

Pocket Garden Design Competition 2024



Competition information

Why take part?



Discover the joyful and practical cross-curricular learning through designing, growing and tending a garden. The 2024 Pocket Garden Design Competition provides a framework and a focus for this learning, linking design, sustainability and nature's engineers. This theme explores natural science and technology, from animal nests, dens or burrows to the impact of a single species on an ecosystem and human technology inspired by nature. Pupils aged 3 - 18 are invited to design a garden inspired by the amazing stories and structures of nature's engineers. We are looking for exciting and unusual designs that use edible plants, plants that attract wildlife, and reuse items which would otherwise have been thrown away.

- This competition allows pupils to plan and design, using plants as a key element. It will build transferable skills to design growing spaces and develop your school grounds.
- The competition themes link to your Eco-Schools Scotland work on food and the environment, biodiversity, school grounds, climate action, health and well-being and your participation can be part of your Green Flag application.
- The competition provides a context for Learning for Sustainability within Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes – see pages six and seven for more detail.
- Winners will be invited to display their Pocket Garden in the online showcase where people across Scotland can enjoy it and vote for their favourite three. You may have seen Pocket Gardens featured on the BBC television programme, Beechgrove Garden in 2021. Previously, the Pocket Gardens have been displayed at Gardening Scotland in Edinburgh, where they have been visited by the BBC Beechgrove Garden team, and the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.
- All winners will also be judged for three discretionary awards:
 - Interpretation of the themes*
 - Wildlife friendly
 - Food for people

*See page 5 for the 2024 themes.

Competition details for 2024

Timescales:

- **5pm Friday 23 February 2024** – deadline for competition entries.
- **w/c 26 February** – winners will be notified and can begin to grow and build their garden.
- **5pm Wednesday 5 June** – winning schools deadline for images and words to show finished gardens.
- **9am 14 June - 9am 24 June** – National online showcase and public voting.
- **From 24 June** – maintain and enjoy your garden.

In partnership with:



Competition categories:

Please let us know which category you are entering:

- Nursery – P4
- P5 – S2
- S3 – S6

All designs must be submitted electronically to pocketgarden@keepscotlandbeautiful.org by **5pm Friday 23 February 2024**. Designs must be high resolution, photographed, saved or scanned as the largest file size possible to allow us to view it for judging.

All winners will be invited to display their gardens nationally in an online showcase.

Mentors:

- We have a team of Garden for Life mentors. They are experienced volunteers who can offer advice by telephone or in person to local schools on designing, building and planting your Pocket Garden. Some Garden for Life mentors may be able to supply you with plants. Please email pocketgarden@keepscotlandbeautiful.org to find out more.

Guidelines and advice:

- Garden for Life Forum organisations can provide you with lots of useful information and advice to help you. Visit www.gardenforlife.org.uk for more information and helpful links.
- Materials used (e.g. compost etc.) should be sustainably sourced / manufactured. Please use peat free compost and locally sourced materials where possible.
- Where plant materials are being used, these should not be collected from the wild and must not contravene any laws. F1 hybrids should not be used.
- If possible, a beneficial after-use for the materials should be sought, e.g. installing as a feature in the school grounds or return of plants to original supplier.
- You can take inspiration from previous Pocket Gardens www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/pocketgarden
- If you are not a winner, we would encourage you to build your garden in the school grounds / community so everyone can enjoy it – and do send us photos for sharing.

Design brief

For the 2024 competition there are three interlinked themes: Nature's Engineers, One Planet Picnic and Wildlife Gardening. There is more information about these themes on the next page. The design must be built on the five principles below of a One Planet Picnic and include food for people but can illustrate the themes in whatever way you like.

The five principles are:

| Principle | Example |
|-------------------|---|
| Locally sourced | Include plants grown from seed at school or in local gardens. Use as many native plants as you can. They usually grow well in Scotland. |
| Seasonal | Your garden needs to be ready to be photographed in the week beginning 27 May 2024. Think about plants that are in flower or leaf at that time of year and are edible to something. |
| Waste reduction | Reuse containers, recycle building materials, use compost etc. |
| Organic | This is a picnic for people and other creatures. Don't use pesticides, fungicides etc. |
| Ethically sourced | The garden should be peat free. Any composts and mulches should ideally be locally made from recycled materials and plant matter. |

Size: Pocket Gardens must fit within a rectangular footprint of: 120cm x 100cm but can be any shape you want. You can re-use any material to create the garden. Play with some available construction materials, e.g. placing them upside down or onto a side to give you ideas. Your design footprint must fit within the size above. You can introduce some height through construction or plants but no higher than two metres is allowed.

Scale: Your design should be to the scale of the plants used. This will help you think about how your plants and structures will fit together. Keep the design simple but imaginative.

Plant choice: Choose plants that you would find growing together, for example do not put pond plants next to plants that prefer somewhere drier. Choose plants that thrive in Scotland and play with colour, leaf size, shape and plant heights.

Anchoring: All gardens must be firmly secured to the ground. Even in May and early June it can be wet and windy so all elements must be secure. Your design should show how you have thought about making it secure.

Construction: It may be easiest to assemble your garden from component parts. Think about all the elements you will need and how they will fit together, and how you can disguise or cover the framework (base, pots or containers etc.) of your garden.



View previous years designs for inspiration: www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/pocketgarden

2024 themes



Nature's Engineers

The natural world is full of engineering, from constructing amazing homes to creating whole ecosystems. Some modern inventions are inspired by nature and could feature in your garden design.

