



My Garden

OUR GARDEN

1807245 JOHN MUIR EXPERIENCE



Fascinating colours and textures I found.



I listen to the birdsong every morning but never really think about the birds, it is interesting to try to identify the birds by their song without being able to see them clearly. My children are listening to the songs and trying to pick out different birds, they found crows quite quickly! It has made us stop and consider each creature that makes the noise and not simply enjoy it as a whole piece of music. Highlighting the wealth of birdlife in our community. Listen to what I have heard by hovering over the pictures and clicking the arrow.



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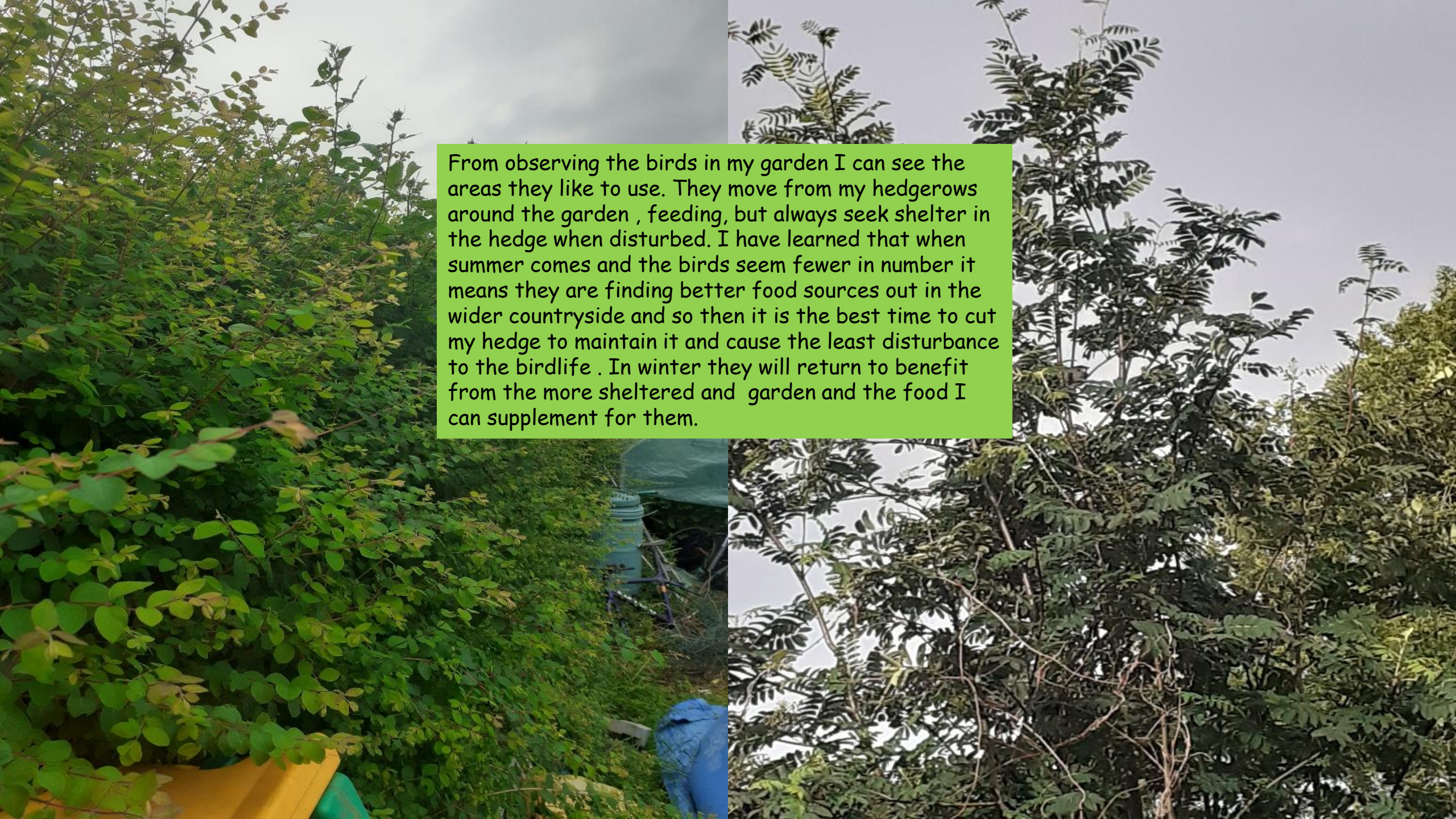


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These are examples of some of the thirteen garden birds I found. They were very hard to photograph , never staying still enough, even if I hid inside and tried to snap a picture through the window. The birds seemed very aware of my presence at all times.



