Keep Scotland Beautiful

Pocket Garden Stories 2024

These amazing gardens were inspired by the 2024 Pocket Garden themes of Nature's Engineers, Food for People and Wildlife Gardening.
Pocket Garden is delivered in partnership with the Garden for Life Forum.

Winners: 2024 Public Vote

1st Place: P1 – P4 Leverhulme Memorial
2nd Place: Redwell Primary
3rd Place: Leverhulme Memorial Primary P5 – S2

Winner: 2024 Food for People Theme

Rephad Primary

Winner: 2024 Nature's Engineers Theme

St Andrew's Primary

Winner: 2024 Wildlife Gardening Theme

Killermont Primary

Have you been inspired by these amazing Pocket Gardens?
You can create your own Pocket Garden at home or take part in next year's competition.

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Carluke High School

Our S4 class were learning about biological control and decided to design the garden based on ladybirds as nature's engineers as they are a natural predator of aphids and spider mites.

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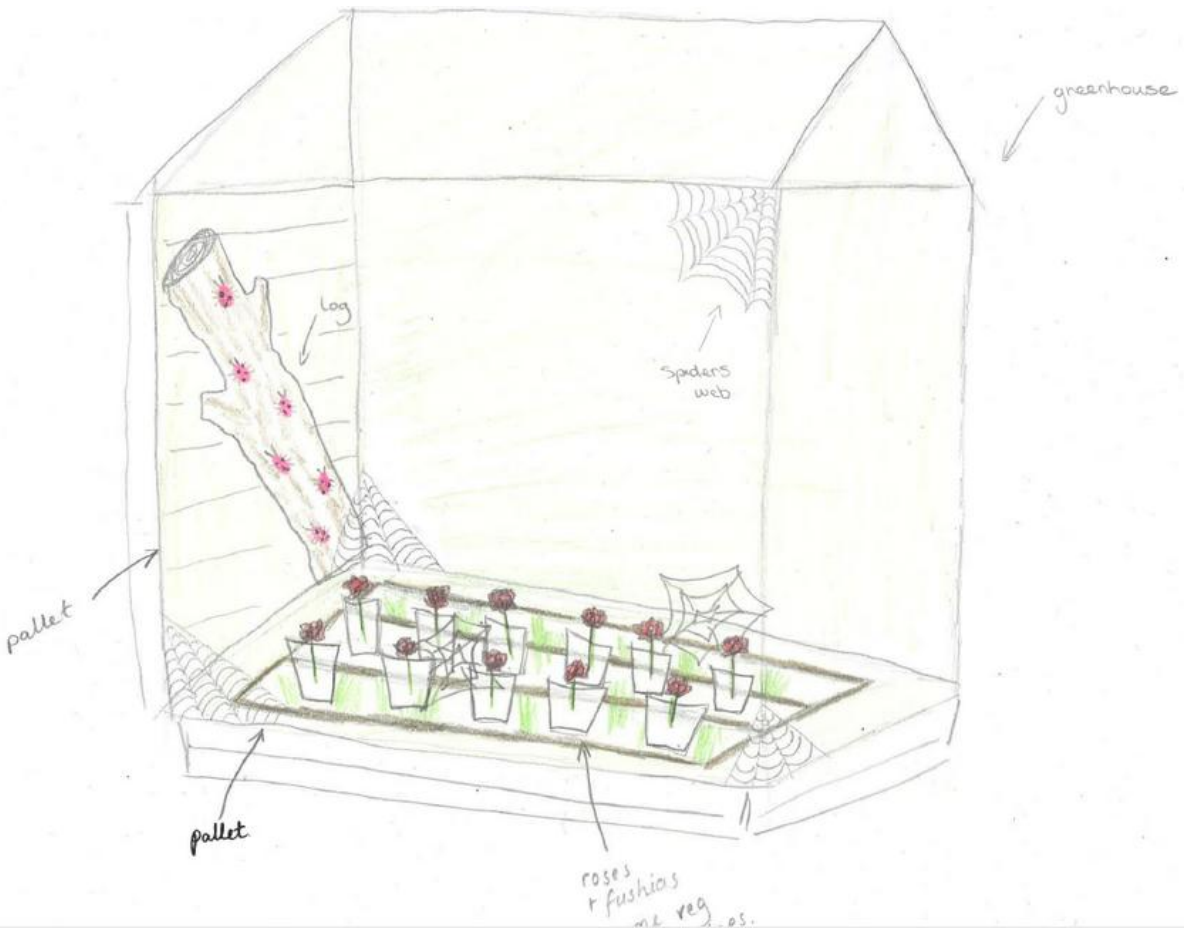
There are some fruits including raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and strawberries. We also included typical garden plants eg. Fushia and roses. The pupils enjoyed making the ladybirds from recycled bottles and used the remining bottles to build the glasshouse structure. We had pallets and compost donated to us from local businesses, but all our plants were bought in local garden centres or cuttings from our own gardens.

Ladybird made from a bottle end

Our 'Bug eat bug' garden

Ladybirds can protect gooseberries from pests



Corseford School

This design was created by the pupils in Class 1. During the design process, our pupils chose to create a Pocket Garden which would attract birds. This was inspired by a poem one of our pupils enjoyed listening to in class called, 'O little bird' by Michelle Picken..

Just like natural engineers must do, our class sought out existing materials that could be recycled and repurposed.

We planted sunflowers, which we researched and discovered are bird friendly. The class discovered that by including these plants, the garden attracted bees!

We selected flowers which were brightly-coloured to allow our pupils with visual impairments to better experience the beauty of the garden.

One of our care practitioners researched different crafts for creating bird feeders, and she discovered a way to use leftover orange peels! The pupils were supported to slice the oranges in half, remove the orange from its skin, and fill the peels with bird seeds.

Finally, to make the garden inviting for birds and to create a sensory experience for our pupils, the class used their funds to purchase a solar-powered water feature.

The pupils included things that they could use as ingredients during their cooking and tasting lessons.

In the drawer of the large sideboard, the pupils planted oregano, coriander, parsley, chives, and thyme. They also planted some of these herbs in the hanging baskets.


Getting started with growing


A herb cascade

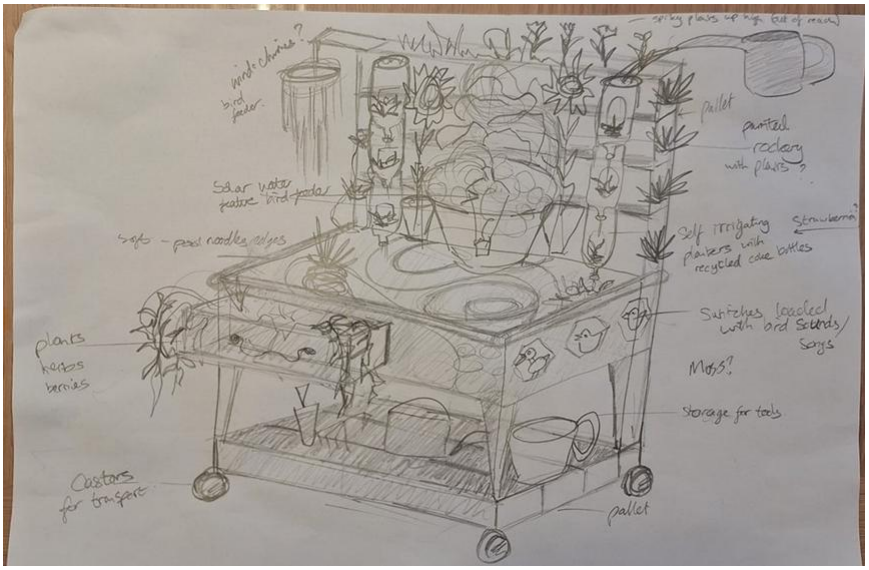

Trying out the solar powered water fountain


Filling the orange peel bird feeder


Our plants are growing and the fountain works


Re-filling the bird feeder with seeds

Unfortunately, our school was relocated twice this academic year. We needed to alter some of our design plans to suit our new learning space. The pupils' 'classroom' is situated within an office building – we were very lucky to be given an office space that includes a balcony, which is where we constructed the garden. Hence the name, Corseford's Blooming Balcony!



Drummore Primary

Our Pocket Garden design is a miniature model of what we are creating in our new larger Eco-Garden, with elements to support different topics. Lots of what we have been learning about has focused on topics that all support each other, including how our actions can engineer water flow, well-being, and even the climate.

Everyone enjoyed making a Pocket Garden and we all had our own personal favourite bits, but we all agreed that seeing it all come together at the end was exciting and it made us feel successful and proud!

Our learning at the National Park has helped us to look carefully and appreciate places without loud noises. We have created a quiet ECO garden to go and sit in and observe the creatures visiting and creating a space to help nature and our Pocket Garden will be placed within this garden near the entrance to our school.

We collected and made things that would support biodiversity through creating habitats to encourage lots of creatures into our garden.


Working on the foundations


Using tools


Working together


Choosing wildlife freindly plants

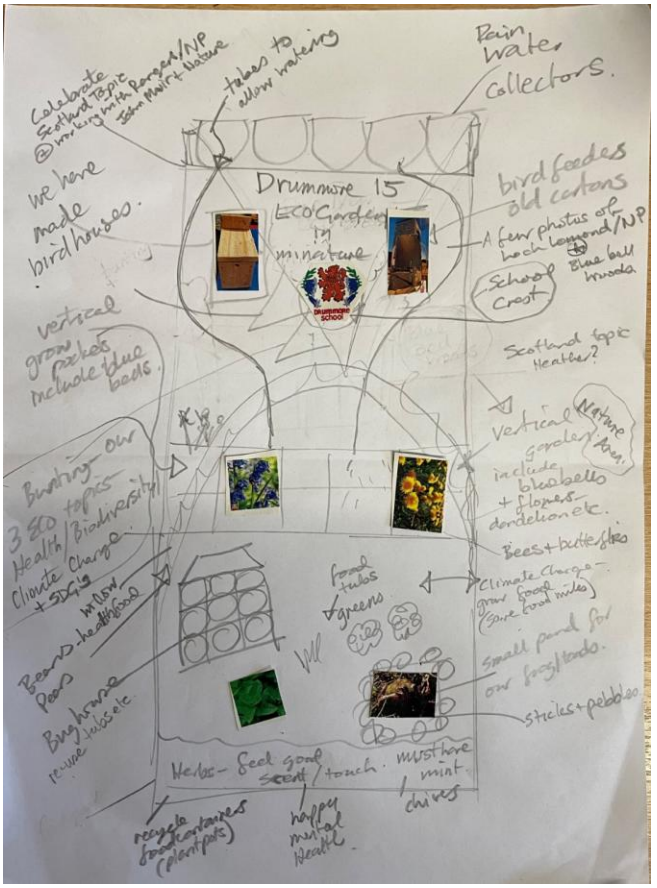
Potting on

Making drainage holes

Final touches

Making our garden has been an extremely rewarding journey but we did experience challenges such as not having anywhere to grow flowers and food.

