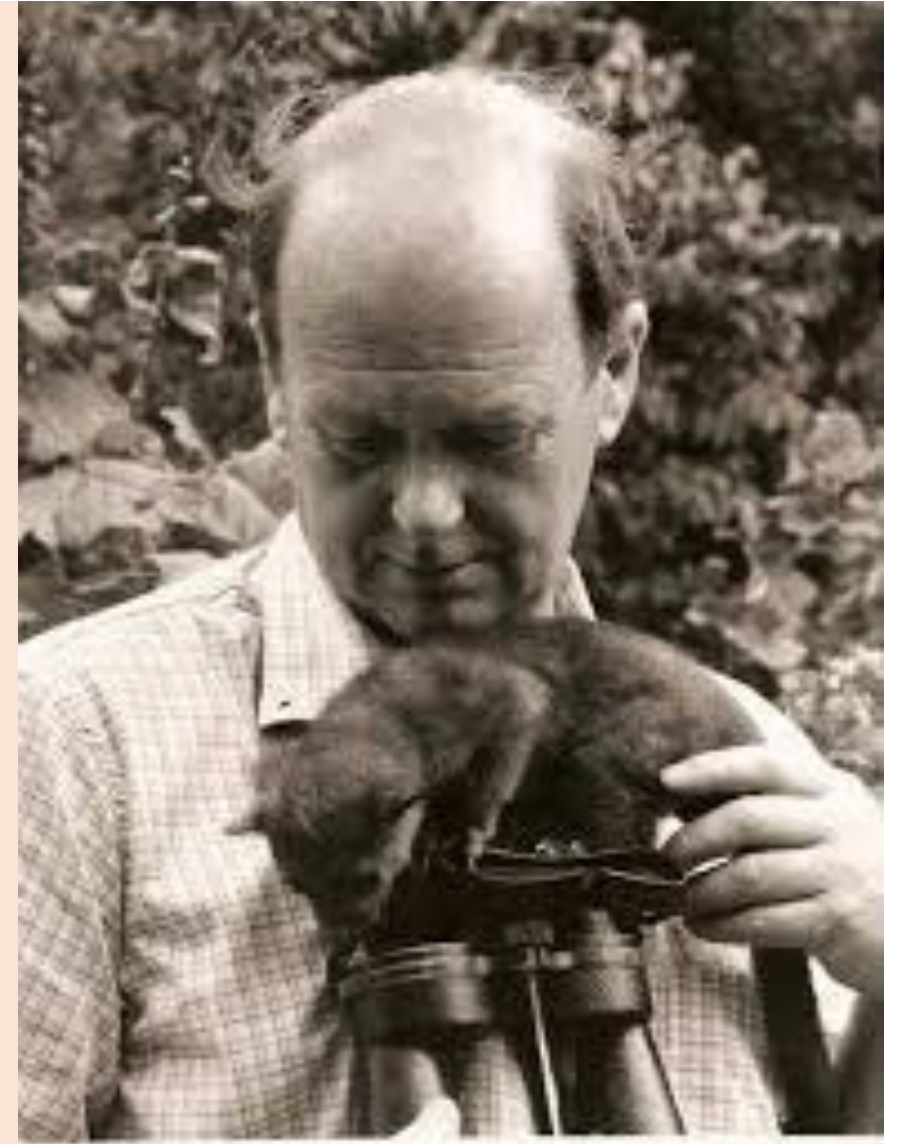


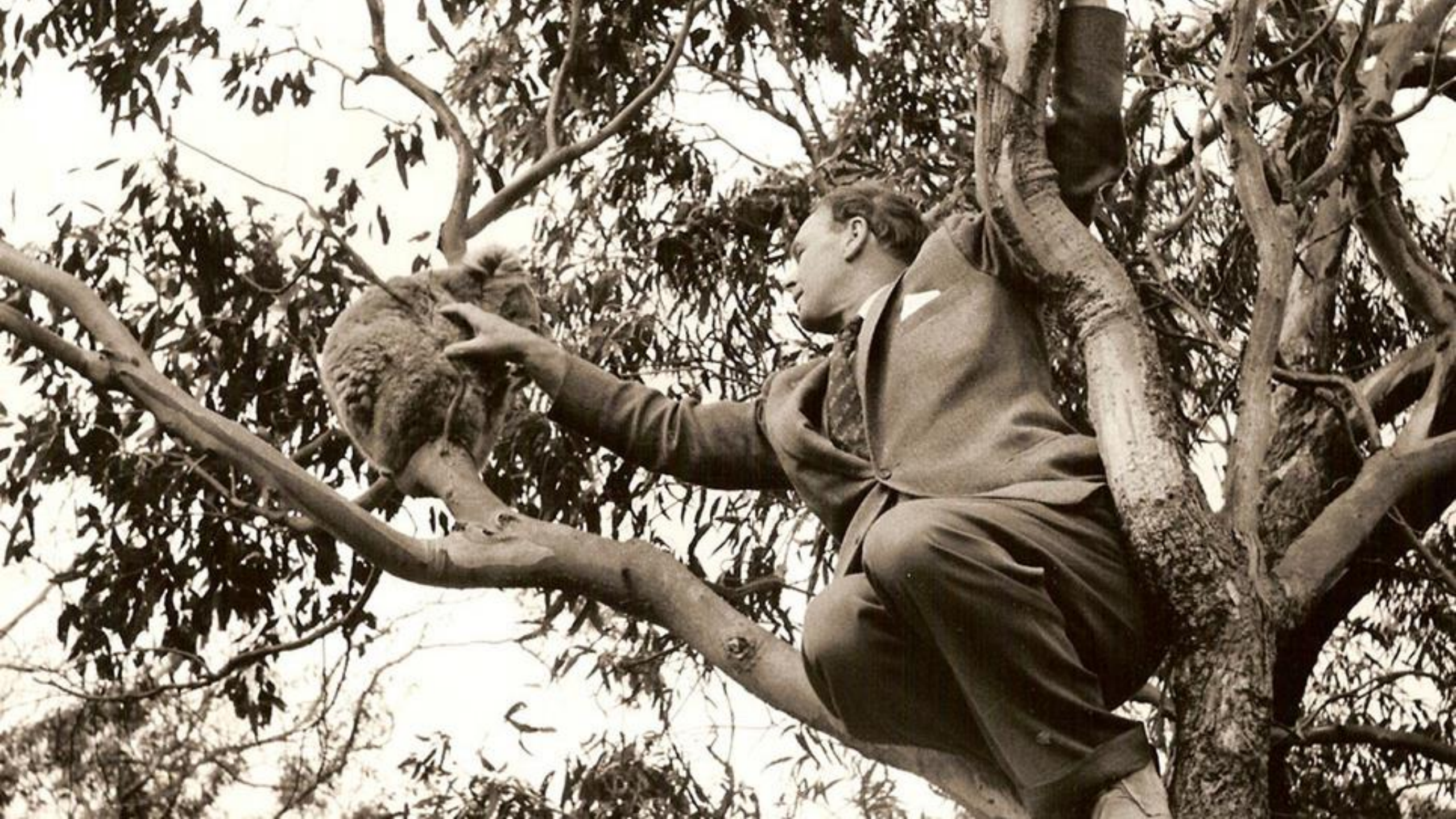
- *Sustainability in the Early Years*

Sir Peter Scott

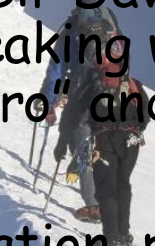
Sir Peter Scott led a remarkable and multifaceted life. Renowned as a conservationist and ornithologist, he also gained acclaim as a talented artist, an accomplished athlete, and an inventive thinker. His life story is filled with intriguing and unexpected pursuits, including his fascination with the Loch Ness monster and the unique honor of having a species of fish named after him.

