring my wellbeing is continued.