Our new Garden for Growing, which is a fenced area with a polycrub within, was not constructed till later than anticipated (May) thus we missed getting our seeds in! However, we really appreciate the donated plants from our community friends at 'Fortune Works' and our school families.We are now ready to start planting in our new garden! Hopefully, some carrots will be ready for our 'One Planet Picnic' planned for September to celebrate our new gardens..



Elphinstone Primary

In September we will be celebrating 100 years since our school building opened. In honour of our Centenary year, we wanted to pay tribute to the history and community of Elphinstone. This has been a fantastic project to allow the children to become responsible citizens and take pride in their heritage.

Our mound or ‘bing’ covers 2 tubes ‘mines’ for wildlife to explore whilst the soil on top welcomes the perfect wormery for natures engineers to enjoy. Our pond invites wildlife to take a drink or bathe on hot days.

There are many edible features of our pocket garden; starting with our 6 bed planter filled with herbs including rosemary, chives, dill, parsley, coriander and mint. In the top planter of our pocket garden pea shoots are starting to grow upwards and will continue to grow around our mining wheel as they naturally engineer themselves.

All aspects of our mini garden were donated and reused starting with the pallet from a recent delivery, wheel, pond and coal from our Janitors garden, birdhouses, paint and tubes from neighbours, pen lids from our recycling station in school, herb cuttings from our nursery garden and finally our scarecrow from recycled materials in our school.

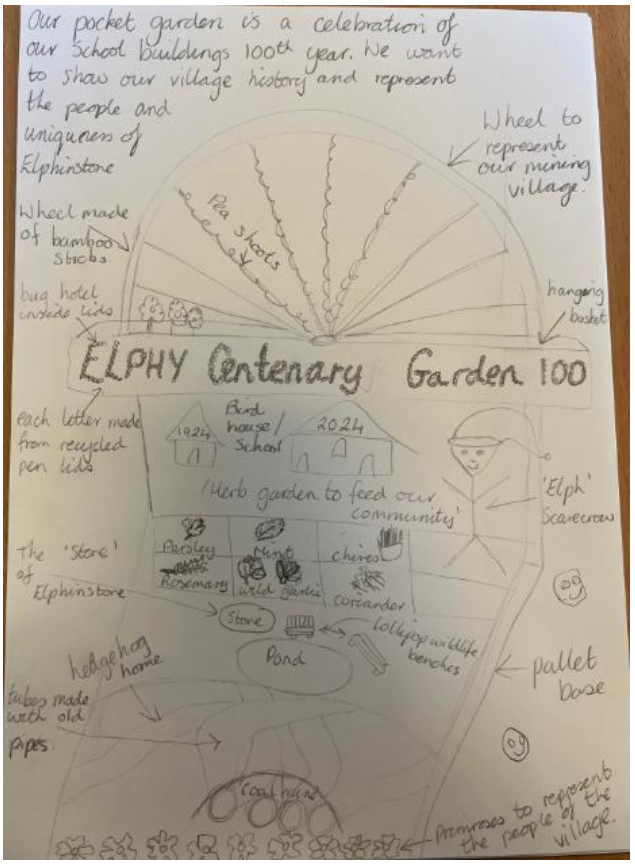
We thoroughly enjoyed welcoming members of our community in to help us with our project and were able to benefit from their expert knowledge of gardening. We now have 2 gardening slots per week where member of the community are welcome to come and join us.

Whilst creating our mini garden we revamped our garden area which is now a quiet sanctuary for outdoor learning. Our pocket garden is at the centre of it all.

A scarecrow will guard our crops

Creating the lettering from old pen tops

Tasty herbs



Flowerbank Early Childhood Centre

We talked about the insects and wildlife that make and engineer structures. Children were keen to talk about birds making nests as we learned about this when we took part in the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch. We looked at other types of nature engineers, the “spiders on our treehouse that made the giant web”. We wanted to make a special place for them all to live.

We started with a blank canvas, a cable drum and a grassy area at the back of the nursery which was previously seldom accessed by the children. This is an area we wanted to improve for the children to access to further expand their knowledge and experience of sustainability and the growing seasons.

A Kilmarnock Willow tree was kindly donated to the nursery and we decided to use this as our centre piece to fit it inside the cable drum.

All our plants in the pocket garden design were grown from seed having been planted by our children from across all 3 playroom age groups.

We planted seeds for plants to attract bees and butterflies in addition to the homes we have made for insects and spiders all of whom are natures’ engineers.

We recycled empty tubs to be used for planting some of our seeds. We used scraps from our arts and crafts resources to make the spiders web which we hope real spiders will make their home in. We put our Kilmarnock Willow tree into a larger tub and added fresh compost

Repurposing human engineering waste

This is where our Pocket Garden will go

Sowing seeds

Potting up

Planting the central tree

Creating webs

Glenlyon Primary P1-3

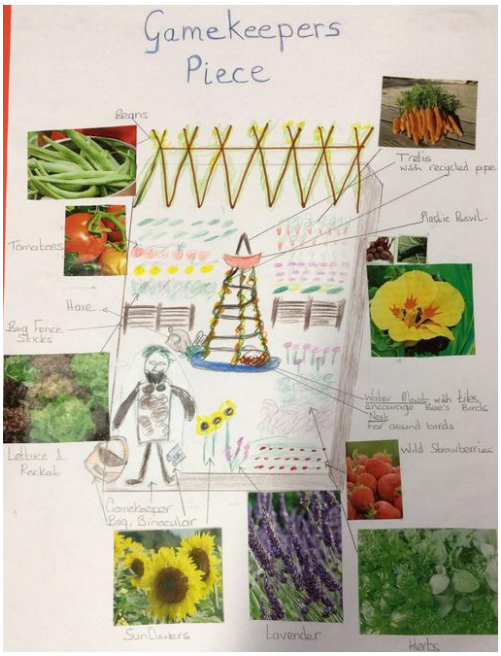
We live in a Glen where gamekeeping is a big part of the community and with 'piece' being Scottish for sandwich, we designed our garden for things that we could eat for lunch. Water is a natural engineer, carving landscape and bringing life. The water feature in our garden helps water the garden and provide water for wildlife and nature. Also we found a discarded nest and used it to provide a place for wildlife!

Our fence was made of sticks – that were collected from around our school – we piled the sticks up in between stacked ones. We learnt new techniques: how to build a fence, how to be eco-friendly, how plants such as peas can climb on to other plants such as corn or sticks , what plants we could grow to eat..

Creating our garden had some fun times like making our water feature, which was challenging, and enjoying making McDuffy the Gamekeeper and his binoculars..

Our garden will be kept going in the years to come and we will add new ideas along the way. We will use herbs in our meals and cooking at school – lettuce for snacks and lunch, strawberries just to eat!!!

Other edible plants in our garden include: Sunflowers, Marigolds, Tomatoes, Mint, Lavender, Sage, Chives, Fennel, Radish, Lettuce, Carrots, and Cabbage.



Glenlyon Primary P4-7

Our garden focuses on the engineers underground that are so crucial to life on this planet, both 1) the fungi that connect and construct beneath the soil and 2) the roots of legumes with their nitrogen fixing bits. Together they are fundamental in creating a rich and healthy soil (and compost).

During the project we learned a lot about nitrogen which is a key part for healthy soils to grow plants, and we also found out loads about fungi and it's uses to us and the whole environment, from communication to nutrition.

Our favourite parts of the design was making the compost tumbler because it involved woodworking and problem solving and planting the seeds and plants that are going to make this soil the best! Our community all came together to help find various crucial elements of the garden (large container for the compost tumbler, organic straw, woodchips, timber for the frames and some local chicken poo to get our tumbler started!)

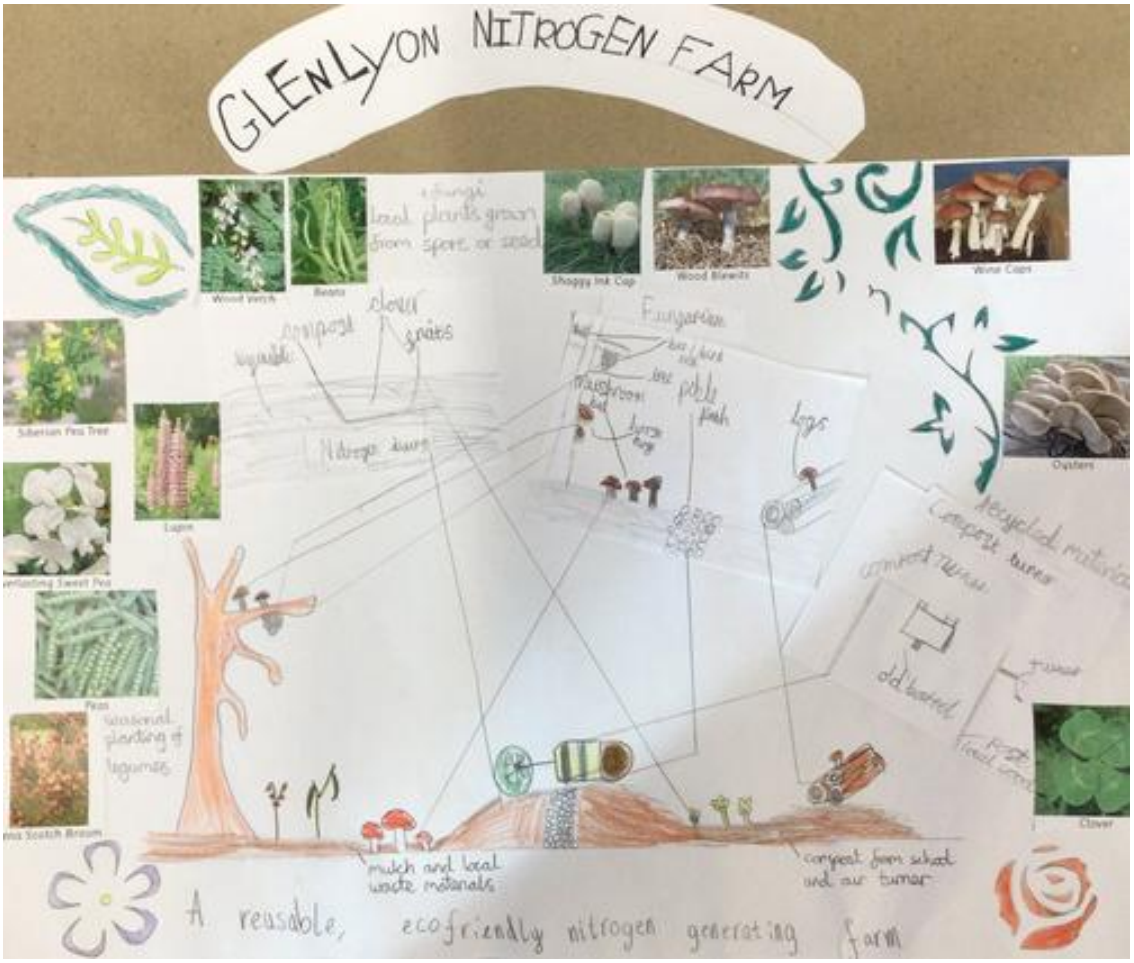
We used shitake mushroom plugs to infiltrate some recently fallen trees – helpfully cut into pocket sized logs by some of our parents on the local estate, which are going to take a time to grow!