From observing the birds in my garden I can see the areas they like to use. They move from my hedgerows around the garden , feeding, but always seek shelter in the hedge when disturbed. I have learned that when summer comes and the birds seem fewer in number it means they are finding better food sources out in the wider countryside and so then it is the best time to cut my hedge to maintain it and cause the least disturbance to the birdlife . In winter they will return to benefit from the more sheltered and garden and the food I can supplement for them.





Can you spot the bull finch I found in amongst the vegetable planter?



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Out of 19 common British garden birds I have noted 13 in my garden over the time I observed. Most of these birds will stay in Britain for the winter but some will migrate . Summer migrations allow birds to breed in milder climates where food is plentiful as most are insect eaters. They will return south in the autumn when our weather becomes too cool. These birds include Swifts, Nightjars, Cuckoos and turtle doves amongst many others.

Some birds overwinter here , enjoying the milder winters than the North and East allows. They feed themselves up with the fruits of milder winters and return North and East in the spring . These are often duck breeds , geese and wading birds.

Some birds will use Britain as a stop off along their migration route and so may be seen only briefly each year . Britain becomes a service station for them.

Certain birds will migrate in some areas but in others will stay all year round, for example Robins live in Britain all year round but in Eastern Europe will migrate to Britain for the milder winters here. They will then return to Eastern Europe for the spring there. So the Robbin in the garden in winter may be a native one or an eastern European one.



I love the thick rubbery feel of these leaves, they look so shiny and their colours make me want to paint a picture of them or fold paper to replicate their shapes.



The architectural nature of these grasses that have just been left to grow is attractive to me aesthetically but I feel shame that others view it as unkempt and messy.



There are fine spiders webs that go from flower to leaves but I couldn't get them to show in my pictures.

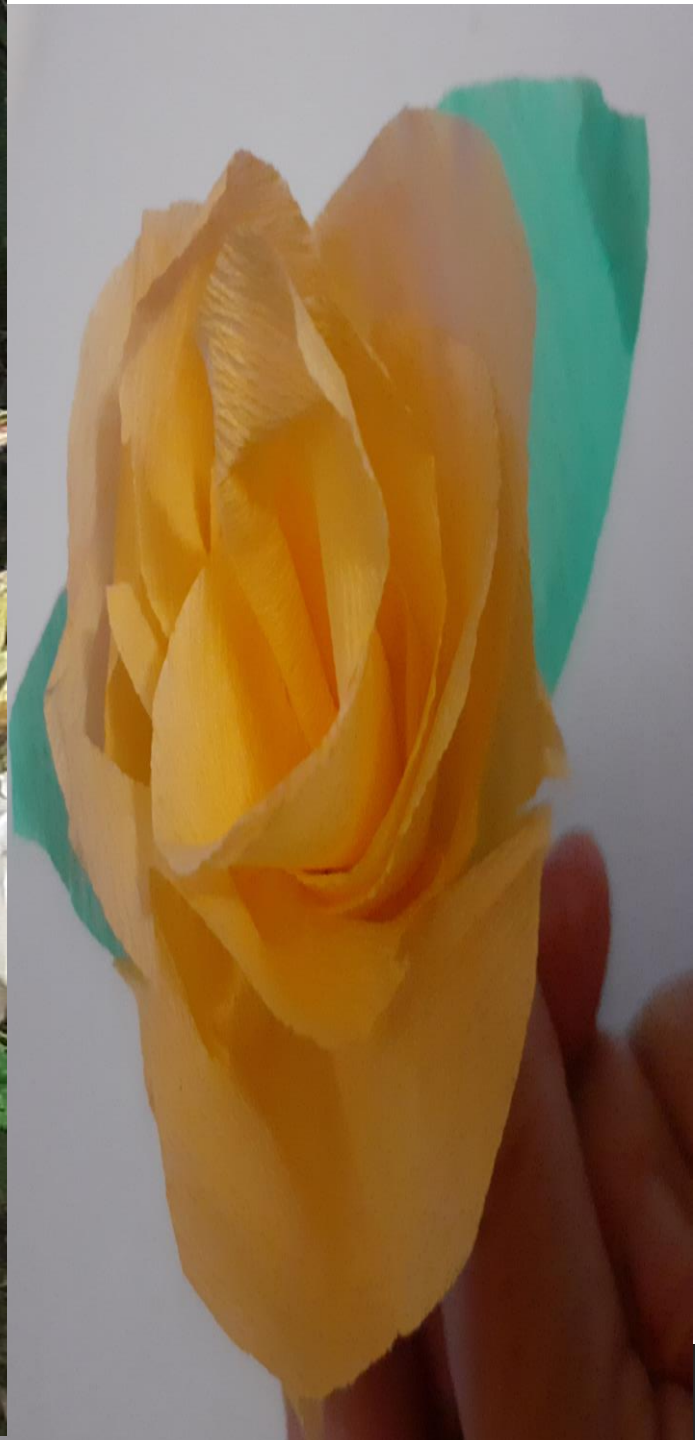


This flower bed was made by filling an old bed base lined with fabric membrane. It is alive with fat spiders who will jump so quickly when they are disturbed.





