



Biodiversity in your School Grounds

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity means the variety of life. It includes all plants and animals, their habitats and the factors that link them to each other and their surroundings. It is not restricted to rare and threatened species and habitats but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered.

Why should Biodiversity be protected?

We all have a part to play in safeguarding the Earth's biodiversity. Therefore action needs to be taken, at both a local and global level, before our biodiversity disappears for good. Increasing biodiversity in your school grounds can make an important contribution to efforts to preserve biodiversity across Manchester and the UK.

The benefits of biodiversity are endless, but include:

- Learning about and enjoying the wildlife of Manchester. This makes an important contribution to our quality of life, health and spiritual well being. School grounds provide an excellent site for students to learn about biodiversity.
- Plants, animals and habitats enrich our everyday lives as they produce the necessary ingredients for all life to exist.
- Without conserving biodiversity, we will pass to our successors a planet that is markedly poorer than the one we were privileged to inherit. Therefore we have a duty and a role of play to ensure that the earth and its environment are protected for generations to come,
- Increased biodiversity can raise environmental awareness in local communities. It has also been shown that improving school grounds can influence children's values and attitudes towards the wider environment.
- There are ethical grounds for conservation, as many people believe that every species is of value in its own right

LINKS TO ECO SCHOOLS

Eco-schools is a programme that provides a framework to help schools become more sustainable. There are three levels that your school can work towards: Bronze award, Silver award and Green Flag. Pupil involvement is key to the success of eco-schools.

Biodiversity is one of the nine eco-schools themes. However it is important to note that all of the themes are interconnected in some way. For example working on your litter or waste themes will impact positively on biodiversity. Increasing biodiversity will also help with your targets in your school grounds theme.

For more information on eco schools visit their website www.eco-schools.org.uk

CURRICULUM LINKS

Understanding and respect for nature can be fostered in children from a very early age. Biodiversity is an essential component of environmental education and can be linked to the national curriculum in many different ways. Your school could try to:

- ❖ Include biodiversity in your curriculum, there are clear links to science, maths and geography as well as citizenship, art and English. For example completing a biodiversity audit could develop mapping skills in geography and data analysis skills in maths.
- ❖ Consider using an INSET day for training in biodiversity education.
- ❖ Explore biodiversity in your school grounds, nearby park or environmental study centre as part of the curriculum.
- ❖ Organise a nature day in the school grounds and/or set up a wildlife club at school.
- ❖ Join a conservation organisation such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers or The Wildlife Trust as a school member.
- ❖ Use the classroom to demonstrate good practice for the environment: recycle waste and use water and energy wisely.



GETTING STARTED

Increasing Biodiversity step by step

Gather baseline data about the level of biodiversity at your school. The audit at the back of this handout could help to get you started.

Now you have a bit of an idea of what biodiversity exists in your school grounds you can start to decide what area of the grounds you will focus on. What are your goals?

What action will you need to take to reach your goals? For example if your goal is to increase the diversity or number of butterflies that visit your grounds what actions will you need to take to make this happen.

Decide at this stage how you will measure whether or not your actions have been successful

Decide on timescales. Will you need to fundraise first? Can the work be completed in the current school term?

Designate responsibility for the different actions that are required. Make sure everybody is aware of exactly how they are required to contribute

Be positive and go for it... put your action plan into place!



How To Increase Biodiversity

By changing a small area in your school grounds into a wildlife garden you will be providing a valuable habitat for local wildlife. The wildlife garden will also be an outdoor classroom where you can discover the natural world and develop your understanding of environmental issues through first hand experience.

Simply planting some native plants and providing attractive conditions for wildlife such as insects and garden birds to shelter and feed will increase the wildlife population.

Activity and project ideas.....

Hedges, trees and shrubs

Plant native species of trees, shrubs and hedgerows. These will help to attract a wide range of insects, birds and small mammals that feed on them. Choose species with berries or nectar rich flowers (rowan or guelder rose), and that are characteristic of local semi-natural habitats (birch, oak, ash, alder, elm and willow).

Plant shrubs closely together in groups or as a hedge to provide living space and food for all sorts of wildlife. Native choices include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Wild rose, Holly, Hazel and Elder.



Bird and bat boxes

With bird and bat populations decreasing, making bird and bat boxes is an excellent idea to help our flying friends live and breed. January and February are the ideal times to build the box and use in the spring. Make sure the boxes don't face the sun and are not exposed to the rain.

Bird and butterfly feeders

By providing food for birds and other animals you will help to attract them to your grounds where they can be watched and studied.

Different birds eat different foods in different ways and different places. Provide nuts, seeds, fat and kitchen scraps in feeders, trays and on the ground to allow for the various diets and feeding

methods of many species particularly in Winter. Move feeding places occasionally to guard against predators, disease and unwelcome visitors such as rats.