Planting focused on those plants that help put nutrients back into the soil – beans, peas, sweetpeas – but we were also wanting to support wildlife, so the lupins and clover were in, especially to give pollinators a source of food. The main things that are edible in our garden are beans and peas and the shitake mushrooms.

Our largest challenge with this was that our fungi needed a fairly shaded spot, while the legumes mainly wanted as much sun as they could get, so the framing of the garden needed to be carefully made to work for both. We are still not sure if we got that quite right.

The hope is that after the plants have died back they will rot down into the soil and the nitrogen that has been generated will make for an even better planting site in years to come.

We might look at planting with the Inuit Three Sister's Method (beans, sweetcorn and pumpkin/squash) which we learnt about during our project.



Greenbank Pre School

The whole Greenbank community has been involved in the making of our pocket garden this year. Every child took their own seed tray home to tend during the Easter break. We reused an old water tray frame. Our challenge was to find a way of making it into a box. This was solved with the help of the Greenbank Church handyman who happened to have some old perspex at home- we suddenly thought how amazing it would be to see the roots through the perspex sides!

The handyman also constructed our wonky shelf out of bits of wood donated by a parent who happened to be having work done in her home at the time.

We're going to enjoy eating some of these

We can see the plant roots and soil creatures

We have a lovely wonky shelf

All our plants have either been planted from seed or donated by parents and families in our community.

The best part of doing the garden has been filling it with soil- all the children helped with this. We also loved seeing how we transplant and knowing that we immediately need to water the plants.

We have several edible plants- tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber, herbs- mint, fennel, chives, basil, rosemary, thyme, marjoram. We have flowers- marigolds, lavender, calendula- all attracting our bees and pollinators.

We have learnt how long it takes for certain plants to grow and how much water they need to get strong. Our pocket picnic garden will remain in our own preschool garden for as long as it withstands the weather.

Grove Academy

The forces of nature that create caves can be used to grow mushrooms and support plants such as ferns and succulents. Our garden is wildlife friendly as it has a water feature and has been planted with buttercups and white clover that are good for pollinators. Our edible plants will mainly be the mushrooms. They have yet to fruit but we are hoping!

We learned about measuring – it has been tricky to get the fish boxes in place with enough space for both the succulents and the mushroom culture.

Everyone working together *A mock-up of how the fish boxes will fit* *Using succulent plants*

We have sown seeds for our project, so plant care has been part of the learning. The design process involved a lot of discussion and debate before we got to the final design. Plants needed to be researched and construction issues identified.

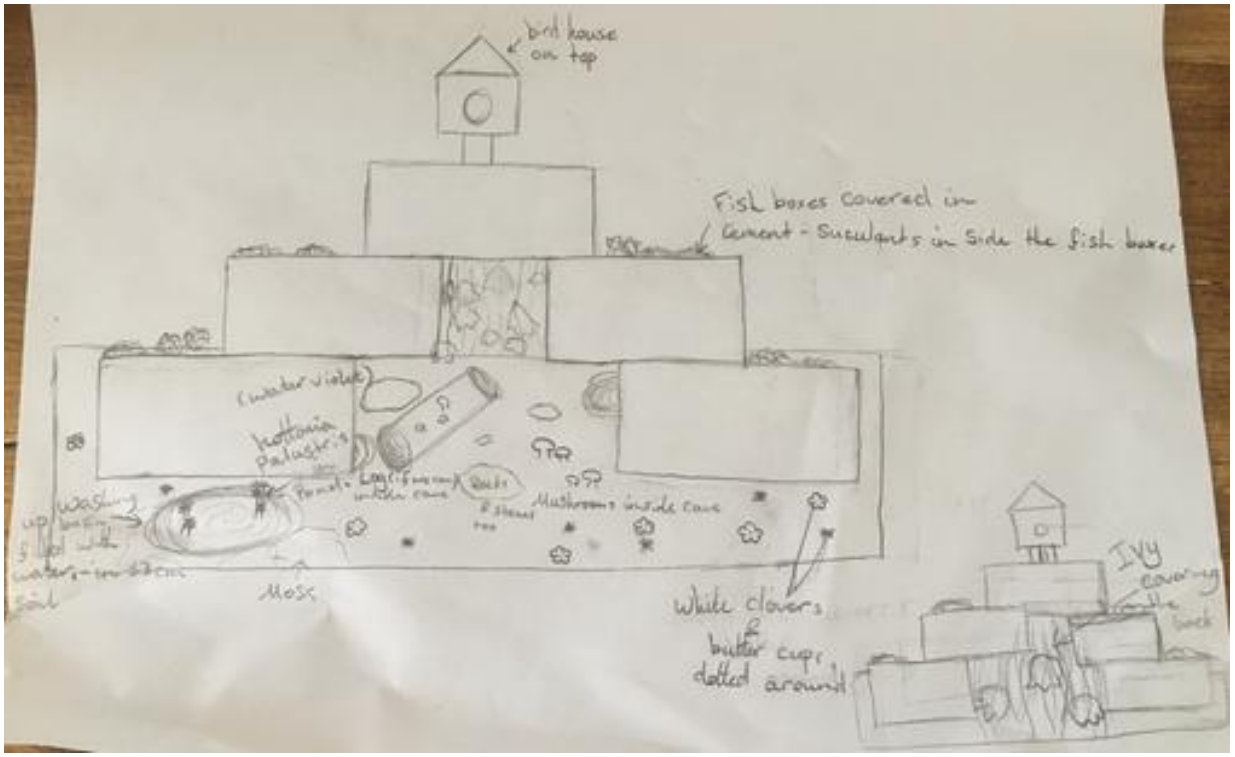
We reused fish boxes which we collected from Arbroath, an old wash basin for our pond and included a bird box – which may even be used by bees if we are lucky. The pallet was reused too.

There have been challenges. The first one was how to cover the fish boxes. Plan A was to use concrete. The prototype weighed a tonne and it was not nice working with concrete dust. Plan B was to bash the boxes a bit to make them more rock like and then paint them with a slightly texture paint. Much nicer to construct and decidedly lighter.

Putting an edge on the pallet gives us room to grow

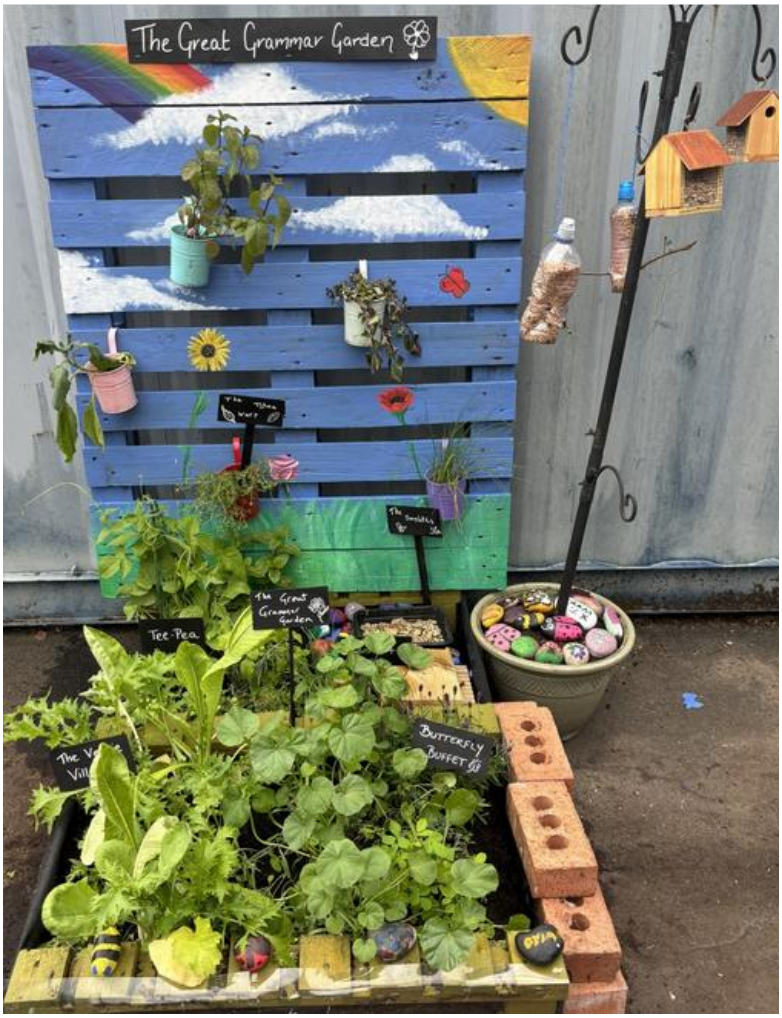
Its coming together

The garden will live in Queen Street Community Garden with an information sheet about it on the notice board.



Hamilton Grammar ASN

To begin our design for our garden we had a brainstorming session in our environmental lessons to get some ideas. Dylan's design was chosen. It includes lots of nature's engineers such as birds, worms, and bees.



We decided to organize the garden into different sections to represent the different types of wildlife we were hoping to attract to the garden. Our favourite part of creating our garden was decorating our pebbles. We also loved watching our plants grow from seeds into big plants.

Butterfly buffet Tea pea The veggie villa

We have an area with lettuce, rocket and kale which is our “Veggie Villa” – this gives food for the caterpillars and other animals.

We also created a “Butterfly Buffet” which is a collection of plants whose flowers provide nectar for our pollinators. These are cornflower, lavender and wildflowers.

The next step was to create our “Songbird Spa” we repurposed pebbles from the school garden and decorated them with paints. We stacked them up to create a rockery and placed a dish on top and filled it with water.

Our “Bug B&B” was made out of spare wood from Mrs Colbourne’s garden. Most of our plants were grown from seeds in our polytunnel - a few were donated by staff. We will continue to look after our garden.