He was the only son of the legendary explorer known as Scott of the Antarctic. In his final letter home, written during his doomed expedition to the South Pole, Scott urged his wife to inspire their son with a love for natural history.





- He was the only son of the legendary explorer known as Scott of the Antarctic. In his final letter home, written during his doomed expedition to the South Pole, Scott urged his wife to inspire their son with a love for natural history.
- He was a trailblazer in recognising television's potential to connect people with the natural world. In 1953, he hosted the BBC's very first live natural history broadcast from his home in Slimbridge. His engaging presence later made him a familiar face on TV, where he also provided commentary for major royal events like the Queen's coronation and wedding. Sir David Attenborough has credited Sir Peter's groundbreaking work in television as a major influence, calling him his "hero" and the "patron saint of conservation."
- Sir Peter was a groundbreaking figure in conservation, playing an integral role in securing the 1982 international moratorium on whaling and contributing to the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty. He also conceived the Red Data List, a vital tool still used today to assess and classify the conservation status of species worldwide. In recognition of his efforts, he became the first individual to be knighted specifically for contributions to conservation in 1973.





He played a key role in founding the World Wide Fund for Nature, serving as its first chairman. He also designed the organisation's iconic panda logo, along with the swan emblem for the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

- He was a trailblazer in the field of conservation, playing an integral role in achieving the international moratorium on whaling in 1982 and contributing significantly to the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty. He also conceived the idea for the Red Data List, which continues to serve as a key tool for documenting and classifying the conservation status of species worldwide. In recognition of his efforts, he became the first individual to be knighted for contributions to conservation in 1973.
- He teamed up to launch the Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau, a squad of monster-hunting enthusiasts determined to crack the mystery behind those elusive ripples and shadowy shapes said to lurk in the loch. Think of it as a detective agency for one very slippery suspect!





"Long before words like biodiversity were coined, Peter looked out from that huge window in his house at Slimbridge and realised our lives are so linked with our natural world that we have to learn to love it and look after it".

Sir David Attenborough

Sir Peter Scott passed away on 29th of August 1989, just shy of turning 80. While he made impressive contributions across a range of disciplines, he is most fondly remembered for his evocative wildfowl paintings and his enduring legacy in conservation.

*Secrets
in
Bloom*

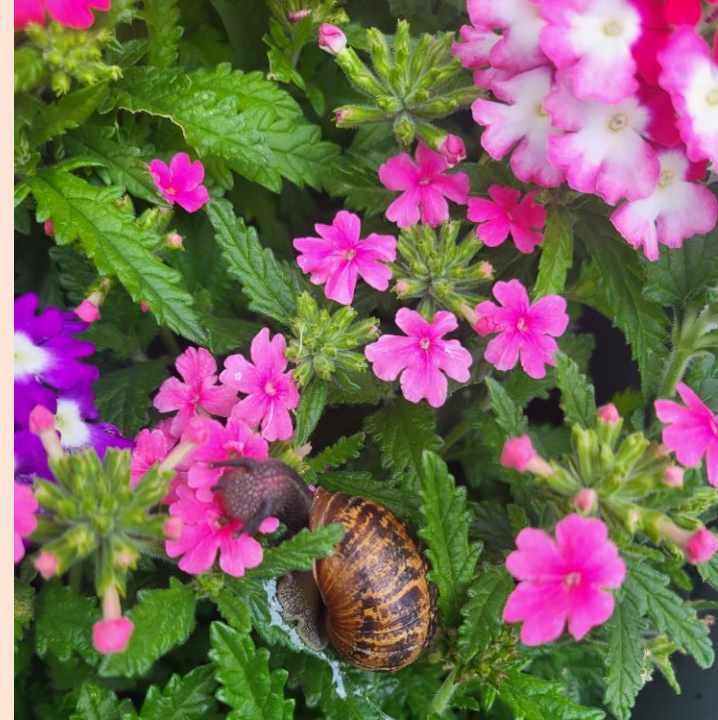


My Concrete Garden

During the quiet days of COVID lockdown, I often found myself staring out at the concrete garden behind my home. It was stark and lifeless, just slabs of cold grey slate stretching from wall to wall, with no plants, no birds, and no signs of nature. Before the pandemic, I had barely noticed it, too busy rushing from one task to the next. But in the stillness of lockdown, the emptiness of that space mirrored how I felt inside, disconnected and worn out. It was then I realised how much I craved the presence of life, colour, and growth. My garden was not just dull; it was a reminder of how far I had drifted from the natural world. That realisation planted the first seed of change.