Your garden could be inspired by the nest building skills of birds and the materials they use. Swallows use beakfuls of soft mud, woodpeckers excavate holes in trees, and grebes build floating nests. In Antarctica, gentoo penguins use pebbles for their nest so rain can drain away. Other animals such as ants, and orangutans build nests too.

Moles, badgers, and foxes dig themselves a den in the ground. Some animals live together in huge communities such as termite mounds, bee hives or meerkat burrows. Perhaps your design could tell the story of an animal city or an underground realm populated by worms and fungi.



Nature's engineers create both delicate and defensive structures. Caddis fly larvae build cases for their bodies, like tiny suits of armour, by sticking bits of sand or twigs together using silk. On a much larger scale, beavers build dams to create ponds that protect their home from predators and keep their food safe.

You could be inspired by the 'keystone' species that whole ecosystems depend on. For example, herds of wildebeest eat the grasses of the Serengeti plain. Less grass means less fuel for wildfires, which means that more trees survive. Trees provide food and homes for more creatures.

Nature's engineers can help us create clever solutions: Velcro was inspired by the hooked seeds of the burdock plant that stuck to the inventor's clothing. The shape of a kingfisher's beak inspired the redesign of Japan's bullet train. Architects are studying the internal structure of termite mounds so we can mimic their engineering to create energy-efficient air conditioning.

Are you inspired? [There's more on nature's engineers here.](#)



One Planet Picnic

A One Planet Picnic is a picnic that is good for you and also good for the planet. That means using local and seasonal ingredients, organic and ethically sourced produce as well as reducing waste.

There are lots of edible plants that grow very well in Scotland. Growing your own food is a great way to get local, seasonal produce. There are more edible plants than you find in the shops. Some flowers are edible too! What would you like to grow and eat?



Wildlife Gardening

Garden for Life is a partnership of organisations working in Scotland. It aims to promote wildlife-friendly gardening ideas and techniques as well as gardens that are great for well-being and healthy living.

We rely on all sorts of other creatures, such as pollinators to help maintain healthy soils, clean water and abundant crops, so we want to see colourful, exciting and fabulous designs for bees, butterflies, frogs and hedgehogs as well as for you.



Curriculum for Excellence: experiences and outcomes

Early level

I explore everyday materials in the creation of pictures/models/concepts. [TCH 0-10a](#)

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. [EXA 0-05a](#)

I have helped to grow plants and can name their basic parts. I can talk about how they grow and what I need to do to look after them. [SCN 0-03a](#)

I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things. [LIT 0-04a](#)

I explore and appreciate the wonder of nature within different environments and have played a part in caring for the environment. [SOC 0-08](#)

First level

I can communicate clearly when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning, using selected resources as required. [LIT 1-10a](#)

I can use exploration and imagination to solve design problems related to real-life situations. [EXA 1-06a](#)

I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment. [SOC 1-08a](#)

I can explore examples of food chains and show an appreciation of how animals and plants depend on each other for food. [SCN 1-02a](#)

Through exploring properties and sources of materials, I can choose appropriate materials to solve practical challenges. [SCN 1-15a](#)

I can take appropriate action to ensure conservation of materials and resources considering the impact of my actions on the environment. [TCH 1-06a](#)

Second level

I can develop and communicate my ideas, demonstrating imagination and presenting at least one possible solution to a design problem. [EXA 2-06a](#)

I can extend and explore problem solving strategies to meet increasingly difficult challenges with a food or textile focus. [TCH 2-04c](#)

I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently. [LIT 2-10a](#)

I can use my knowledge of the interactions and energy flow between plants and animals in ecosystems, food chains and webs. I have contributed to the design or conservation of a wildlife area. [SCN-2-02a](#)

I can discuss the environmental impact of human activity and suggest ways in which we can live in a more environmentally responsible way. [SOC 2-08a](#)

Third level

While working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative design solutions. [EXA 3-06a](#)

By using problem-solving strategies and showing creativity in a design challenge, I can plan, develop, make and evaluate food or textile items which meet needs at home or in the world of work. [TCH 3-04c](#)

I can convey information, describe events, explain processes or concepts, and combine ideas in different ways. [LIT 3-28a](#)

I can sample and identify living things from different habitats to compare their biodiversity and can suggest reasons for their distribution. [SCN 3-01a](#)

I can identify the possible consequences of an environmental issue and make informed suggestions about ways to manage the impact. [SOC 3-08a](#)

Fourth level

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. [LIT 3-26a / LIT 4-26a](#)

By working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative and original design solutions. [EXA 4-06a](#)

I can discuss the sustainability of key natural resources and analyse the possible implications for human activity. [SOC 4-08a](#)

I understand how animal and plant species depend on each other and how living things are adapted for survival. I can predict the impact of population growth and natural hazards on biodiversity. [SCN 4-01a](#)

I consider the material performance as well as sustainability of materials and apply these to real world tasks. [TCH 4-10a](#)

Health and Wellbeing

Representing my class, school, and/or wider community encourages my self-worth and confidence and allows me to contribute to and participate in society. [HWB 0-12a – 4-12a](#)

Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community. [HWB 0-13a – 4-13a](#)



We support the ambitions of the United Nations
Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is your charity
for Scotland's environment. We work with
you to help combat climate change,
reduce litter and waste, and protect and
enhance the places we care for.



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