Harrysmuir Primary

The garden idea was decided by two boys in P5. They researched different animals and insects and decided they liked the idea of ants and an ant hill. The way the ant hill has a labyrinth of tunnels unseen was fascinating. Our school does a lot to support hedgehogs and so decided to incorporate a hedgehog house under the ant hill.

They also included a bug house close by and used plants that would attract bees and butterflies.

Each week the boys would invite someone from their class to help build the garden. They grew peas, marigolds, nasturtiums, sunflowers, rocket and pansies. They got some marjoram from someone who had a lot in their garden and was happy to dig some up for them. There were some wild strawberries growing in the school garden so they transplanted some of those too.

The children had the opportunity to learn how to use a variety of tools.

They used loppers to clear the vegetation at the back to enable the willow canes to stand upright, they used a saw to enlarge the entrance to the hedgehog house and secateurs to cut through the chicken wire. The favourite part was actually putting the compost over the structure and planting it up and the group working as a team to make their garden.

A hedgehog home we already had in the school garden was repositioned. It had not been used last year and when we looked at the entrance, we found that the entrance was not big enough (entrance should be 13cm x 13cm) so we used a saw and increased the size of the opening, fingers crossed it will now attract a hedgehog. To make sure the hedgehog house is protected from water a bit of waterproof sheeting, that Mrs Carder found discarded by builders who had been re-roofing a house near to her home, was placed over the hedgehog house.

To make the hill some old chicken wire was cut and bent into a dome shape over the hedgehog house. We thought it would hold the compost and plant roots could grow through the mesh.Old bread baskets were placed along the side of the structure to help hold in the compost while we built the shape. They were then removed and replaced with old bricks and wood from a broken planter which would hopefully provide areas for minibeasts to hide.

Willow canes that had been off cuts from a willow arch were used for the back of the garden structure, they were tied together using an old piece of bunting tape. Hopefully the peas will grow up them.We have had a lot of issues with slugs, which are I suppose food for our hedgehogs!

Heathhall Primary

We have a spider's web themed climbing space for sweet peas made from wool. We have woven bird houses which we found and a stick and wool teepee for climbing tomatoes. We made a log pile similar to the ones you would find created by insects.

The rock pond, log piles and flowering plants make our garden attractive to insects and wildlife. We already have wood lice, caterpillars and bees visiting the garden.

We enjoyed building the garden and seeing things grow. We were surprised how quickly things grew and flowered. We have used creativity skills and adapted as we have gone along. We have learned what plants will grow and what will struggle in the school grounds and when they should be put outside.

We have worked as a team and shared ideas. We have chives, parsley, chocolate mint and strawberries and other herbs in pots. Tomato plants and beetroot are in the tyre. Unfortunately our courgettes, squash and chard were eaten by slugs.

We have a watering system made from donated gutters and the planters have been used in our school garden for years. The local garden centre donated seeds and burst bags of compost.

A woven bird nest and flowers to attract insects *Repurposed baking tray as a bird bath* *Repurposed tins to grow herbs*

We faced the challenge of slugs and snails eating lots of our plants. Some seeds didn't grow like we expected them to and we had to adapt our design and expectations.

We decided not to add the roof from our design because the garden was drying out quickly and hoped the rain would help it to grow.

We tried save some of the plants by putting mint in which slugs don't like.

Our garden will remain in place over the summer holidays to help wildlife and we hope to have more flowers and food when we get back to school. We will compost plants when they have died away in winter and add seasonal vegetables at the end of summer.

We are planning to ask the nursery next door to help us look after the garden. We would like to expand the garden to include more food.

Houston Primary

We (Primary 6) worked with our Nursery to bring the pocket garden to life. We adapted our original plan to fit the scale of the project and ideas collected from all of our pupils in school and nursery. Our garden represents human and nature's engineers together: We used a man-made tyre to represent the world, a wooden block representing a skyscraper (bug) hotel, biodegradable plastic tubing for factory towers (with trees growing out from them – which we will protect and move when they get larger) and tubing to represent a nuclear tower/geothermal tower.

We used blocks of wood to encourage bugs to visit and live in. A family of spiders have moved into our hotel already. We hope to see more bugs and nature's engineers visit and stay. Our favourite parts were watching our plants grow from seeds, watching and looking for bugs visiting our garden, spending time with the nursery and building our pocket garden.

Getting started *Adapting the arrangement to fit* *Planting our tiny trees*

We tried to get as many plants, baby trees and vegetables as we could from around the world that would grow in our climate. Our poppies did not grow unfortunately. We used an old log for fungi growth and bugs to stay.

We used wood chippings sourced from local community trees/group to protect our garden from heat, retain moisture and camouflage aspects from predators to make a safe home for natures engineers (bugs) and to protect our plants and vegetables. We added some stones underneath the woodchip and a place for Hedgehogs to stay too.

Nasturtium

Cabbage

A visitor flew in

These worms popped up

New residents in our bug hotel

Killermont Primary

2024 Wildlife Gardening theme winner

P7A chose to enhance an area of our school grounds to promote biodiversity. There is an area of grass that is regularly waterlogged- the solution?- a BOG GARDEN! Our P7 pupils got hard to work researching the best plants to include as well as designing how the garden might look.

The Wild Wetlands Trust had inspiring videos to highlight how our communities can make a big difference to mitigating for climate change through drainpipe gardens as well as promoting biodiversity by the inclusion of a small container pond.

Once we knew there was a pond involved, we looked at Nature's Engineers and it was unanimous to include beavers and their incredible abilities to shape mini eco systems, into our design inspiration. Beaver lodges would be created from twigs and sticks, barks and pebbles…our local insects would love these! Plus, we are hopeful that amphibian friends might like our new water feature.

The digging began. In high spirits and full singing voice, P7s dug a hole together. It was hard work to get through the compacted soil. We picked out big stones and rubble and washed them up to look nice at the edges of our feature as well as provide stepping stones for visiting creatures to get in and out of the pond – a must have if you do become inspired to add a little container pond to your own garden.


Remove the turf


Dig a hole


Line the hole so it drains slowly and


Trim away excess liner

At a local industrial site, they had waste of thick plastic tarpaulin and big sections of pipes. We did not want to see this thrown away and reused the tarpaulin as a liner for our bog garden. We pierced some holes so that it would not permanently hold water, but it would be slow draining. We had a lot of rain that night and at playtime the next day, we were delighted to see our first, inquisitive visitors. Two ducks were investigating this new area!

We hadn't even added our pond (but we were busy collecting up the precious rainwater to fill our pond in coming days). Our bog garden has given us a new appreciation for rainy, rainy days as we know our garden will be pleased!


The original bog garden engineer


Keep the roots damp or wet


A visit from another engineer

Planting up! We wrote letters to our local garden centres and got the message out to parents/carers and neighbours about the help we needed in sourcing plants. We had some fabulous donations as people were busy tidying up their gardens for Spring. A fallen, uprooted buddleia was cut into sections and with its natural twists and curves, became the outer edge of our garden as well as being used to build some height and provide yet another access point to our little pond. We love the look of this wood and hope the insects enjoy it as it rots away over coming years.

A huge, pruned grass was donated. We planted it next to our pocket garden

A huge, pruned grass was donated. We planted it next to our pocket garden as many creatures will love hiding away within its cover as it regrows. Our iris is not the yellow flag iris we had planned for but we have bog area seeds that will hopefully come on for next year that include these. We kept these iris rhizomes towards the edge of our garden as they may not love the boggy conditions just as much as the yellow flag iris will.

Our little cuttings of ground covering plants like astilbe have really loved the conditions and have established very well.

Twisty old branches and lush planting

Finally, we added our artistic touches by painting some of the reused decking blocks from our industrial waste pick up. We painted and varnished these to let them last a bit longer.

The idea is that now other classes can add other little pocket gardens around the area and together we can make a beautiful area that benefits wildlife. As we move up to high school after the summer, P7A are over the moon to be able to leave our little Pocket Garden oasis for the benefit of our community and our local eco-system.

Leverhulme Memorial Primary P1-3

1st in 'My favourite Pocket Garden' public vote

We live on the Isle of Harris. Harris has beautiful beaches and machair wildflowers. We like the story of Beataidh Banrigh (Super-Bee) by Tiree Primary School children. The story is told in both Gàidhlig and English. We have both Gàidhlig and English in our school too. Beataidh is one of the rarest bees, the Great Yellow Bumblebee who lives amongst the Machair wildflowers, on an island just like ours. Bees are amazing nature's engineers and love Machair flowers and plants, so we thought our pocket garden could be a mini machair to attract a Beataidh, bees and other insects into our school garden.

We did a community roadside and a beach clean-up and recycled a pallet from a local crofter, an old Barbie doll, plastic bottles and used driftwood to build our bug hotels. When we were on the beach, we found seaweed. It's a very good fertilizer. Lots of crofters on Harris put it on their potato patch.

We approached Temple Collective, a local business, for support with the project. We chose Temple as they make products using machair flowers. Their website says they use Organic and regenerative farming practices. Temple kindly let us use an area in their greenhouse and helped us learn all about the organic techniques they use. We got lots of support from Matt. He helped us choose the seeds to grow some edible plants and flowers that are found on the machair.

The pupils tell their garden story. Find out how even Barbie got involved.

