



Complementary Activity

Your School Grounds

Why not take inspiration from the Nidderdale AONB and think about caring for habitats and wildlife in your school grounds or for the wider environment. Here are few ideas.

Wildlife and Habitats which can be created or supported

- Setting up a bird feeding station and nest boxes will support your local bird population. The responsibility for providing food can contribute to the curriculum strands of Citizenship and PHSE.
- Plant hedges along fence lines to help both birds and insects. This not only looks much more attractive than a fence it also provides shelter and food for wildlife. Caring for the young trees can be incorporated into school studies. Tree planting can be undertaken by all ages.
- Create a pond or bog garden. If you have space a pond can enhance the school's science curriculum and contribute to other areas such as English. Be sure that safety issues are addressed (such as providing a dipping platform and fencing/hedging the area to control access).
- Creating habitat piles, trapdoors and other mini-beast havens in a small area of the grounds is an easy way to attract lots of insects to study.
- Bulb planting is a fun activity that children of all ages can take part in. The results are colourful and native species can be chosen such as snowdrops, English bluebells and wild daffodils.
- Wildflower areas. These can be created as part of a nature area if you have a larger area to develop. They do need proper maintenance to get the best flower results. The planting of wildflower plugs can be enjoyed by all ages.
- Small copse of trees. Again, if you have a larger area these can benefit a lot of wildlife.
- Butterfly and insect hibernation areas. Butterflies are attracted to nectar-producing plants such as buddleia, valerian and flowering fruit bushes. Brambles, nettles and thistles provide food for their caterpillars. A hollow cane-filled tube is an ideal overwinter home for ladybirds and lacewings.
- Sensory Areas. Sensible planting of herbs and fragrant bushes give another dimension to an area. Use of different path surfaces and textured barks or stone widen the use of senses.

Other outdoor ideas

- If you lack available green space, planters can enhance a playground area. Using small bushes, herbs, butterfly plants and wildflowers can provide opportunities for study.
- Healthy eating can be incorporated into the curriculum through vegetable patches. Science and plant growth provides cross-curricular studies.
- Living willow structures can be planted if you have space in the school field. These make fun and interesting alternative play equipment.
- Seating and outdoor classroom areas.

The wider environment

- Recycling of:
Paper, Ink cartridges, Pop cans, Foil, Old clothes
- Water conservation – repair dripping taps etc.
- Energy Conservation – turn off lights, use energy saving bulbs, switch computers off (not left on 'standby'), shut room doors to keep heat in

There are prestigious awards like Eco-Schools, which can be won through the action your school takes.

Some of the work to create the habitats may be done by the children and willing volunteers. There are also organisations such as BTCV, Wildlife Trusts and Groundwork who can help. Grants are available to schools for projects to improve their environment and involving volunteers etc. For advice, schools within the AONB can contact the AONB Offices and those outside can contact other organisations below.

AONB Offices, King Street, Pateley Bridge.
N. Yorkshire. HG3 5LE. Tel: 01423 712950.

BTCV York, 3, Leake Street, York.
YO10 3BR. Tel: 01904 644300.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, 10, Toft Green, York.
YO1 6JT. Tel: 01904 659570.

BTCV Leeds, Hollybush Conservation Centre,
Broad Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds. LS5 3BP.
Tel: 0113 274 2335