A commemorative white rose for my dog no longer with us. . Helps keep a connection with memories and the present in a sensory and aesthetically pleasing way. It reminds me to stop and reflect and also to keep nurturing it.











This is an area of my garden which I have used to dump my apple tree pruning's and fencing that I removed last autumn. I am ashamed of this pile as it is an eyesore in the garden, however it is tucked away in a corner which is not visible to passers by. During my time discovering and exploring I decided to start to sort this unkempt area and that is when I made the discovery with my children!



A Hedgehog!





Hedgehog poo!

In the pile of pruning's and leaf litter from hedge clippings I discovered evidence of the hedgehogs life. I found hedge hog poo. I would have thought it was simply decomposing vegetable matter if I was still unaware of the hedgehogs existence. On carefully examining the area and the hedge I found a large opening inside the hedge much like a cave but sheltered and not visible to the eye. It had been used as there was clear path on the ground that didn't have growth of any sort because of being walked over often. The pile of twigs and branches obscured the space and gave a sheltered route in and out. I was surprised and saddened to see litter in this space , cans and plastics which have found their way into the hedge. The hedgehog is sharing it's bed and home with rubbish which could cause it harm. Sharp edges on metal cans may cut the hedgehog and if it attempts to eat the plastics may have damage done to its intestines.





What I learned about hedgehogs

Food

Hedgehogs eat slugs and snails and other insects. You can feed hedgehogs but it must be cat or dog meat which is not fish based and cat or dog biscuits which you may have to crush up a little. Never feed hedgehogs milk or bread it can give them diarrhoea.

Space

Hedgehogs need areas left wild in a garden, areas that have leaf litter and logs to make their nests in and that have a good supply of food such as invertebrates for the hedgehog to eat.

Sympathetic Garden Maintenance

Before strimming and mowing check for hedgehogs particularly around hedges as they rest in these quiet areas. Always check bonfires before lighting them as hedgehogs may well be in the pile of logs and sticks, feeding or sheltering. It is a good idea to build your bonfire very close to the time of lighting them but always check for them anyway.

If you use netting, either for sports or for your gardening. Such as fruit netting. Remove this when it is not in use as hedgehogs can entangle themselves in it and that may cause injury to the animal.

Do not use slug pellets to control slugs and snail populations as these are poisonous to hedgehogs and many other animals who may eat the poisoned slug. You can use crushed egg shells or coffee grounds around plants you want to protect from slugs instead. This is a good ecological way to garden in harmony with nature.



To keep your garden safe for a hedgehog , if you have a pond , make sure there is a safe route out of the water . You can do this by simply placing a few bricks up to the edge so the hedge hog has a little ramp to walk out on.
make sure to cover drains and holes over. This will prevent Hedgehogs falling in or down them and getting trapped.



Letting twigs and logs rot overtime encourages lots of insects that feed on the rotting wood . A quiet place which doesn't get much disturbance lets these creatures feel safe and they will stay and thrive. The insects will attract other wildlife which feed on them such as birds and of course hedgehogs.



Conserve

When investigating my garden I found litter I was unaware of within the hedge. I removed this as quietly and gently as possible . The cans had spiders and slugs in them which I removed and placed back in the hedge. The crisp packets were filled with decomposing plant matter which I also placed back in the hedge to continue its natural process and allow the small insects that feed on it to continue to do so. This left the area that the hedgehog rested in clean and natural and safe.

In order not to cause too much disturbance to the area which needed clearing, I took several days , doing only a little bit each day to allow the wildlife time to adjust. I used shears rather than loud petrol tools to prevent as much disturbance as possible.

Having researched what hedgehogs need I tried to create an area which meets both our needs for the space.

I have created a little story to explore how we can share and protect our garden space.