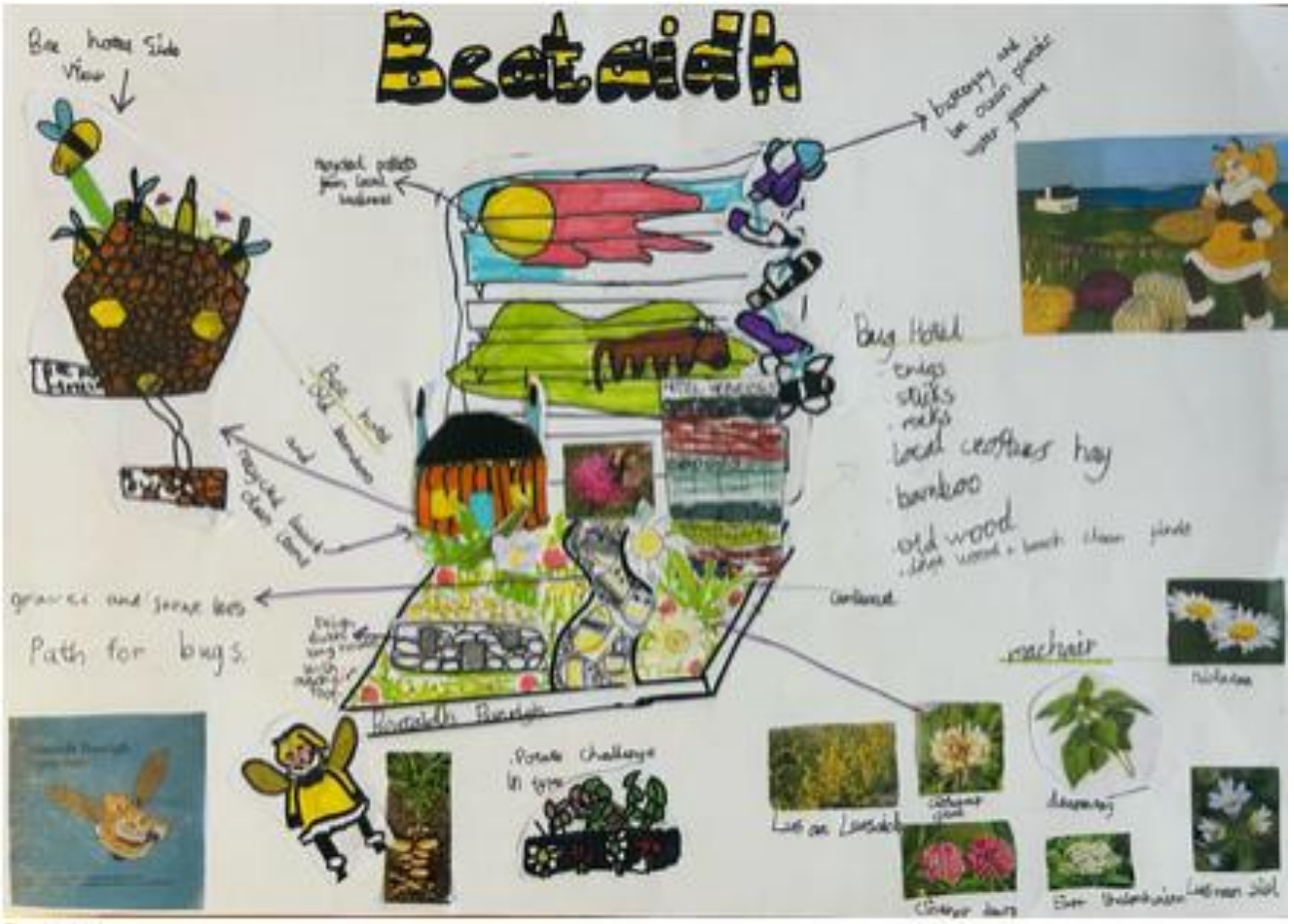
When we visited the greenhouse, it was so exciting to see little green shoots appearing and we repotted them to give our seedlings more space to grow. Not all the plants survived, and some machair flowers are not ready to be in the garden, but luckily we planted more than enough to get plants which bees and humans can eat. We have Marigold, yarrow, nasturtium, radish, broad bean, potatoes, thrift, kale, broccoli, mixed salad and mizuna.

While we waited for the plants to grow, we painted the pallet with an island scene like in the story. We painted bee pebbles too. We also learnt how to use saws to cut bamboo and willow (That was hard work!) We also used drills, hammers and nails to build our bug hotels.

We got an area in the school garden ready for the plants. We put down cardboard to keep the weeds and grass away and then covered it in peat free compost. Matt tells us this technique means you have healthier soil compared to digging.

As we learnt so many new skills, everyone has a different part they enjoyed, but we all loved bringing it all together in the garden. It was so exciting to see it come to life. We even had a bee visit while we were planting! Our Eco-committee will continue to care and upkeep our garden.

The project has led to lots of exciting activities too. We made machair flower soap and lip balms with Caroline from Temple. We also had a local Artist Marigold Williams help us make machair flower lampshades..



Leverhulme Memorial Primary P4-7

3rd in 'My favourite Pocket Garden' public vote

We live on the Isle of Harris. Harris is known for it's beautiful beaches, machair wildflowers and the famous Harris Tweed or Clò Mhòr as we know it in Gàidhlig. When we thought of Nature's weavers, it made us think of the Harris Tweed weavers who have been part of our heritage and culture for over a century. Some of our friends, family and parents weave Harris Tweed so this inspired us to thinking of creating a Harris Tweed Loom Pocket Garden.

We packed the back of our pallet with leftover willow, driftwood, stones and grass for our bug hotel. We have all enjoyed this project. It has allowed us to make links with several people in our local community. We have enjoyed our trips to the beach, the polytunnel and having visitors into the school to teach us new skills. A lot has been trial and error which has been a valuable lesson too.

Bird houses! We had originally thought about making wooden bird houses using driftwood. We were advised to think about creating a version of a weaver bird's nest using chicken wire and grass, straw, or string. We knew just the people to ask to help us. We got in touch with another local business, Croft 36. Steve and his son Finlay came into school with freshly cut willow and taught us all how to make a weaver's bird nests. It was quite tricky but great to learn a new skill. We really hope that the birds will come to the nests that we have made for them. We think that they look amazing and more sustainable..

We used leftover coffee beans from a local organic cafe and sand to spread around the circumference of the garden as slugs and snails don't like coarse materials. The pocket garden is dug straight into the soil, currently there is grass so will use no-dig gardening technique where we put down cardboard and 6 inches of peat free compost. This technique has been shown to improve soil health compared to digging.

We visited the poly tunnel in Northton to plant our seeds. We kept visiting the poly tunnel to check on our plants and to repot them once they started growing. We planted a variety of plants and flowers. Some grew but others not so much.

We planted a garden of flowers and vegetables, all edible

- Pot Marigold to bring vibrant yellows, a fantastic plant that has edible petals great to add colour to salads and the more you pick the flower heads the more they grow back.
- Nasturtium a plant where all leaves and flowers and seeds are edible. This gives the pocket garden some height in a small plot where it will grow along upcycled fishing nets.
- Chamomile this will offer tints of white and yellow amongst the green tartan and can picked to make tea with
- Kale will provide the greens to the tartan
- Radish can provide a different shades of green to the tartan
- Broad Beans - along with the nasturtium will be grown up the upcycled fishing nets.
- Lollo Rosso will provide reds and can help give distinctive lines in the pattern.
- Mustard leaves offering more colour and edible options.
- Spinach using perpetual spinach this cut and come again vegetable will be perfectly ready for May.
- Swiss chard this multicoloured plant will add more fantastic colour to the garden.

We had to dig lots! First we had to think carefully about the location of our pocket garden. It had to be situated somewhere sheltered that also got the sun. Once we decided on it's location we measured out the area to dig and turn over the soil and added compost to the site.

Finally we added the cardboard on top to supress the weeds. We had to put big stones on it to make sure the wind didn't blow it away. We had planned to anchor the loom with two fence posts to support to the structure. We started digging 2 holes however disaster struck. We hit rock bottom. We had to dig the length between the 2 holes in order to see if it was one massive rock on the bottom or just lots of smaller rocks.

The thinking cap went back on and then we decided to use the trench that we now had and we placed pallet into it. We buried the bottom into the ground to secure it.!

Once Harris Tweed is finished on the loom it is very stiff and the weave is quite loose. Traditionally, groups of women would “Waulk the tweed”. This would involve soaking the tweed and beating it rhythmically to shrink and soften it. They would sing as they were waulking the tweed and it was a sociable time for the ladies.

Our design includes 2 designer Barbies, dressed in handmade tweed outfits made from offcuts of local tweed. They can be seen at the front of the loom waulking the tweed.

A local fisherman kindly donated a brand-new long piece of really good rope. We collected more rope, driftwood and other bits and bobs for the bug hotel when we did a beach clean up on Northton Beach. That was very successful. We used the rope and seashells collected to upcycle plant pots that we used for some of our plants.

We chose Lord Leverhulme to be our weaver. He owned our village around 100 years ago and our school is named after him. We used an old football to create his head and a plant pot for his hat. He was also known as the Soapman with his company Sunlight soap.

Linnvale Primary

Our garden is on the site of our previous pocket garden to maintain the 'no dig' philosophy of gardening- we recycled the older, top covering of compost to our bug hotel and then topped up with newer compost. This meant that we already have millipedes and worms in the plot!

We have planted our lettuce seedlings and pea seedlings as well as basil and parsley so we can enjoy green salads from our garden later in summer. At the back of the garden, there are two sunflower seedlings. We have also added amaranthus seedlings that P4/5 donated as they are growing them for the RHS 'Grow With It' project. Their variegated foliage has added interest and instant colour to our bed as well as the plant having edible seeds that can be cooked and eaten.

We also saved the chives plant from last year's garden and used it in this one!

Our janitor came and helped with the sawing of the pallet as it was hard going! We then added the bird house that we had built at the start of the year and made a pond using a small bowl and surrounded it with stones and rotting bark-one piece made a nice bridge feature!

We filled between the slats of the pallet with sticks, stones and pinecones to encourage more wildlife and we found a toad nestling in the grass, so we are excited to see if it takes up residence in among our garden's bug house area!

We have learned that our seeds germinate better in school than out in our polytunnel but once they have grown they thrive out at the polytunnel as long as we water them regularly and it doesn't get too hot over the weekends.

Our favourite part of the garden is the little path and pond as it looks like is has come from a miniature world, it is there to provide water for our bees. We now know that we need to add pebbles in the water so the bees don't get waterlogged.

Our garden will remain there until next year as it gives us a chance to watch the sunflowers grown and come into full bloom and also it offers the minibeasts a safe home.

The chives from last year give instant impact

Park Primary

We asked permission to create and showcase our design at the Wimpy Community Park, and we were fortunate enough to be gifted a large, raised bed. This meant we were able to use the structure to create an old railway wagon. It also meant ownership of the design was shared between the Eco Crew, families and wider community.

Preparing the soil

Minerals from rocks

Sowing seeds

We used natural resources that rely on nature to survive for example: pollination of crops. This would have been visible when bees and butterflies would feed from barley, hops, and tomato plants.

The Earl of Mar created a wagonway to bring coal from the pits down to the harbour. Our school stands in his estate and the giant spired entrance pillars, which he erected back in 1766, are replicated in our Pocket Garden as clay bird houses. Engineering was the thought process behind how we have come to know and learn about Alloa that the pupils have found exceptionally interesting.

The children researched recipes and have even tried soup that contains barley.

The favourite part for all of us involved was, to witness it coming together. It was especially heart-warming to see older people comment on it and it helped them to recall life back in the day.

One downside was that we cannot be overseeing the garden all of the time and although the community have all pulled together, we have unfortunately been the victims of vandalism. We have had to rebuild our creations 4 times now due to theft and abuse of the resources used on display. But we have persevered. The Wimpy Park committee who oversee the day to day running of the park want to use our design as a key feature in the park for visitors to see.

