



School Awards Scheme Guide

Embedding nature-based activities and learning within the curriculum

This guide gives you all the information needed to make the most of being part of the One Planet Matters Schools' Network.

INTRODUCTION

What is the Schools' Network?

The One Planet Matters Schools' Network supports educators in delivering **Nature-Based Learning Opportunities** to those they teach. These Learning Opportunities are linked directly to National Curriculum objectives in science, geography and D&T. In addition to lesson-based activities, we are also keen to work with schools and communities to develop their growing spaces and improve their biodiversity within the school site..

When a school joins the Network, we survey the existing Biodiversity and Growing context. We create a proposal with the school that includes realistic Biodiversity and/or Growing actions for that year.

As part of the Schools' Network, schools join our School Awards Scheme. This creates a structure for the school to work towards achieving Gold Certification in Biodiversity and Growing.

Contents:

- ❖ **The School Awards Scheme**
- ❖ **Learning Pathways**
- ❖ **Monthly Challenges**
- ❖ **Awareness Days Calendar**

The School Awards Scheme

Your pupils and school can work towards certification at different levels (bronze, silver and gold) in both Biodiversity and Growing. This is through completing a range of activities that can be stand-alone projects or part of curriculum delivery.

To achieve the different levels, a school needs to complete four activities for bronze, six activities for silver and eight activities for gold.

Schools receive a printed A3 tracker document, which includes stickers to show the completion of activities.

The table on the next page provides links to the activities and curriculum information. Members of the Schools' Network have access to all curriculum linked resources.

There is flexibility with how schools choose to use these activities. This can be through learning pathways, such as the ones suggested in the next section of this guide. Alternatively or in addition, schools may decide to use awareness days as a way to focus activities, as detailed later in this guide.

Towards the end of the academic year, we review progress in collaboration with schools. This is an opportunity for One Planet Matters (OPM) to celebrate with your school community and award certificates. We can arrange to visit you during the last term and present your certificate to the school community.

As a school continues with its Biodiversity and Growing journey, this celebration of progress also continues annually.

OPM is always interested in learning how schools use the materials provided, so please be in contact with us with your ideas or suggestions.

This table provides links to the activities and curriculum information:

Curriculum/Activity - Biodiversity	Curriculum/Activity - Growing
Biodiversity	Growing
Bioblitz (At start of the process)	Companion Planting
Build a Bug & Bee hotel	Green Spaces and Temperature Making a Thermometer
Creating a wildflower patch	Making a Rainwater gauge
Creating a Hedgehog friendly environment	Making a Compost Heap
Making a Bird feeder	Creating a Wormery
Creating a Water feature for wildlife	Vertical Growing
Investigating Soil	Regrowing Food (From scraps and cuttings)
Planting an orchard	Growing with Hydroponics
Information Resources	Information Resources
Bioblitz - To be carried out annually to measure the change in biodiversity of your school grounds at the start and at the end of the school term.	Growing Survey - (To be completed at when you Join the Schools' Network and reviewed at the end of the academic year
	Monthly Growing Guide - We provide all schools with a detailed Monthly Growing Guide through our website.
No - Dig Method - This is an additional activity that can be undertaken and can count as one of your 8 steps towards Biodiversity Gold certification.	Seed saving - This is an additional activity that can be undertaken and can count as one of your 8 steps towards Growing Gold certification
More information resources are available through the curriculum links.	

Learning Pathways

~ Using our activities to inform broader learning pathways ~

Biodiversity

As well as being an important aspect of both KS1 and KS2 Science and KS2 Geography, an understanding of local biodiversity is enriching for children as it deepens their connection to their natural environment. By leading your learners through these activities, you can encourage their observation skills as well as their sense of ecological stewardship by empowering them to make a positive difference in supporting local wildlife.