My garden needs to be clear and clean and tidy so I can....



run



pick Daises



play football

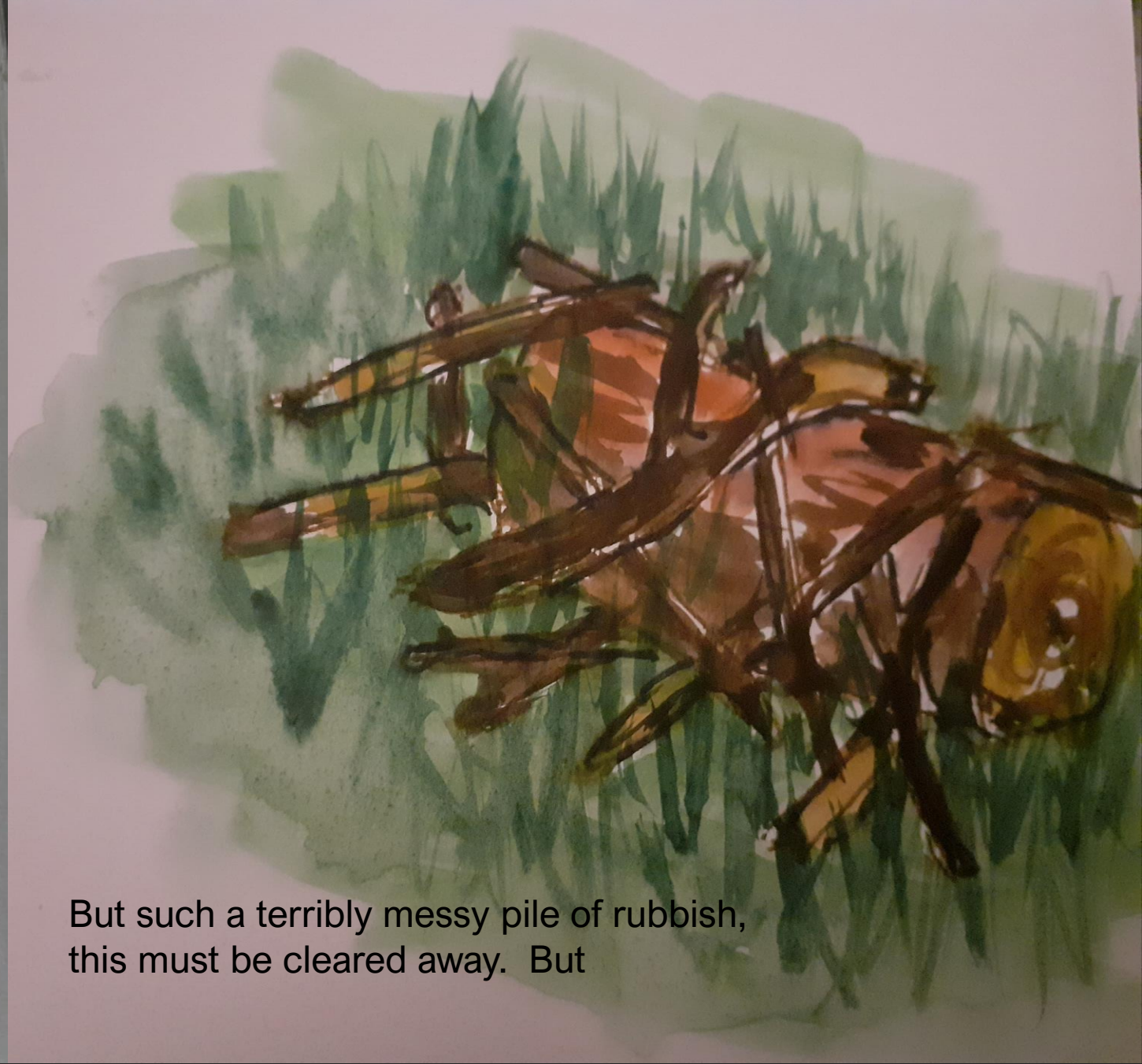
and



Look at my garden



What a lovely neat plant pot, so pretty.



But such a terribly messy pile of rubbish,
this must be cleared away. But



Wait, it might look a mess to you , but just look at the little creatures who live in the pile of logs and twigs. They need the rotting wood to feed on and live in.

Long grass needs to be cut short so I can run about and not trip over.....



But Wait, ...that sound.. Brrrrmmm grrrrbrmmmm , oh no! a lawnmower to chop down my grass. Run Quick before it runs me down.



Stop !

A watercolor painting of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a nest made of sticks and twigs, with some green grass and blue patches. A coiled wire or branch lies on the ground near the nest. In the background, a wooden fence with vertical slats runs across the scene. The sky is a mix of light blue and white. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Whos home is this?



It is mine!

W

Hedgehog lives here too, it needs a quiet place to rest, a safe place that won't be disturbed to have babies and lots of food to eat.



That messy corner is its perfect home, safe from other animals who can't get past the twigs and branches, dry and sheltered under the hedge and that rotting messy wood has lots and lots of the things Hedgehog likes to eat. Remember the beetles and snails and worms? those are Hedgehogs dinner. It eats all the things which eat the flowers and fruit and vegetables we grow to enjoy ourselves so it helps our gardening and we didn't know it was there.

So leave that messy corner and let hedgehog have its space and use the rest of the garden to play, explore and rest in. We can share and look after the space for each other.