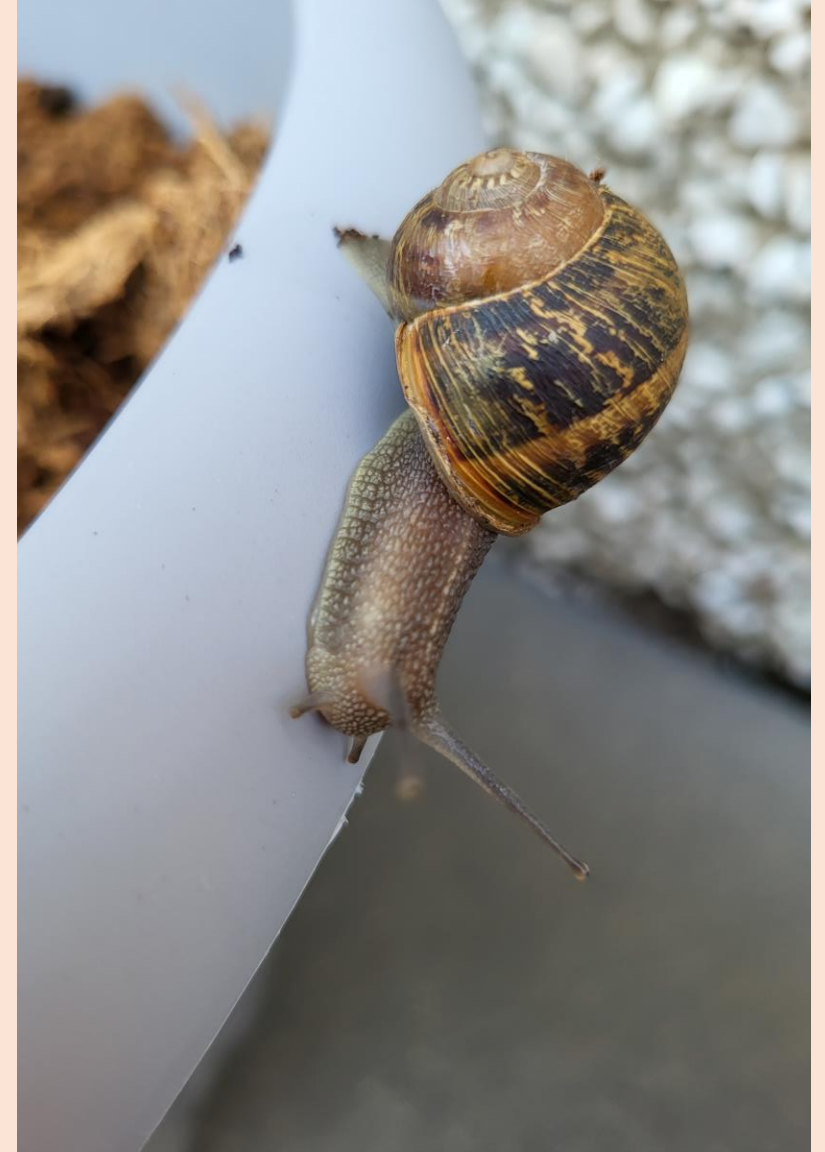
Discover and Wonder

While exploring my garden one damp morning, I made an unexpected discovery, several snails nestled among the leaves, under my flowering plants. The gentle patter of overnight rain had brought them out of hiding, their glistening shells catching the soft light. They moved slowly but purposefully across the moist soil, leaving delicate, silvery trails behind. This simple yet fascinating encounter sparked curiosity about their quiet lives and the miniature ecosystems thriving in overlooked corners of the garden.



Resourceful Snails

I used to think snails were just slow and sluggish, but I have come to see that there is more to their pace than meets the eye. Sure, they do not rush around like other creatures, but their movement is purposeful and well-suited to their environment. Watching a snail glide along using its muscular foot and leaving a trail of protective mucus, I realised it is not about speed, it is about efficiency and survival. Their steady pace helps them stay safe, conserve energy, and adapt to the world around them. What I once saw as slowness, I now understand as a quiet kind of wisdom. One minute they were on the romaine lettuce, and the next they had somehow made their way back under the umbrella of the flowers. slow, maybe, but certainly not idle.



Fungai

I discovered that fungi often appear in my flowerpots, and at first, I was unsure whether it was something to worry about. But I have since learned that their presence is usually due to a mix of moisture, warmth, organic matter, and spores already in the environment. High humidity and poor air circulation can also encourage them to grow. What I have come to appreciate is that these fungi are actually helping break down organic material in the potting mix, which means the soil is rich and full of nutrients. In a way, it is a sign that the soil is alive and healthy. Still, I keep an eye on it, if the fungi ever seem to spread too much or affect the plants, I will adjust the watering, improve drainage, or make sure there is better airflow. It is all part of learning how to work with nature rather than against it.



Bee Trouble



While I was tending to my garden, I noticed a little bee struggling on the ground near one of the flowerpots. It was not flying and seemed weak, barely moving its legs. I gently scooped it up with a leaf and placed it somewhere safe, away from the footpath. I remembered reading that a tired bee might just need a bit of sugar water, so I mixed some up and placed a tiny drop nearby. After a few moments, it began to drink, slowly gaining strength. Watching it buzz away a few minutes later filled me with such joy, it was a small act, but it reminded me how much every little life in the garden matters.

Surprise Visitor

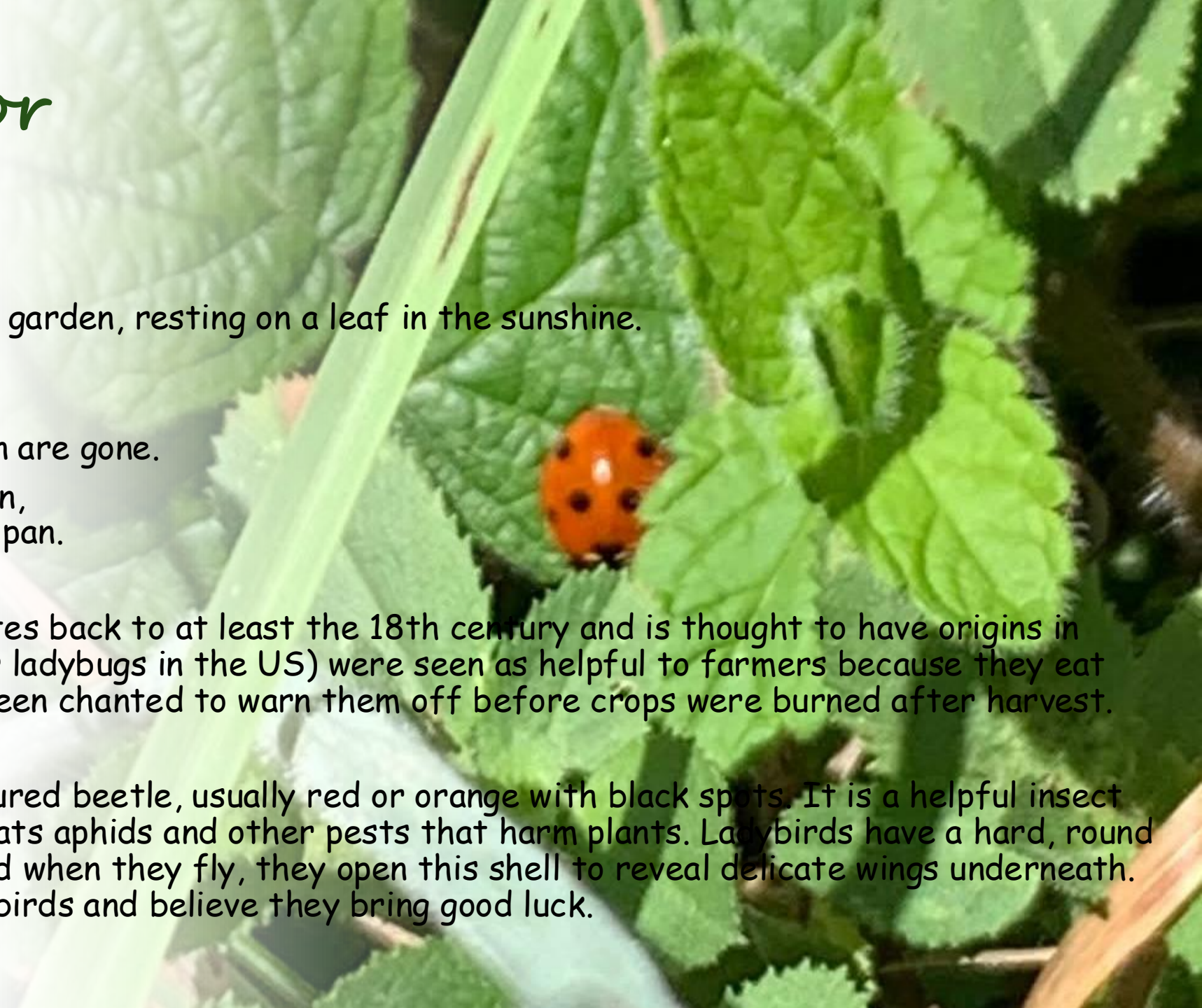
I found a little red ladybird in my garden, resting on a leaf in the sunshine.

Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home,
Your house is on fire, your children are gone.

All except one, and her name is Ann,
And she crept under the warming pan.

This old English nursery rhyme dates back to at least the 18th century and is thought to have origins in agricultural folklore. Ladybirds (or ladybugs in the US) were seen as helpful to farmers because they eat aphids, and this rhyme may have been chanted to warn them off before crops were burned after harvest.

A ladybird is a small, brightly coloured beetle, usually red or orange with black spots. It is a helpful insect often found in gardens, where it eats aphids and other pests that harm plants. Ladybirds have a hard, round shell that protects their wings, and when they fly, they open this shell to reveal delicate wings underneath. Children often enjoy spotting ladybirds and believe they bring good luck.



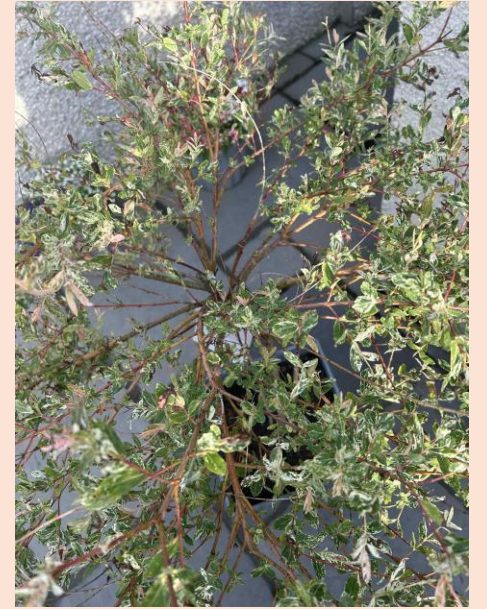
Pink Flamingo Tree



In the quiet corner of my garden, I have been watching my Pink Flamingo tree grow, and it fills me with joy each time I pass by. When I first planted it, its delicate leaves were just a hint of green and soft pink, barely fluttering in the breeze. Over time, it has stretched taller, its branches reaching out with confidence, and the colours have become more vibrant, a hint of soft blush pinks mixed with creamy whites and fresh greens. Each new leaf feels like a small celebration, and I often find myself pausing to admire how far it has come. The tree was a special gift from my son, who had terrible trouble finding one, making it all the more precious to me. It is not just a tree now; it is a gentle reminder of patience, care, and the quiet beauty of nature unfolding.

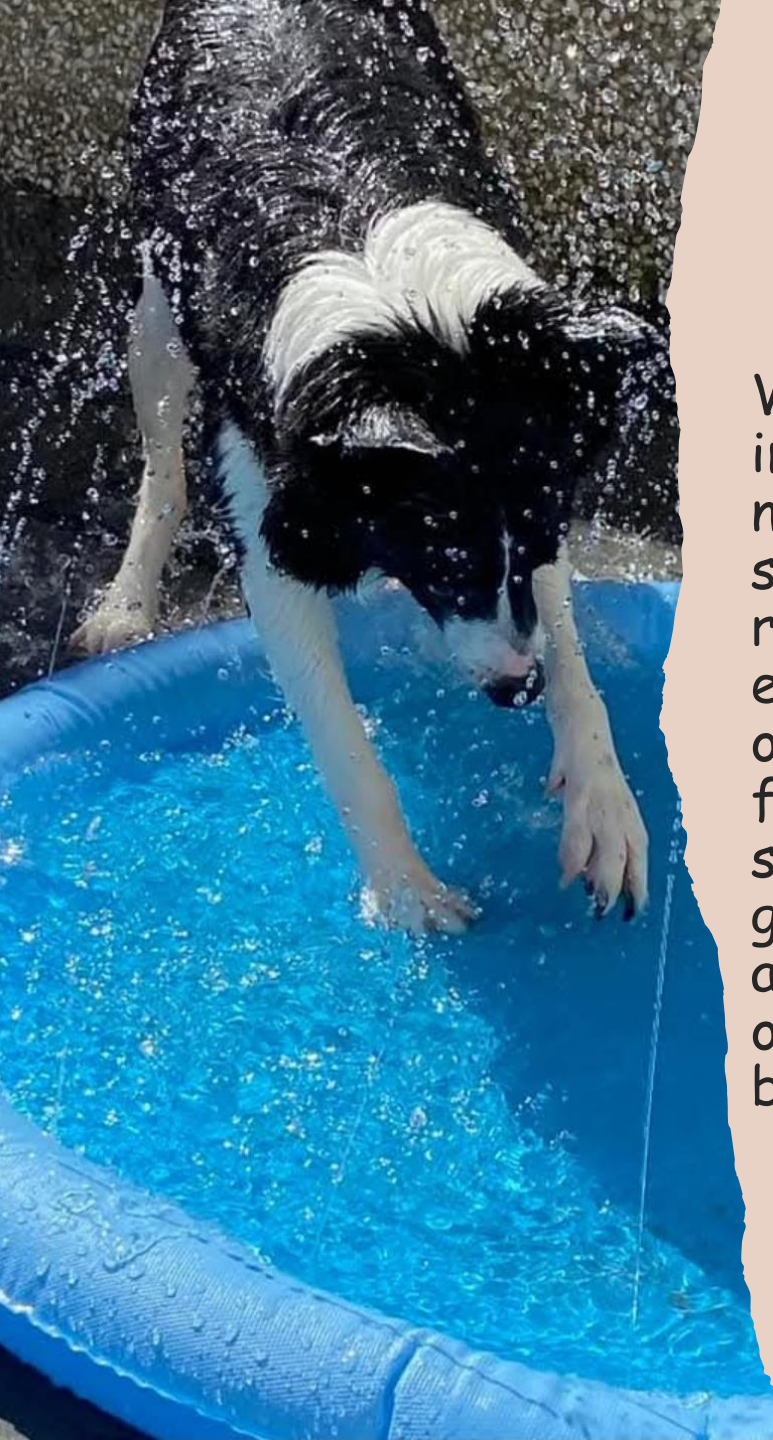
Growing Still: The Beauty of Slow Change

As my Pink Flamingo tree grows and evolves, it brings more than just beauty to my garden. Its delicate, colorful leaves provide shelter for small insects and contribute to cleaner air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. The tree's roots help hold the soil steady, preventing erosion, while its vibrant colors brighten the space and bring a sense of calm. Watching it grow reminds me how life adapts and nurtures everything around it, even in small, quiet ways.



