

# Pocket Garden Design Competition 2025



Competition information





# Why take part?



Discover joyful and practical cross-curricular learning through designing, growing and tending a garden. The 2025 Pocket Garden Design Competition provides a framework and a focus for this learning, linking design, sustainability and our heritage. This heritage theme celebrates Scotland's rich heritage and culture. It includes the objects, buildings, traditions, skills, language, ideas, songs and stories that have been passed on to us from previous generations. Pupils aged 3 - 18 are invited to design a garden inspired by their heritage. 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.

- Scotland's Chief Medical Officer recognised the health benefits of Pocket Garden in his Annual Report 2023 -2024. He said it, "connects children with their food and with nature."
- The competition themes link to Eco-Schools Scotland work on food and the environment, biodiversity, school grounds, climate action, health and well-being and the new Heritage topic. 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 2025 themes.

# Competition details for 2025

## Timescales:

- **Friday 21 February 2025** – deadline for competition entries.
- **w/c 24 February** – winners will be notified and can begin to grow and build their garden.
- **Wednesday 4 June** – winning schools deadline for images and words to show finished gardens.
- **9am 13 June - 9am 23 June** – national online showcase and public voting.
- **From 23 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](mailto:pocketgarden@keepscotlandbeautiful.org) by **5pm Friday 21 February 2025**. 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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 2025 competition there are three interlinked themes: Our Heritage, One Planet Picnic and Wildlife Gardening. Additionally, Keep Scotland Beautiful is celebrating 25 years as a Scottish charity this year and we'd love you to weave a silver thread through your design in recognition.

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 26 May 2025. 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](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/pocketgarden)

# 2025 themes



## Our Heritage

Our heritage is made up of things that have been handed down to us that we value, that we have held on to in some way and maybe still use. Those things can be physical objects such as huge buildings or delicate tools; they can be songs or stories or skills and things that we can do, such as crafts.

Your garden design can be inspired by monuments, architecture, or objects that you could see in a museum. It could be inspired by an old tune that you enjoy, or a traditional craft that you admire such as basket weaving. Your design might be inspired by traditions of clothing that still appear in wardrobes, or foods that have been part of people's diet for generations and that you still cook and eat today.



Our food and natural heritage are intertwined and are closely linked to place: from low-land soils to highland peat, from fresh water to salt, from remote to urban areas, they have their own character and landscape. Sometimes they have changed and sometimes they've stayed the same. Is there a building or a tree that is part of your daily view and community?

Our food and technology are also intertwined: from farming tools pulled by horses to fishing boats guided by information technology. Our heritage has helped us to survive and to thrive.

Heritage is part of who we are. It helps us to tell our story, where we are from, how we live, and what is important to us. Our language and the words we use to tell our story can be part of our heritage too. Our heritage is made up of what we have chosen to conserve. It can reflect what we value as individuals and as a community. What part of your heritage will inspire your garden design?

Inspired? See ['Dig Where you Stand'](#) for more.



## 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 can make a personal link to the past by exploring items or images connected with important individuals or special events in my life. [SOC 0-02a](#)

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](#)

By exploring places, investigating artefacts and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the ways we remember and preserve Scotland's history. [SOC 1-02a](#)

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](#)

Through exploration and discussion, I can understand that food practices and preferences are influenced by factors such as food sources, finance, culture and religion. [HWB 2-34a](#)

## 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 discuss the extent to which my choices and decisions are influenced by the ways in which I am informed. [SOC 3-17b](#)

## 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 have developed a sense of my heritage and identity as a British, European or global citizen and can present arguments about the importance of respecting the heritage and identity of others. [SOC 4-02a](#)

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, restore nature and biodiversity and improve places. We aim to inspire changes in behaviour to improve our environment, the quality of people's lives, their wellbeing and the places that they care for.



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[www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org)

