

WILD YOUR SPACE

Wild your school
Rewild your children



Funding

Don't forget our Wild Your Space Microgrant, which is unique to the Scottish Borders and which has already helped numerous local schools to make their playgrounds more wild-life (and child) friendly. brightgreennature.org/microgrant

Sensory Gardens (inc. Herb Gardens)

All gardens and outdoor spaces are, in their own way, sensory gardens – that's why people are attracted to spending time there. The higher the level of sensory reward, the more likely we all are to truly enjoy being in that space and to look forward to returning as often as possible.

Much of the narrative about Sensory Gardens in school settings targets those with Additional Support Needs. We want to encourage this opportunity for more schools to sympathetically (i.e. keeping wildlife and nature restoration goals in mind) develop their outdoor areas to the benefit of those who may otherwise have less desire to venture outside – yet who may benefit the most. And, it's no secret that being outdoors provides mental health benefits for all.

Careful planning and budgeting is essential (and is something that Bright Green Nature can help with). Think about why you are doing this and who it is for. Consider best use of your available space, how it can be accessed (remembering those with mobility issues) and any likely maintenance requirements.

Then think about what our individual senses actually are, and how your new sensory garden can work best to achieve the very best results possible.

• Sight

You obviously want the garden to look as visually appealing as possible, with a variety of native plants (of different shapes and sizes) displaying a diverse range of colours all year round (leaves and flowers). It's also worth considering light and shade and how best to use the natural sunlight.

• Sound

Most of your sounds will come from the wind as the breeze moves through different grasses, hedges and trees. But all the best gardens (sensory or otherwise) will also be a haven for wildlife, and as such expect to hear more birdsong and more buzzing insects.

www.brightgreennature.org/wildyourspace

• Touch

All plants have a unique texture, and you will want to encourage your visitors to touch and compare these textures as much as possible. Again – remember accessibility may be an issue for some, so you may want to consider some raised beds or containers. But just being outdoors and feeling the wind in your hair or the sun on your skin will be a refreshing and delightful experience for many.

• Smell

Some of Scotland's native plants are amongst the very best when it comes to smell. In addition to an impressive range of sweet smelling flowers, we can delight in all our incredible strong scented herbs – such as mint and marjoram.

• Taste

Obviously herbs come to mind once more, but don't forget to add a few wild strawberries, blaeberreries, and other tasty treats to your garden. Enjoying 'home-grown' food is a great way to connect to nature, and the wildlife will enjoy whatever you leave behind.

Additional TOP TIPS...

- In addition to varying your plant selection, you may want to vary your use of building and landscaping materials.
- If your space is big enough, you may be able to incorporate a winding path, and some nice seating areas.
- Remember to focus on creating an area that works best for nature. Enhancing the biodiversity will work wonders in creating a space that is also more appealing to people.
- Be creative and use your imagination, and encourage the children to get involved at every stage – from planning, to planting, to exploring and thoroughly enjoying the end result. The more involved the children are in the creation, the more likely they are to enjoy the resulting immersive experience on offer.
- Learning opportunities will be plentiful and include lessons about pollinators, birds, invertebrates, food sources (for wildlife and people), medicinal plants, growing from seeds, and much more. As always, Bright Green Nature will be happy to work with you to develop an individual learning experience tailored to your individual group.

Useful Links

These websites will provide you with some additional inspiration (although please note that some may promote non-native plants – we don't!).

How to design a sensory garden - Sensory Trust
sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/sensory-gardens-design-guide

Sensory Gardens Made Simple
communityintegrated-care.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Sensory-Gardens-Made-Simple-1.pdf

How to create a sensory garden for wellbeing / RHS Gardening
rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/design/sensory-garden



BRIGHTGREENNATURE

www.brightgreennature.org/wildyourspace