Make a butterfly border of long-flowering, sweet-smelling, sun-loving plants such as Buddleia (butterfly bush). Plant them in a sheltered sunny spot and arrange to have some plants in flower all year round. Moths are attracted to night-scented stocks such as Honeysuckle and Evening Primrose.

Wet areas

Water is vital for all living things, providing a source of water in your school grounds will increase the range of plants and animals that can survive there.



'Wild' corners

Undisturbed 'wild' areas where grass and wildflowers grow, can provide valuable shelter and food for wildlife. Damp log piles create an ideal winter home for hibernating frogs, toads and newts.



FUNDING

Ernest Cook Trust Educational Grants

www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk

Grants range from £100-£300. The ECT does not help with capital costs e.g. digging ponds, constructing paths. However they can help with educational resources such as bug boxes, pond dipping equipment, bat boxes, books on wildlife, weather stations etc. Application details on website

Email: grants@ernestcooktrust.org.uk Tel: 01285 712 492

Asda Foundation

<http://www.asdafoundation.org/>

Charities, schools and community groups have the opportunity to apply for funding for local projects that require financial assistance to the ASDA Foundation. The ASDA Foundation trust was set up in 1988 to support local good causes chosen by employees and is funded by profits from the mid-week national lottery. Organisations can apply for funding for a wide range of projects as long as they have the support of local ASDA colleagues.

Some of the projects that the ASDA Foundation has supported in the past include:

Transforming a large tarmac playing ground at Haslingden Primary School, Lancashire, into a place where children can play, learn, enjoy, plant and grow, and most of all have fun.

The Foundation also provided funding for the Southglade Park community allotment, a non profitable initiative where the produce grown is used to educate young children and adults on healthy eating.

Potential applicants should contact their local Store or Depot in the first instance.

Garfield Weston

The Garfield Weston Foundation offers support to organisations that are registered charities and excepted or exempt charities such as churches, hospitals, educational establishments, museums and housing corporations. Founded in 1958 the Garfield Weston Foundation is a UK based, general grant- giving charity that makes grants in the areas of the Arts, Community Education, Medical, Environment, Health, Religion, Welfare and Youth.

Applications are considered individually by the Foundation and the following issues are taken into consideration:

- The financial viability of the organisation;
- The degree of need for the project requiring funding;

- The amount spent on administration and fundraising as compared to the charitable activities;
- The ability to raise sufficient funding to meet the appeal target;
- Whether the organisation has appropriate priorities and plans in place to manage its activities.

There is no limit on the size of grant.
There are no application deadlines.

Other funding grants can be found on:

- <http://apps.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening/teachershome/resources/findingfunding.aspa>
- <http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/school-grounds.htm>
- <http://www.schoolscapes.co.uk/grants-and-funding.asp>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Establishing links and finding out where to go for ideas, help and support is an important factor in the success developing your school grounds and increasing biodiversity.

- **Wildflower seed and plants** - Landlife Wildflowers 0151 7371819
<http://www.wildflower.org.uk/>
- **Trees & shrubs**
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, 01302 572200 or your nearest garden centre <http://www.tcv.org.uk/>
- Woodland trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/>,
learning@woodlandtrust.org.uk, 01476581111
- **Tools** - British Trust for Conservation Volunteers 01302 572200 or your nearest garden centre <http://www.tcv.org.uk/>
- **Field Study guides** - Field Studies Council, <http://www.field-studies-council.org/publications.aspx>, 0845 3454071, enquiries@field-studies-council.org