Raploch Community Campus

Natures Engineers: We ran two rainy day nest building workshops where children tried to build their own nests from natural materials. It was not easy and we learned what amazing engineers birds are! One of the nests was put in our Pocket Garden as its very own habitat for minibeasts.

We used some human engineering in the form of our Pocket Wallace Monument to add height to our garden and use as a frame for climbing plants, and trailing plants too. We also created a twig pile for insects and a pebble pile by our mini pond for insects and newts if we are lucky!

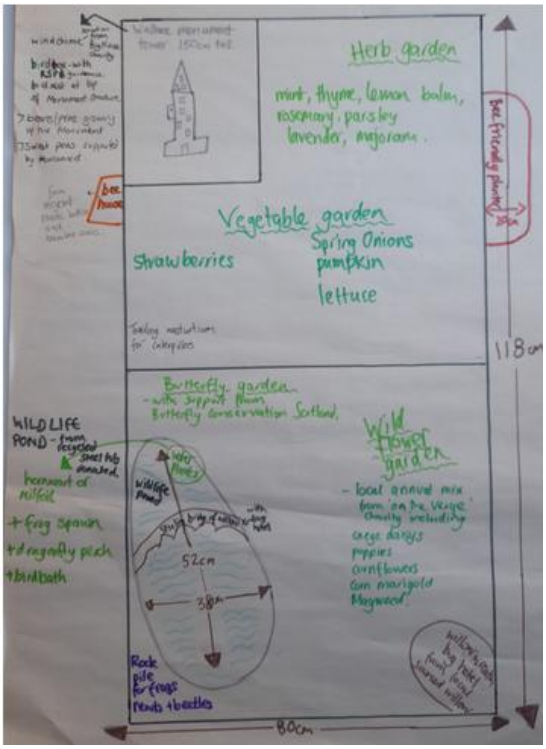
WE learned so much! Highlights include:Growing from seed, natures engineers, butterfly and frog lifecycles, how to support wildlife through gardening, how to grow our own food. Also we all experienced how gardening and being in nature can help you feel better. Children enjoyed recording how everyone felt from 1 – 10 before gardening and then again after gardening. Every week it was clear, everyone felt better and happier after gardening together.

Favourite part of creating the garden? Everyone had different aspects they like best, but overall I think it would be volunteers and the children from 3 different schools all learning and working together to create a beautiful, nature boosting garden. The juice and biscuits donated by one of our volunteers every week were always a hit too!



Wildlife Friendly We were very excited to create the school's first ever mini pond. We included mud, gravel and stones so insects and birds could safely use the pond and included dragonfly perches by the pond. We included a bird box donated by a volunteer to go with our birds nest. We also made our own bee house out of a recycled plastic bottle and garden canes.

We also were very lucky to work with Alice from Butterfly Conservation Scotland who donated many butterfly and caterpillar loving plants including birds foot trefoil, garlic mustard, lesser knapweed, cowslip and scabious. We also added caterpillar loving nasturtiums to trail, and lavender for the bees to enjoy, with the children planning to harvest later in the year for lavender bags.



Redwell Primary

2nd in 'My favourite Pocket Garden' public vote

P3 at Redwell have been very busy bees, using the engineering design cycle to research, imagine, plan, create and adapt our Pocket Garden. P3 learned that engineers work in teams and communicate with each other to solve problems and so our pocket garden reflects the ways in which bees do the same.

In a bee colony, different bees have different jobs: the queen bee lays the eggs, drones fertilise the eggs and worker bees clean the hive and collect pollen and nectar. When a worker bee finds a good source of food, she will do a waggle dance to communicate to other bees where it is. Bees solve problems every day too – did you know that some bees will fan the hive with their wings if it gets too warm?

Bees also love to eat nectar from wild flowers, and we have speedwell, creeping cinquefoil, buttercups, daisies, clover and orange hawkweed in our Bee Cafe.

All our plants were found in the school grounds or donated to us by members of our school community. If our bees get thirsty, they can stop off at the bee bath for a quick drink and we also have a bee hotel for solitary bees to stay in.

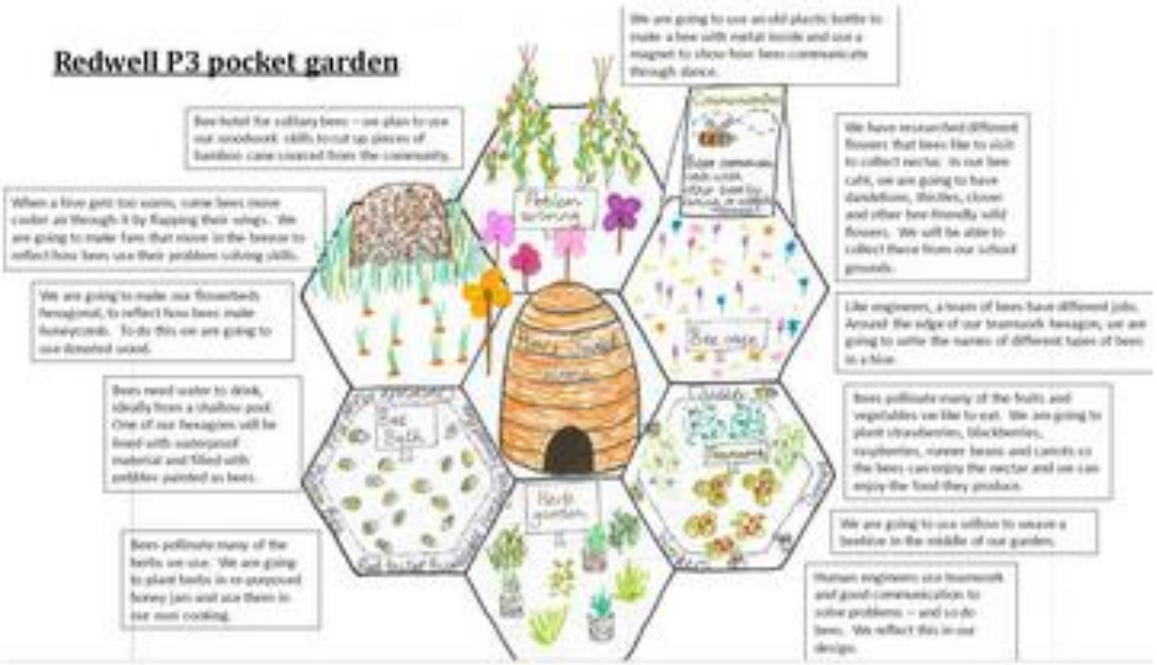
The children have learned how to safely saw, glue, weave, dig, paint and plant to create the finished garden. They used their knowledge of magnets to create our dancing bee!

Our local Garden Centre generously donated sage, mint, thyme and lavender and we also have strawberries, beans, blackberries, and carrots, all of which rely on bees for pollination. The grandpa of one of our pupils very kindly made the signs especially for our garden.

Building the garden framework

Adding soil and compost to some hexagons

Weaving a skep for the centre



The garden will continue to be integrated into learning experiences in our school as it grows and changes over the seasons. We are looking forward to trying some tasty strawberries, blackberries, beans and carrots later this year!

Rephad Primary

2024 Food for People theme winner

Nature’s engineers have been represented in our pocket garden in several ways. Firstly, the structure around the garden is constructed like a Beaver would build a dam, only we have used it to frame the pocket garden. The raised circular bed in the middle of the garden is inspired by a bird’s nest, and we have decorated our garden with cocoons inspired by caterpillars making their transitional home and have copied the idea of spider's webs to create a frame for our peas to grow up.

There have been so many lessons to learn in the creation of this pocket garden. The first is that time goes much quicker than you could ever imagine! The second is that children have such wonderful imaginations, and we should embrace that. Thirdly, it is difficult to get your plants to a good maturity in a short time. Fourthly, it is great to have friends with a polytunnel who are willing to help out in the holidays with your precious seedlings!.

Our gardening club has only been running for just over a year, and we are all learning from each other. It has been good fun to be involved in this pocket garden competition, as it has given us a focus for some of our activities. We only meet once a week for just over an hour, so we feel very proud of what the children have been able to achieve.

The competition encouraged us to start the club up earlier than we would have otherwise done so this year, which has been really positive in many ways, not least making us realise we would really like to have a polytunnel of our own.

We've made a nest shape. These woven sticks are for plants to climb up

Planting out into the garden

Skypoint School ASN

The children had lots of great fun this year on our garden and we have got some of our best plants together to put in our wheelbarrow. Some things in the wheelbarrow are strawberry and gooseberry plants, green beans, selection of flowers and our chilli pepper plant. We have managed to use some already for our cooking class.

Also on our wheelbarrow is our bird house, bird feeder and our beaver pushing his wheelbarrow to the dam. And a nod to our trout that we reared in January.

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Designing a new garden has been thoroughly enjoyed by all pupils, as we have to continue to find creative ways in order to plant and grow produce.

Unfortunately we don't have a secure garden area at our school, there can be a lot of antisocial behaviour locally, so to avoid disappointment, the young people came up with the excellent idea a few years ago of using a wheelbarrow.

We sourced an abandoned wheelbarrow, recycled it and repainted it in anticipation of planting our garden. We will be able to move this to a secure space at the weekends. This has been loved and reused by us for 3 years now and the children take great pride in reinventing it each year.

St Andrew's Primary P1-3

Having studied Mini –Beasts as a science topic, P3 were keen to make their garden all about bugs. When they discussed engineering in nature (particularly insects) butterflies were the most popular choice, as the pupils were fascinated with metamorphosis.

They decided to divide their garden into 3 ‘zones’ one for each phase of a butterfly’s life cycle. They researched the types of plants that caterpillars and butterflies like and tried to include many of them in their design. They learned how caterpillars eat ferociously and decided to include lots of leafy plants in their garden for caterpillars to enjoy.

P3 liked getting their hands muddy when planting their flower seeds and then repotting their seedlings. They are delighted to see how everything has grown and changed.

They love playing in the area near their garden and were delighted to see a bee and a butterfly enjoying the plants yesterday. By adding some glass stones to an old plastic plate P3 made a butterfly feeder, the butterflies and bees can land safely on the stones to have a rest and drink.