- ❖ [Bioblitz - tracking biodiversity](#)
- ❖ [Build a Bug Hotel](#)
- ❖ [Create a Water Feature for Wildlife](#)
- ❖ [Creating a Wildflower Patch](#)
- ❖ [Preparing and planting your orchard](#)

Soil & food

Learning to grow food gives children an understanding of natural systems and reconnects them with where their food comes from, including all of the processes that get our food from soil to plate. Growing their own produce exposes them to local seasonal vegetables which are grown organically and non-intensively, to support an appreciation for healthy food that benefits rather than degrades nature. These concepts can be hard to teach young children in a classroom setting as the problems and solutions can feel too far away from their lived experience, and out of their control. Growing food gives children agency in their health and their environmental impact, while also being a great way to think about curriculum-based topics such as life cycles, rocks and soils, and habitats.

- ❖ [Investigating Soil](#)
- ❖ [Making a Wormery](#)
- ❖ [Regrowing from Cuttings and Scraps](#)
- ❖ [Vertical Growing](#)
- ❖ [Hydroponics](#)

Weather & climate

These activities encourage learners to engage with and observe their local weather and climate conditions so that they can begin to comprehend large-scale climate topics through what is happening to them locally. These topics are also closely associated with core ideas from Science and Geography within the National Curriculum.

- ❖ [Making a Rainwater Gauge](#)
- ❖ [Greenspaces & Temperature](#)

Monthly Challenges

These monthly challenges link activities from the curriculum/activities table to awareness days. Using monthly challenges is optional, though may be a useful way for a school to begin implementing its Biodiversity and Growing journey. (See Awareness Days Calendar at the end of this guide.)

OCTOBER - Make a Wormery

- ❖ Awareness day: World Earthworm Day (21st October)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 Science Living things and their habitats. Year 3 Science: Rocks and Soils. Key Stage 2 Geography: Seasons, Climate, Biomes and Vegetation Belts.

World Earthworm Day is a great time to celebrate these little creatures that often go under-appreciated. Earthworms are amazing. They recycle food and plant waste into nutrient-rich soil which feeds our crops - in fact, without earthworms, we would have significantly less food on Earth and some argue that life on Earth would quickly diminish without them!

Learning about worms through making a wormery connects children with an understanding of where their food comes from and allows them to recycle the food scraps from your school kitchen, staff room or from composting bins in classrooms.

To complete this challenge, make a vermicompost wormery (either single unit or stacking) using our activity sheet.

[Making a Wormery Activity Sheet](#)

[Learn more about World Earthworm Day](#)

NOVEMBER - Autumn BioBlitz

- ❖ Awareness day: Outdoor Classroom Day
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: All Plants, Living things and their habitats and Animals including Humans content as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically.

Outdoor Classroom Day is a global movement to make time outdoors part of every child's day. On two days of action each year, teachers take children outdoors to play and learn. Late Autumn is a great time to do a BioBlitz to track the biodiversity on your school grounds. You can compare your results from this BioBlitz with the results you will get in the Summer BioBlitz in May.

To complete this activity, simply follow the instructions on the activity sheet and share what species you found - we will add this to the Schools' Network database where you can see what other schools around the country have found! By tracking biodiversity at your school twice a year and sharing the information with the Schools' Network, your learners can not only gain an understanding of seasonal changes and local wildlife, they will also learn how species vary across the country. This is a brilliant activity to do each year alongside our other activities that work to support wildlife, so you can track how your activities are benefitting biodiversity.

[BioBlitz Activity Sheet](#)

[Learn more about Outdoor Classroom Day](#)

DECEMBER - Investigating Soil

- ❖ Awareness day: World Soil Day (5th December)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: Year 3 Science: Rocks and soils

World Soil Day is run by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and its purpose is to bring awareness to the importance of maintaining healthy soils for food security and the wellbeing of humans and ecosystems. This is a great opportunity to discuss the importance of healthy soil and what it means for growing food while meeting core topics for Geography.

To complete this challenge, use our Investigating Soil activity sheet to complete the soil testing activity in order to help young people to learn about different types of soil and work out what kind you have! You can then use this information to think about what types of produce you can grow at school.

[Investigating Soil Activities](#)

[Learn more about World Soil Day](#)

FEBRUARY - Make a Water Feature for Wildlife

- ❖ Awareness day: World Wetlands Day (2nd February)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: Living things and their habitats and Animals including Humans content as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically.