Safety for All

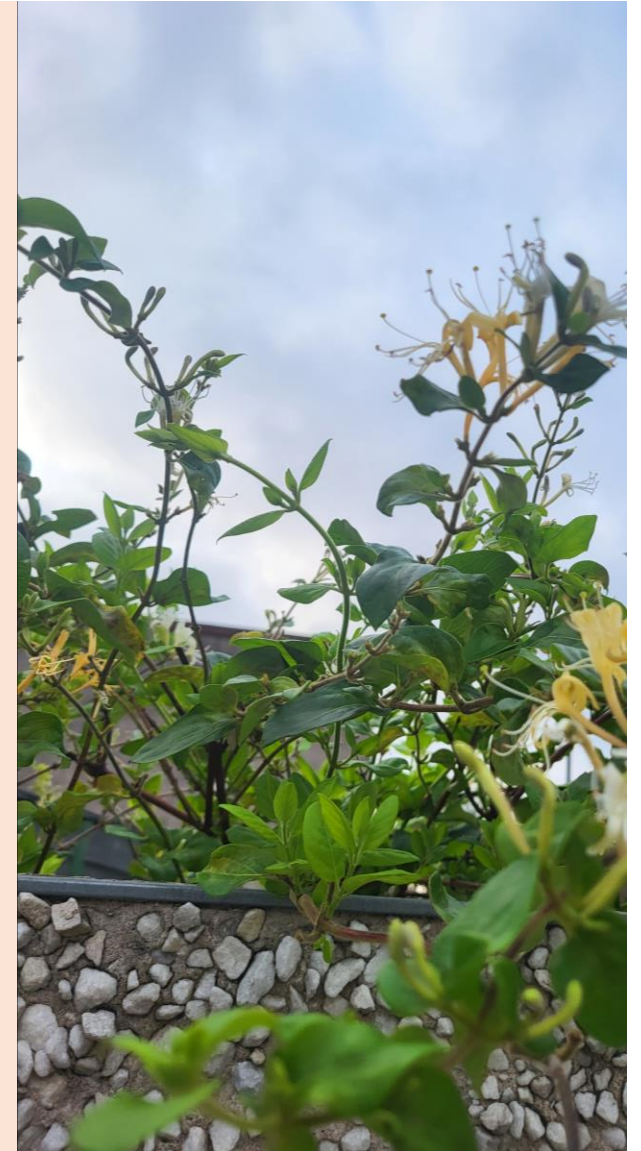
When selecting plants for my garden, it's important that all choices are safe and non-poisonous, especially as I share the space with my dog. I have taken care to research each plant before planting, ensuring that none pose a risk if touched or accidentally nibbled. Considering her favourite treat is lettuce and she will sometimes go for a nibble. Creating a garden that is both beautiful and safe allows me to enjoy the space with peace of mind, knowing it supports the well-being of all living things, my pet included.