| Organisation | Contact | Summary |
|---|--|--|
| Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project | gmeu@tameside.gov.uk | The Biodiversity Project aims to bring together individuals and organisations from all sectors of the community to conserve biodiversity across Greater Manchester. They can offer advice and information on wildlife conservation, ecological surveys, habitat creation and management. Will offer specific advice to schools on particular species and grants. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Manchester City Council Environmental Strategy | Andrea Marshall Environmental Strategy Officer - Education Environmental Strategy Tel: 0161 234 3962 Mobile: 07900418649 Email: a.marshall@manchester.gov.uk www.eco-schools.org.uk www.wildaboutmanchester.info | Can provide support, guidance and information on a range of environmental issues. One to one support for Eco Schools Can sometimes help with small scale planting and provide flowers, bulbs and trees. Can provide litter pick materials to clean up your school grounds (litter picks, gloves, bags), can also arrange to pick up larger items of rubbish. Contact point to order your copy of the Going for Green resource pack for teachers. |
| Groundwork School Grounds Development Programme | Liane Kirk, Youth Manager Tel: 0161 624 1444 Email: liane.kirk@groundwork.org.uk | Main sign-posting organisation for Manchester Schools, offering advice and information about the process and development of school grounds. |
| Manchester Environmental Education Network (MEEN) | Raichael Lock Tel: 0161 273 8881 Email: meen@gn.apc.org | Gives support to schools in teaching Education for Sustainable Development. Provide training for teachers, useful contacts and advice on resources. Also support eco-schools work. |
| Red Rose Forest | Tel: 0161 872 1660 Email: team@redroseforest.co.uk | Advise on woodland development and can provide trees/wildflowers free of charge for community projects. May have ideas on funding. |
| British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) South Manchester | Registered office Tel: 01302 388 883 Fax: 01302 311 531 Email: information@tcv.org.uk | BTCV South Manchester can offer advice and assistance in schools grounds issues. Mainly help with funding or physical labour using dedicated volunteers. |
| The National Wildflower Centre - Liverpool | Tel: 0151 737 1819 Fax: 0151 737 1820 Email: info@landlife.org.uk http://www.nwc.org.uk/ | Advise schools on gardening projects involving wildflowers (meadow areas etc). Promote idea of the "Living Wall" – an exhibition piece that schools can develop themselves (encourages minibeasts in a variety of habitats). Teacher's resource pack available for £12.50 (ideas for the classroom). They also run trainings for teachers, many of which are relevant to School Grounds Development |
| The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside. | Tel: 01772 324129 Fax: 01772 628849 Email: lancswt@cix.co.uk www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/lancashire/ | Environmental Charity dedicated to conserving all our habitats and species. Also run 'Wildlife Watch' for young environmentalists. Publish a 'Wildlife Action Pack' with information on promotion biodiversity |
| Manchester Museum - Outreach | Tel: 0161 275 2630 Email: school.bookings@manchester.ac.uk | Can't get to us? We'll come to you instead! Museum Comes to School offers the chance to experience our learning programme in your own school! Museum professionals visit your school with real objects from the collection. Children have the opportunity to investigate, explore and learn from these objects – your class can step back in time and imagine another world! Suitable for KS2. |

USEFUL WEBSITES

| Organisation | Summary |
|--|---|
| Wild about Manchester http://www.wildaboutmanchester.info | Manchester's own biodiversity web site. Links to the biodiversity strategy, education, latest events etc... |
| Nature Detectives http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/ | All the resources you need to discover, survey and monitor biodiversity in your school grounds. Many free resources available online when you register. |
| Arkive www.arkive.org | Search for your favourite animal or plant and find out whether they are endangered with an excellent separate resource site Lesson plans, support materials, curriculum links and project ideas |
| Natural History Museum: Exploring Biodiversity http://internet.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/biodiversity/index.html | Lots of interesting information about wildlife and nature conservation from the Natural History Museum in London. Includes lesson plans and a database to compare areas in the UK by postcode. |
| Royal Society for the protection of Birds http://www.rspb.org.uk/ | Information about garden hedges and other ways to attract birds to your site |
| Trees for all www.treesforall.info | Tree For All is the most ambitious children's tree-planting project ever launched in the UK, with plans to help plant 12 million trees over the next five years. With your support, Tree For All could give one million children the chance to make a positive difference |
| Woodland Trust www.woodland-trust.org.uk | The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading conservation charity dedicated to the protection of our native woodland heritage |
| Wild about Woods http://www.wildaboutwoods.org.uk | A range of online and offline resources for teachers and pupils about trees |

Developing & Using Environmental Areas in School Grounds (Cleapps Guide L221)

Free Guide available from Cleapps to all Manchester LEA schools

Information on many topics related to biodiversity: For example bird gardens and bird tables, butterfly gardens, meadows, ponds and trees.

Tel: 01895 251496 Fax/Answerphone: 01895 814372

www.cleapss.org.uk E-mail: science@cleapss.org.uk



Manchester Schools Biodiversity Audit

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Name of School | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Contact Name | | Date of Audit | |

Features for Attracting Wildlife

| Feature | Number | Comments |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Bird Box | | |
| Bird Bath | | |
| Bird Feeder | | |
| Bat Box | | |
| Log Pile | | |
| | | |
| | Size (meters ²) | Comments |
| Pond | | |
| Hedge | | |
| Wildflower Meadow | | |
| | | |

| Plants to attract | Number | Comments |
|-------------------|--------|----------|
| Butterflies | | |
| Bees | | |
| Birds | | |
| | | |

Trees

| Species | No. | Height | Spread | Single | Row | Woodland |
|---------|-----|--------|--------|--------|-----|----------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Woodlands

This table will apply to you if there are any areas of woodland or small copses of trees on or adjacent to your school grounds.

| | Hectares | Squares |
|------------------------|----------|---------|
| Size of Woodland | | |
| Ownership of Woodland | | |
| Management of Woodland | | |

Wildlife

| Species | Where sighted | Month sighted | Comment |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Any further comments on biodiversity:

Please send your completed audit to:

Environmental Strategy

Manchester City Council, Floor 5, Town Hall Extension,
Albert Square,
PO Box 532,
M60 2LA