World Wetlands Day is an annual day to celebrate and raise awareness about our important wetland habitats. There are lots of different types of wetlands, such as fens, lakes, lagoons, mangroves, rivers, salt marshes, and...ponds! Each one is an important habitat for the many species that rely on them, and integrating even a tiny pond into your school area can be a massive benefit to wildlife. They are incredibly easy to make, can be made totally child-safe, and they offer lots of learning opportunities for children of all ages.

To complete this challenge, use our activity sheet to create a mini wildlife pond at your school. There are lots of different ways to get creative and make a wildlife-friendly pond. This is a great activity to pair with our BioBlitz activity too, so that you can track the species that your pond is supporting.

[Create a Water Feature for Wildlife Activity Sheet](#)

[Learn more about World Wetlands Day](#)

MARCH - Make a Rainwater Gauge

- ❖ Awareness day: World Meteorological Day (23rd March)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & 2 Geography: Seasons, Climate, Biomes and Vegetation Belts. KS1 & KS2 Science - opportunities for working scientifically

This year marks 150 years of international cooperation in weather and climate observations, dating back to the establishment of the International Meteorological Organisation in 1873. We can easily take weather forecasting for granted, but these forecasts save lives and livelihoods every day. World Meteorological Day is a great opportunity to not only celebrate our collaborative achievements in understanding climate and weather better, but also to encourage your students to engage with these ever-important topics.

To complete this challenge, use our activity sheet to create a rainwater gauge, meeting curriculum needs in Science and Geography while collating information with schools around the country in order to map out rainfall patterns across the country!

[Make a Rainwater Gauge Activity Sheet](#)

[Learn more about World Meteorological Day](#)

APRIL - Greenspaces & Temperature: Making a Thermometer

- ❖ Awareness day: Earth Day (22nd April)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & 2 Geography: Seasons, Climate, Biomes and Vegetation Belts. KS1 & KS2 Science - opportunities for working scientifically KS2 Mathematics - working mathematically using thermometers

Earth Day is all about celebrating and protecting our planet. It is an educational day and a deeply important call to action to find creative and innovative solutions to the climate crisis. There are many elements to the global issues of climate change and biodiversity loss, so this activity seeks to engage children with a topic that can be understood and tackled on a local level in order to spark their sense of empowerment in making a difference.

Making a thermometer is a great way to get pupils to think about the effect their physical surroundings have on temperature. By making multiple thermometers using this method, learners can track the difference in temperature between green and built environments, and come to understand the importance of green spaces in built environments. It is a great conversation starter for finding creative ways to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and urbanisation in a way that all age groups can understand and get involved with. To complete this challenge, use our activity sheet to work through the discussion points and exercise, and share your findings and thoughts with the Schools' Network to be part of a wider conversation around how we can shape our environments for the better..

[Greenspaces & Temperature: Making a Thermometer Activity Sheet](#)

[Learn more about Earth Day](#)

MAY - Creating a Wildflower Area

- ❖ Awareness day: Wildflower Week (1st-7th May)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: All Plants, Living things and their habitats and Animals including Humans content as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically.

Wildflower patches and meadows are important habitats for many species, including insects, birds, and mammals. They are even more important when we realise that in the UK, we have lost 97% of our wildflower habitats in the past 100 years.

Wildflower Week is aimed at advocating for the planting and preservation of wildflower habitats. You can get involved using the guidance of our activity sheet. Plan and grow your wildflower patch to add some colour and beauty to your school grounds, while providing important shelter and food for many species. You may choose to take photos of your wildflower patch as it progresses, and pair the activity with our [BioBlitz activity sheet](#) to keep track of the wildlife you are supporting!

[Creating a Wildflower Patch Activity Sheet](#)
[Learn more about Wildflower Week](#)

MAY - Build a Bug Hotel

- ❖ Awareness day: International Day for Biological Diversity (22nd May)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: All Plants, Living things and their habitats and Animals including Humans content as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically.