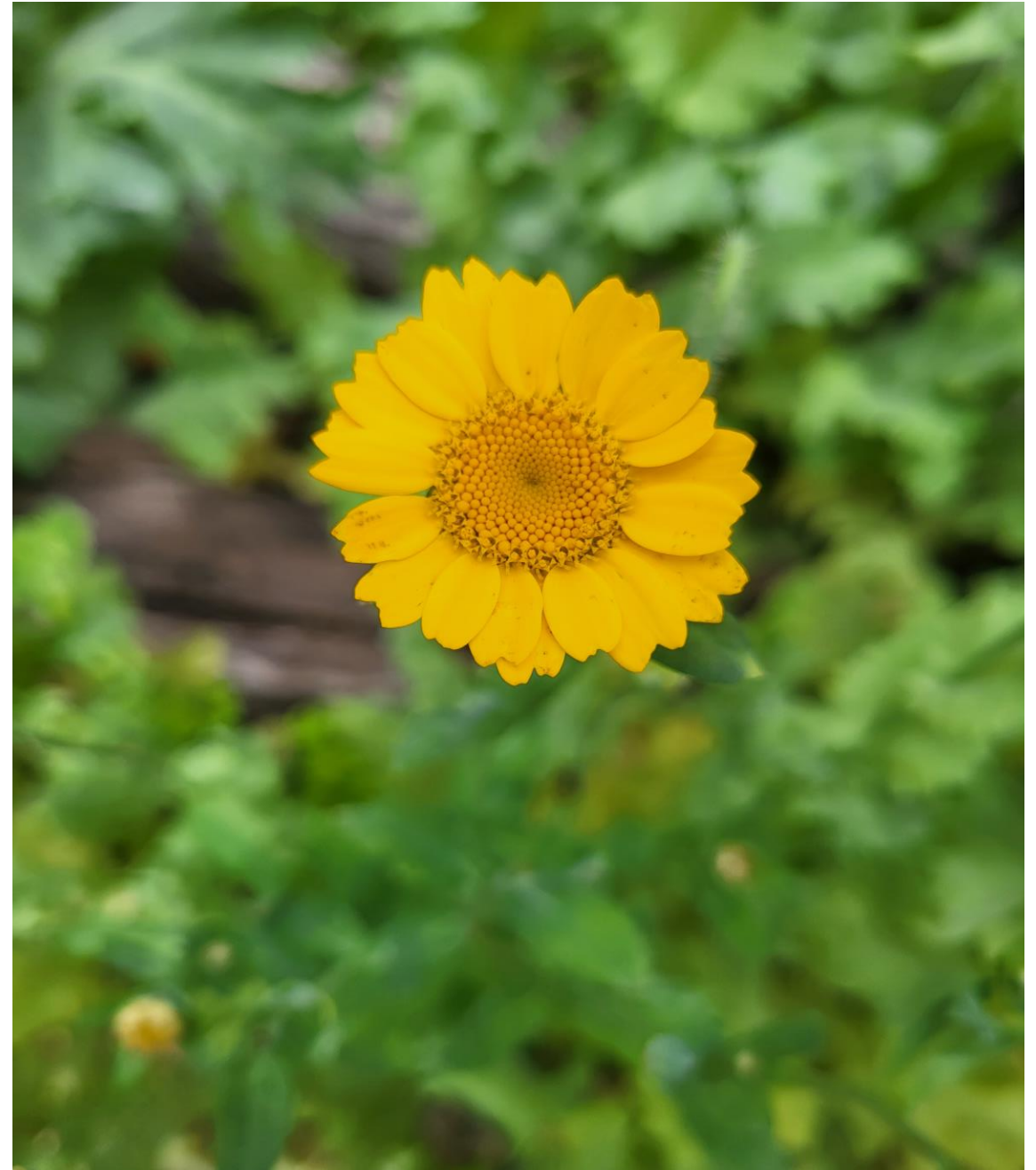
The Secret Next Door

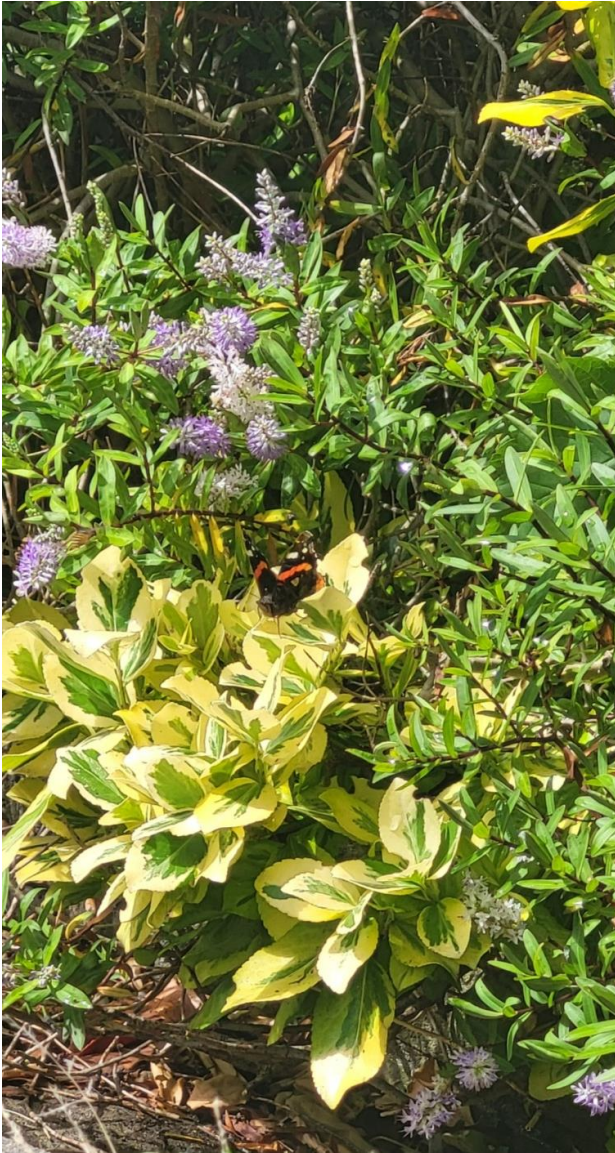
Today, as I sat quietly in the garden, I noticed something I would have never seen before, nature gently peeking over my neighbour's wall. A tangle of ivy and delicate pink blossoms had crept up and spilled softly into view, as if nature had been quietly painting in the background all along. The leaves shimmer in the sunlight and sway in the breeze, and I wondered how I had missed this quiet beauty until now. It felt like a little secret the garden had been keeping from me, waiting for the right moment to reveal itself.



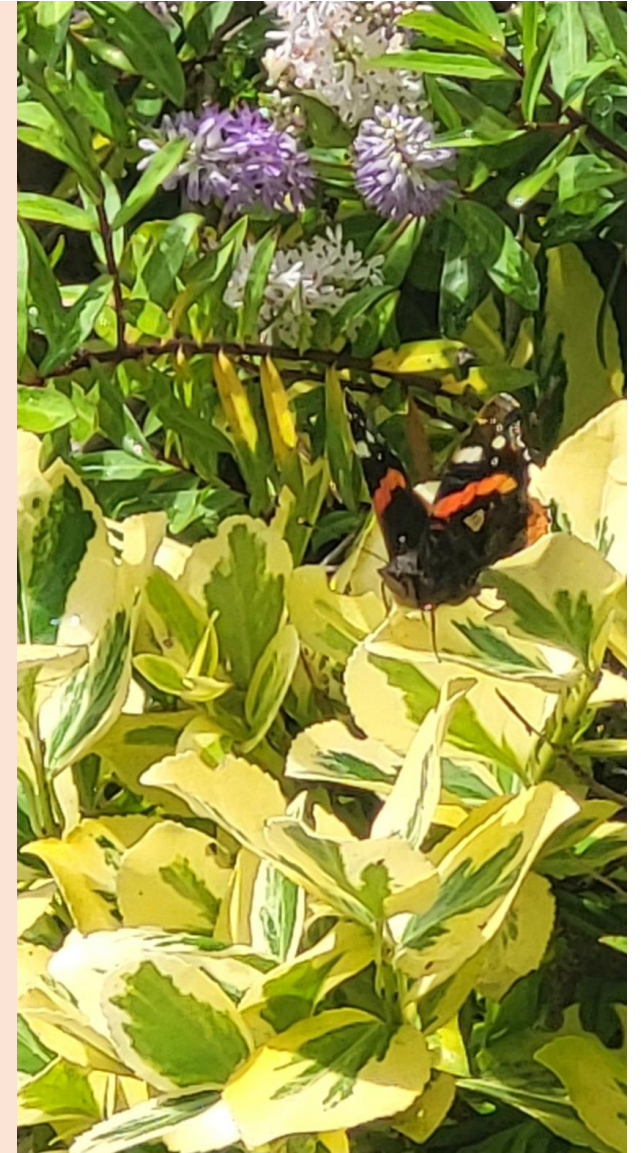
Exploring and Understanding

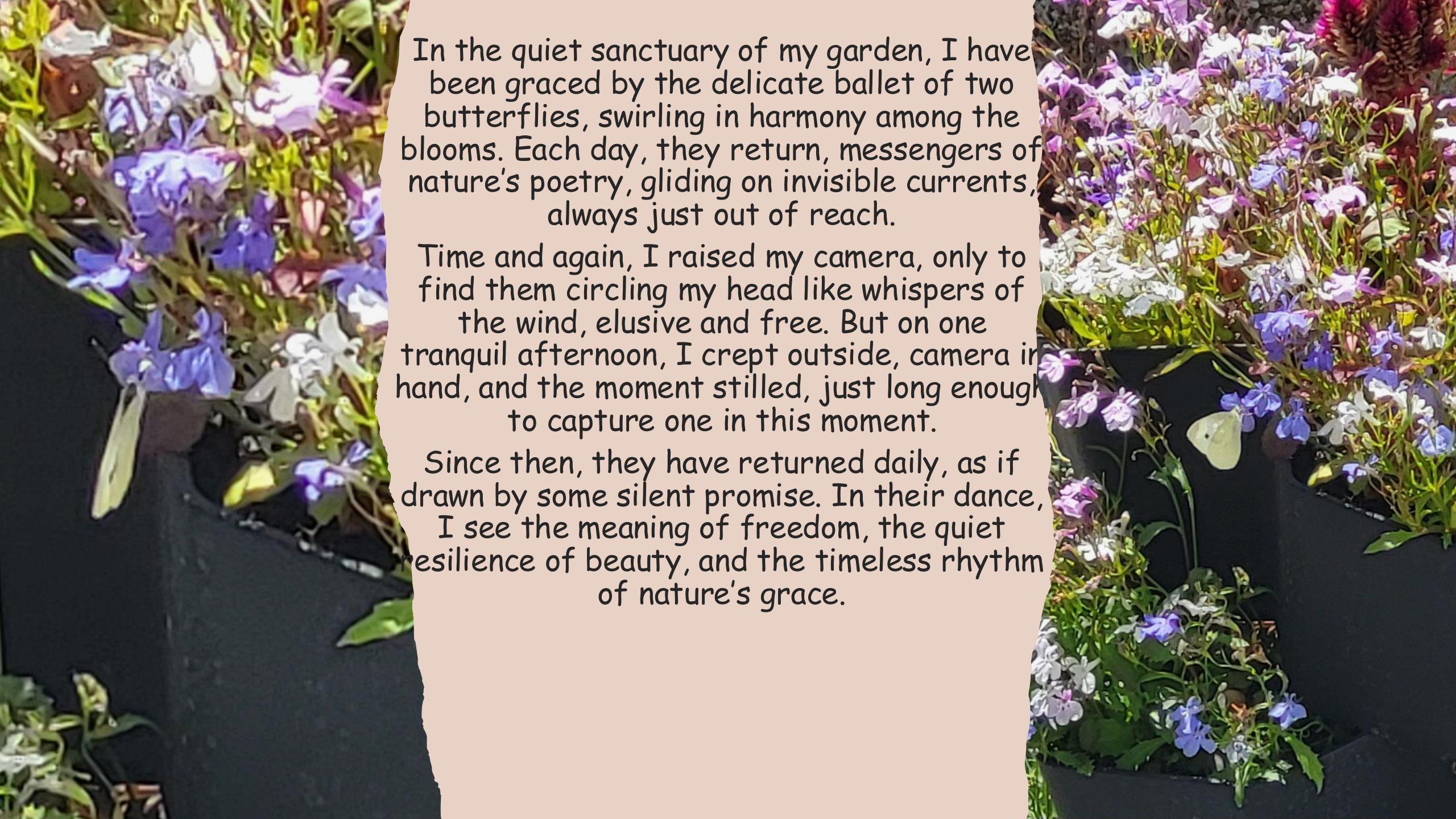
Being an urban city centre means being surrounded by buildings, concrete, and busy streets, with very little access to green space. In our setting, there was no grass at all, so planting flowers and adding shrubbery became essential. We introduced raised beds, pots, and planters filled with colourful blooms and hardy shrubs to soften the hard surfaces and bring life back into the space. Not only has it improved the look and feel of the area, but it has also created a small haven for wildlife like bees and butterflies. In the heart of the city, these planted areas offer a breath of fresh air and a sense of calm, reminding us how integral even the smallest patches of nature are. Watching a single flower bloom against the backdrop of grey concrete fills me with hope, proof that nature finds a way, even in the most unlikely places.