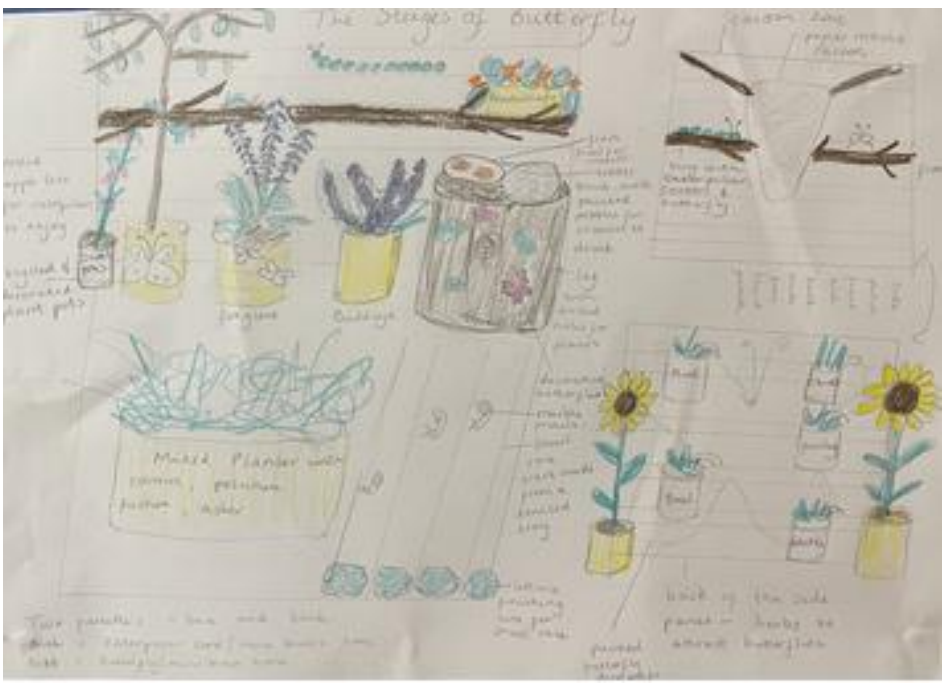
The most popular feature in the garden design was the Caterpillar Racetrack, pupils were very excited to make it from a donated bath tile and some paint pens. They were keen to place lettuce at the end of the track for the caterpillars to race towards and enjoy as a prize at the end of their race. Their hand made caterpillars make nice additions to the track n old plastic plate P3 made a butterfly feeder, the butterflies and bees can land safely on the stones to have a rest and drink.

A clay slug for the lettuce race track | Ready, steady... | Home for a butterfly | Furry caterpillar

Pupils from P6 wrote to local garden stores and were lucky enough to receive some beautiful donations that were shared between all the classes.

So many elements of this year's garden were reused, recycled or repurposed.

All the plant pots were donated. The pallets that the garden has been built on were from last year's competition. Pupils repurposed a pair of old tights, stuffed with earth and grass seeds to make hairy caterpillars. Old beads and pipe cleaners were used to make little caterpillars to hide around the garden. The tree stump, slates and bricks were used to add height to areas of the garden.



St Andrew's Primary P4-7

2024 Nature's Engineers theme winner

Our 'Burrow and Nest' garden is inspired by the natural engineering found in Scottish Woodlands. Pupils in P5 thought about the amazing builds that they see when they go for a walk in the woods and tried to incorporate them into their garden. They wanted to focus on burrows, nests and spider webs as they think that they show engineering at its best. The giant burrow and a nest represent their favourite builds in nature.

Spider webs were also crocheted to decorate the area. Pupils were fascinated to learn more about nests and were astounded by the huge variety of nests that are built. They quickly realized how tricky nests are to construct with hands let alone only a beak. In the base of the pallet pupil's added twigs, bark and pine cones to the different sections to create a bug hotel. The woodlice seem to love it, they have already made it their home.

The pocket garden is just outside the P5 classroom and they enjoy spotting the daily changes and the wildlife who visit. As well as the cheeky squirrel pupils have seen bees, sparrows, robins, magpies and even a ginger cat.

Pupils felt that, given the size limits of their garden, it would be best to build the burrow inside the nest. P5 hope that they have demonstrated similar engineering skills to the animals that they were inspired by. They were certainly exposed to new skills such as digging and sculpting with mud, weaving with twigs and spinning with wool. This gave the opportunity to discuss the skill and precision required in the animal world to make their homes.

An old pet pool and large pot for the shape

We covered it with natural materials...

...so you cant see the framework

Almost everything in the P5 garden has been reused or recycled. The paddling pool (that became the burrow and nest) was an old pet pool that was donated. All of the turf and soil used to construct the burrow came from emptying out the planters from last year and from the grass removed from the area used to create space for our new fruit trees. All of the twigs used to form the nest were collected from around our school grounds after some storms earlier in the year.

St David's ELC

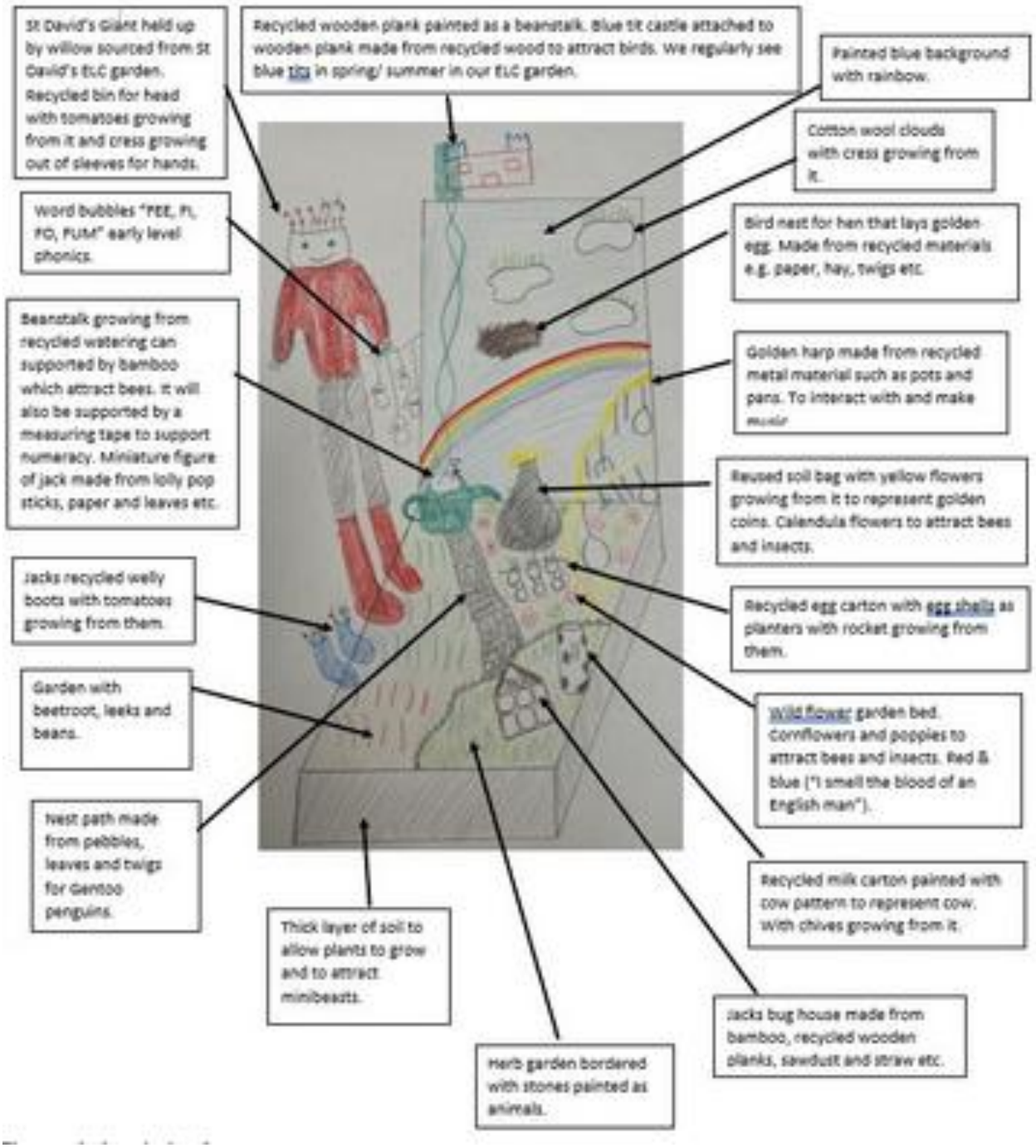
We used the Jack and the Beanstalk story to make different places for wildlife. The beanstalk in the story becomes a ladder to climb, so we are growing beans too. The giant's castle is a nest box and Jack's house is a home for solitary bees.

We had a week were parents could come in and plant some seeds with their children, One of our parents who has a passion for planting came in and assisted the children and staff to plant whilst teaching us what they need to grow and how to care for them, Our parents and local community donated most of our resources that we used to build our garden, One of the mentors Jenny was extremely supportive and donated seeds and plants and soil to help start grow or garden.

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Together in the ELC we have learnt about what plants needs to grow and how to care for them, the importance of having wildlife friendly spaces and how to do this, animals and the homes they live in, the importance of recycling and reusing materials, working together as a team and with the wider community, and why planting our own food is important.

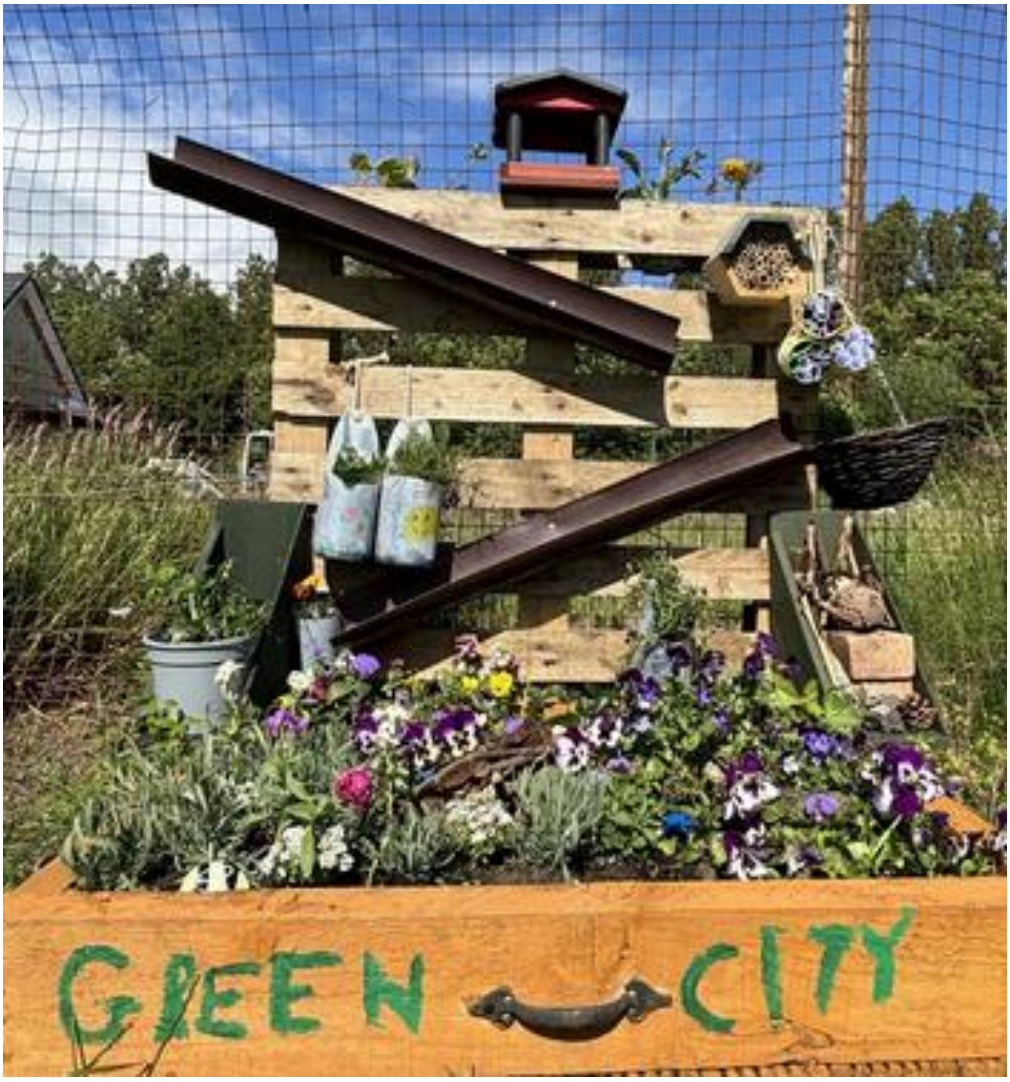
The garden will be a garden for children to access as it is in the nursery garden which children can access freely throughout the day. We will continue to care for our plants and watch them grow until we can harvest them and support children to follow recipes in the kitchen to make our own snacks.