The International Day for Biological Diversity was begun by the UN as a day to promote the importance of taking action to build a shared future for all life on Earth. The central message around this day is that “when biodiversity has a problem, humans have a problem” due to our complete dependence on the biodiverse ecosystems that we are destroying with our practices. Fostering a sense of ecological stewardship is key to making a real difference, and we believe that if this is supported from childhood, our young people can grow up with the tools and understanding they need to make real positive change through love of the natural world.

Building a bug hotel is a really fun activity for young people of all ages to do together, in order to create shelter and food for wildlife while getting creative and using waste materials. It is also a fun way to meet curriculum needs in Science throughout KS1 and KS2. This activity is the perfect way to show children that they can make a positive impact on the wildlife in their local environment, which is key if we want to help young people to feel connected to nature and to become proactive about issues such as biodiversity loss. It is also a great way to encourage resourcefulness and creativity, as you will be using as many upcycled materials as possible. Creative diversity is important for supporting biodiversity! When you pair this activity with the BioBlitz activity, you can share the progression in the different species you see using your bug hotel.

[Build a Bug Hotel Activity Sheet](#)
[Learn more about the International Day for Biological Diversity](#)

JUNE - Create a Vertical Garden

- ❖ Awareness day: World Localisation Day (21st June)
- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: All Plants, Living things and their habitats as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically. KS1 & 2 Geography: Seasons, Climate, Biomes and Vegetation Belts.

World Localisation Day is a great opportunity for learners to think about where our food comes from and how we can find creative ways to feed the world by localising food growing. We can easily feed the global population if we make food accessible. Two ways that we can illustrate this and help young people to get involved is by making food growing accessible, and by sharing the food we grow. A great way to make food growing accessible is to grow produce vertically. This is a technique that can be used almost anywhere, meaning that growing produce can be accessible even in heavily built-up environments with very little greenspace. These are the areas that would benefit most from vertical growing, as they are where we often see most poverty and food insecurity.

In the lead up to World Localisation Day, find a creative way to grow food vertically using our guide. We also encourage all schools which currently have a growing area to donate some produce to a local food bank this World Localisation Day. Let us know how much food you donated (in portions of vegetables and kilograms of fruit) and we will add your donations to our Growing Communities Data that will show how much local produce is being used by the local community.

[Vertical Growing Guide](#)

[Learn more about World Localisation Day](#)

JUNE - Summer BioBlitz

- ❖ National Curriculum Links: KS1 & KS2 Science: All Plants, Living things and their habitats and Animals including Humans content as well as lots of opportunities for working scientifically.

As the academic year comes to a close, we think it is important that your pupils celebrate the actions they have taken over the year to understand and support their local wildlife better. It is also important to track progress in order to meet your curriculum needs in Science, so we recommend doing this second BioBlitz of the year before your school closes for the summer term. This will be an exciting activity as plenty will have changed in terms of wildlife at your school since your Autumn BioBlitz!

To complete this activity, simply follow the instructions on the activity sheet and share what species you found - we will add this to the Schools' Network database where you can see what other schools around the country have found! By tracking biodiversity at your school twice a year and sharing the information with the Schools' Network, your learners can not only gain an understanding of seasonal changes and local wildlife, they will also learn how species vary across the country. This is a brilliant activity to do each year alongside our other activities that work to support wildlife, so you can track how your activities are benefitting biodiversity.

[BioBlitz Activity Sheet](#)

Awareness Days Calendar

Month	Challenge	Awareness Day	Date
October	Making a Wormery	World Earthworm Day	Friday 28th October
November	Autumn BioBlitz	Outdoor Classroom Day	Thursday 7th November
December	Investigating Soil	World Soil Day	Monday 12th December
February	Create a Water Feature	World Wetlands Day	Thursday 9th February
March	Make a Rainwater Gauge	World Meteorological Day	Thursday 23rd March
April	Greenspaces & Temperature: Making a Thermometer	Earth Day	Friday 21st April
May	Plant a Wildflower Patch	Wildflower Week	Monday 8th May
	Build a Bug Hotel	International Day for Biological Diversity	Monday 22nd May
June	Create a Vertical Garden	World Localization Day	Wednesday 21st June
	Summer BioBlitz		Friday 30th June