Whenever a butterfly comes near, I cannot help but feel it carries a deeper meaning. To me, it symbolises transformation and the hope of a fresh start. There is a gentle sense of joy and freedom in its fluttering wings, as if it is quietly reminding me to welcome change and remain open to new beginnings. At times, it feels like more than just a coincidence, more like a silent message from someone I have lost, or a comforting nudge from a guardian angel watching over me. This feeling is especially poignant in light of the loss of my daughter and brothers.





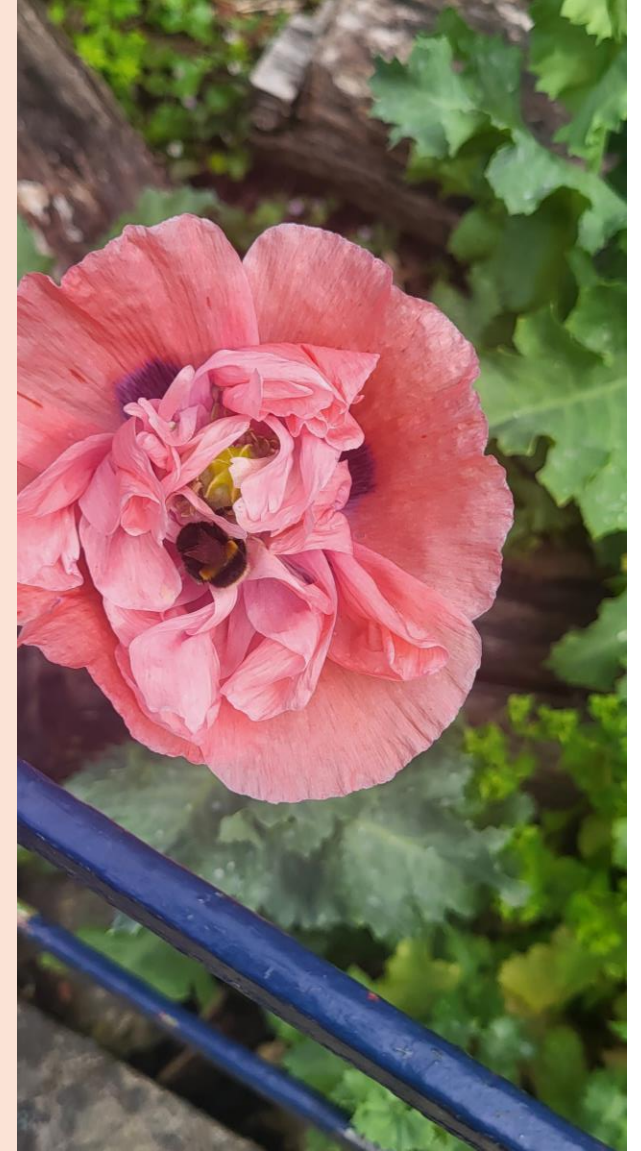
In the quiet sanctuary of my garden, I have been graced by the delicate ballet of two butterflies, swirling in harmony among the blooms. Each day, they return, messengers of nature's poetry, gliding on invisible currents, always just out of reach.

Time and again, I raised my camera, only to find them circling my head like whispers of the wind, elusive and free. But on one tranquil afternoon, I crept outside, camera in hand, and the moment stilled, just long enough to capture one in this moment.

Since then, they have returned daily, as if drawn by some silent promise. In their dance, I see the meaning of freedom, the quiet resilience of beauty, and the timeless rhythm of nature's grace.



I used to overlook bees, but I have come to realise just how important they are to the balance of our ecosystems. As pollinators, they play a key role in helping plants reproduce by transferring pollen between flowers, which allows fruits, vegetables, and seeds to grow. Without bees, many of the foods I take for granted would become scarce, and the rich variety of life on our planet would suffer. It is only by learning more about the incredible work they do that I have truly begun to appreciate their importance, not just to nature, but to our own survival. Their quiet efforts support entire food chains, and I now understand how essential it is to protect and respect these amazing little creatures.





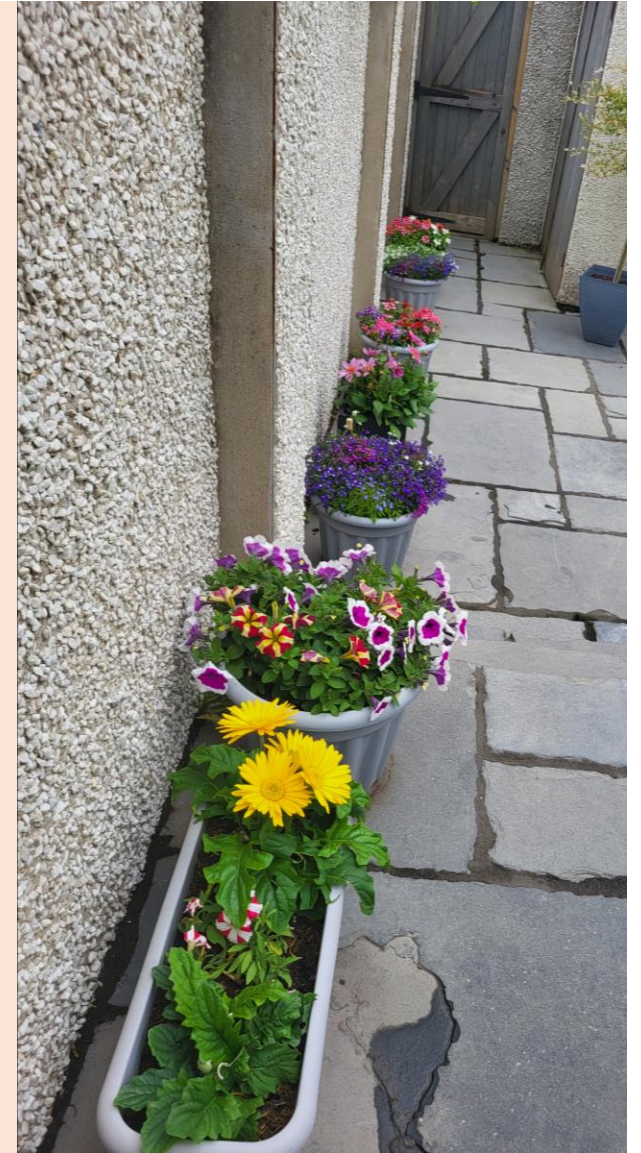
I believe having plants and shrubs outside is so important, not just for the environment, but for our well-being too. When I step outside and see greenery around me, it instantly lifts my mood and makes me feel more connected to nature. Plants help clean the air, attract wildlife like bees and butterflies, and bring colour and life to even the duller spaces. Shrubs can offer shelter for small creatures and create a sense of calm and privacy. For me, they turn an ordinary outdoor space into a place of peace, reflection, and quiet joy.