St. Mark's Primary

The children in Primary 5 designed and created a garden based on the idea of a green city built by nature to link with the 2024 theme - Nature's Engineers.

Our garden is wildlife friendly as it accommodates bees, butterflies, insects and birds. There is a bug hotel, beehive and birdhouse. The blue flowers flowing through the middle of the garden represent a river, which comes up against the sticks and stones. This part of the garden was inspired by the engineering work of a beaver.

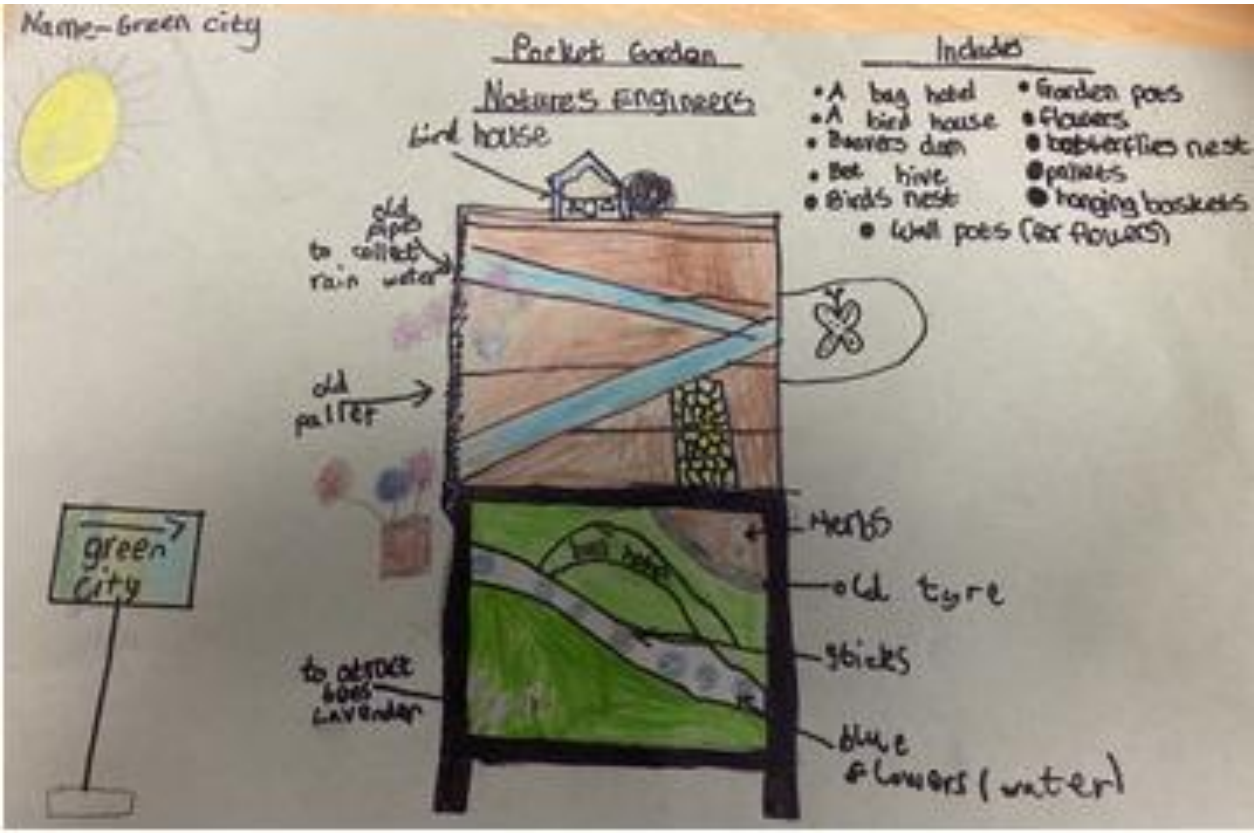


The wooden beehive was kindly donated by a Primary 5 pupil. We also received plant donations and peat free soil from our local community to help bring our garden design to life. Our garden includes the following edible plants: strawberries, thyme, rocket, runner beans and rosemary.

Our favourite part of creating our garden was working together as a team, sharing creative ideas, planting, decorating the garden and learning throughout the process.

We repurposed two donated pallets to create the structure of our garden. The 'back wall' includes a water feature (recycled guttering), beehives, recycled milk bottles, plant pots, a bird house and a hanging basket. The children painted stones with illustrations of different animals and insects found in nature. They also created beehives made of recycled tins and scrap paper.

The garden is something we will continue to nurture and cherish. We hope that other classes in our school will be inspired to design and build their own Pocket Garden in the future, as the process has been lots of fun for all involved!



Tulliallan Primary

Tulliallan Eco Committee were inspired by bees because they work hard and they make hexagons all day long to store their honey in so we designed our garden in hexagon shapes like their honeycomb. We want to attract more wildlife like bees and other bugs to our playground.

It turns out hexagons are not easy to make and it made us think bees are even more amazing. We had to do some different attempts to get planters that look like hexagons.

We also had to learn how to tie knots and work together to hang the bug hotels up.

Now our garden is looking beautiful, it's not a secret anymore- though we might still call it our "secret garden" because it's hidden amongst some trees. We will tell everyone in our school community about it, explain why it is important and our gardening committee will help to maintain it.

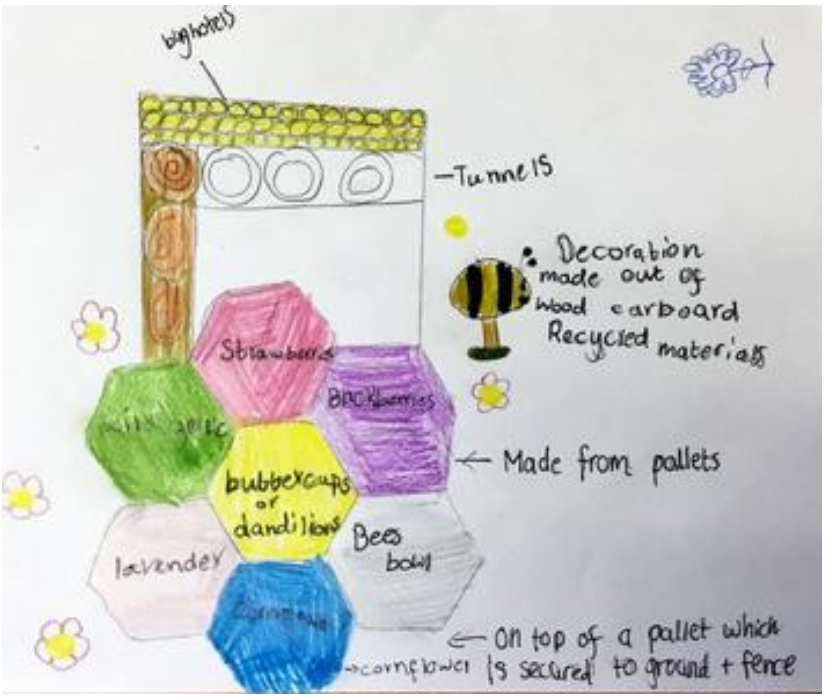
We are going to share with the whole school in assembly. We are looking forward to eating some of the produce too!

In the middle of our garden is a bee bowl filled with pebbles and water because we know bees need water just like us. We've also planted some flowers which we know bees will love like our daisies and lavender.

We have food for bees and food for pupils- we are very excited that our strawberry plants are already beginning to have berries on them. One of our committee suggested we make some rocks look like strawberries which deters birds from eating the fruit. We also took some advice from our mentors about the plants we originally wanted and instead planted nasturtium, marigold and cabbages which are all edible.

These are the skills we learned: teamwork, creativity, planning, organising, problem solving and gardening.

Our local community supported us by a donation of compost from a farmer. We think he is really kind. We also got bamboo donated and old juice bottles. We plan to make cards for those people.



Whinhill Primary

We were intrigued by the title ‘Nature’s Engineers’ and all the more so when we started looking at all the ways in which nature works. We based our garden on an osprey’s nest, using branches from a shrub that grows (far too prolifically) in my garden and twigs we gathered from round the school.

Our idea was to have a trellis at the back, representing a spider-web and to grow the beans and peas up it. Some of the design team were very keen to have what they called a canopy over the garden, and that evolved into another web arched between two shrubs planted on each side of the nest and over which the sweet-peas would grow – they made this themselves.

We have a little bird-bath with stones around representing a penguin nest, and we made toadstools from recycled bowls and empty glue-sticks to illustrate nature’s way of using bright colours to indicate poison.

We put together the garden on a rare sunny day - and how lovely to hear the children exclaim in delight when they saw a bee landing on one of the sunflowers.

We were able to use wood chippings as the base - ageing trees within our grounds had been felled and the chippings left behind.

Our favourite part of creating the garden was seeing the seeds all growing so well.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is your charity for Scotland's environment. We work with you to help combat climate change, tackle litter and waste, restore nature and biodiversity and improve places.

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