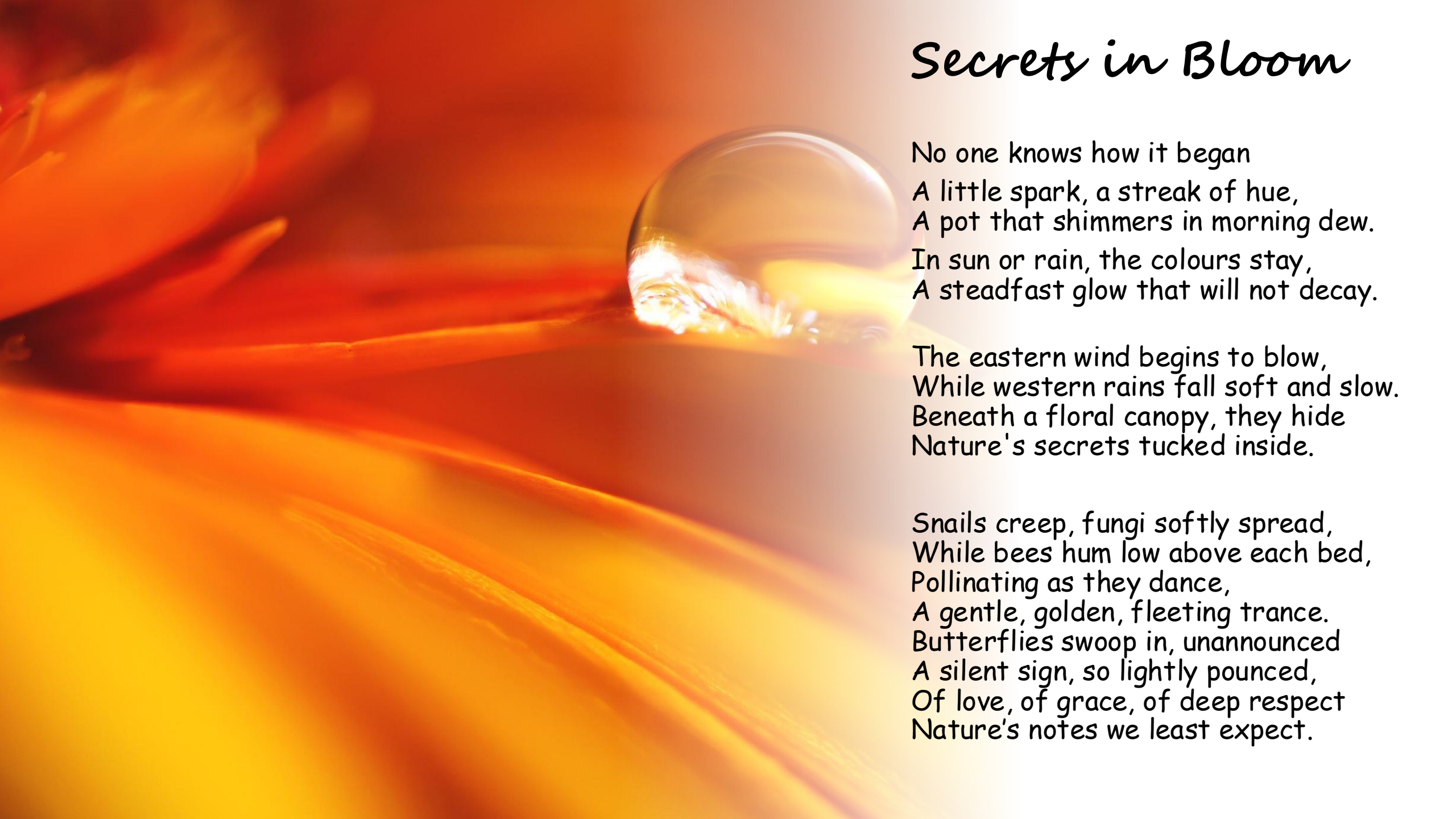
Conserve

Adding flowerpots to a concrete garden is a simple yet powerful way to conserve and reconnect with nature. I have found that even the smallest pot filled with vibrant blooms or leafy greens can bring life to an otherwise grey and lifeless space. By using containers, I can grow a variety of plants without digging up the ground, which helps protect the existing surfaces and reduces waste. It also encourages biodiversity, attracting bees, butterflies, and other pollinators that are essential to our environment. For me, it is a meaningful step towards conservation, turning concrete into colour and giving nature a place to thrive, one pot at a time.



Reflection – Life Beyond the Concrete

Reflecting on my experiences with my garden and setting, from watching resourceful snails and a bright ladybird to nurturing the Pink Flamingo tree, I see a powerful lesson in sustainability for early years education. These small, natural moments teach children about patience, care, and respect for living things. Through this process, I have also learned and discovered so much myself. I have realised how important it is to slow down and truly observe the world around me, noticing life thriving even in unexpected, urban spaces. Watching my tree grow slowly and seeing nature peek over the garden wall reminded me that sustainability is not just about big actions, it is about everyday care and connection. By encouraging young learners to engage with nature in this way, we help them understand how every creature and plant plays a role in the environment. These experiences support early years sustainability by fostering curiosity, responsibility, and a lasting appreciation for the natural world, foundations that guide children toward becoming thoughtful, environmentally aware adults.



Secrets in Bloom

No one knows how it began
A little spark, a streak of hue,
A pot that shimmers in morning dew.
In sun or rain, the colours stay,
A steadfast glow that will not decay.

The eastern wind begins to blow,
While western rains fall soft and slow.
Beneath a floral canopy, they hide
Nature's secrets tucked inside.

Snails creep, fungi softly spread,
While bees hum low above each bed,
Pollinating as they dance,
A gentle, golden, fleeting trance.
Butterflies swoop in, unannounced
A silent sign, so lightly pounced,
Of love, of grace, of deep respect
Nature's notes we least expect.



The concrete's grip is gone at last,
Replaced by blooms both bright
and vast.

Where once was grey, now colour
sings

A garden full of living things.

The flowers make me smile each
day,
The growth still takes my breath
away.

And though the world may twist
and turn,
These blooms are here, and still
they burn.

So, hush...

They may be listening soon
These whispered dreams,
These **Secrets in Bloom.**