

CREATE + MAKE



CHRISTMAS DECORATION COMPETITION

Have a go at making your own Christmas tree decoration using any recycled materials, then send us some of your images... I am sure Sock's would love to see your homemade decorations!

WIN A €50 SMYTHS VOUCHER

Send us pictures of your homemade decorations and the winning one will receive a €50 Smyths gift voucher and their handmade decoration will feature in our next newsletter.

E-mail your photos and full details to: dundalktidytowns@gmail.com

All entries must be sent to us by no later than Friday 16th December. We will announce and contact the winner at the start of the new term.

CHRISTMAS TIPS

- * CREATE YOUR OWN COOL CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM RECYCLABLE MATERIALS.
- * GET CREATIVE WITH HOMEMADE DECORATIONS.
- * USE NATURAL ITEMS LIKE HOLLY, PINE CONES AND MISTLETOE FOR TABLE, MANTELPIECE AND DOOR DECORATIONS.
- * FORAGING FOR DECORATIONS IS FUN TOO.
- * LED CHRISTMAS LIGHTS USE LESS ENERGY.
- * REDUCE THE HUGE AMOUNT OF WRAPPING PAPER WASTE BY USING SOME RECYCLED PAPER OR STAMPING OR /PAINTING PLAIN PAPER WITH SOME FUN DESIGNS.



dundalktidytowns@gmail.com
share with us!



HEDGEHOG - GRÁINNEOG



Hedgehogs are nocturnal which means that they sleep in the day and only come out at night. / The 'Hedge' part of their name comes from where they build their nests hedges. The 'hog' part comes from the small snorting/ grunting sound they make which is similar to a pig/warthog. / Hedgehogs have the ability to hibernate (although not all do). Hibernating means that they hole themselves up and stay in a dormant state for winter. / Average lifespan is 3 years. / Young hedgehogs are called 'hoglets'. / They have poor eyesight but a great sense of smell and even smell the smallest of worms! / The Irish word for hedgehog is 'Gráinneog' meaning 'horrible one'! / When not hibernating hedgehogs travel between 1-2km every night looking for food and mates. / Hedgehogs have around 5000 to 7000 spines on their back. These can be raised and lowered to respond to threatening situations. Each quill or spine lasts about a year before dropping out and being replaced. / Hedgehogs are a gardeners' friend because of their eating habits. Not only do they enjoy berries and fruit but the staple of their diet is made up from pests that are common in our back gardens such as beetles and caterpillars. / You can provide spaces for hedgehogs to nest or hibernate by making piles of logs or leaves in a quiet corner. These natural hedgehog homes will also attract lots of insects which provide food for hedgehogs but also for other animals.

ROBIN (SPIDEOG): Lifespan approx 2 years. / Male and females look identical. / They are the only birds that keep singing through the winter. / Their diet consists of insects and worms. / Young Robins have a brown speckled breast not a red one. **THE**

ROBIN IN IRISH FOLKLORE: If a robin stays close to the house in autumn, a harsh winter can be expected. / Robins are a sure sign of spring and if you make a wish on the first robin of spring before it flies off, you'll have luck throughout the following year. / In the Christian tradition, it is thought that a robin tried to remove the thorns from Jesus' head during the Crucifixion, and that drops of his blood fell onto the bird and stained his breast feathers red forever. / The Robin is sent by Santa Claus to report back on good behaviour.



MEET THE NATIVES!

HOLLY - CUILEANN

An evergreen tree native to Ireland / Small tree- average height 1m / Red berries are a great food source for birds and animals in the winter. / The leaves of holly also provide shelter for the birds. / Holly tree produces a very hard, white wood that is used to make the white pieces in a game of chess. / The Ancient Druids of Ireland considered Holly one of the sacred trees, the evergreen holly was the ruler of the dark months of winter, while the oak was the ruler of the lighter summer months. / Christians have adopted the holly tree as a symbol for Christmas. The sharp leaves are said to symbolize the crown of thorns worn by Christ, while the berries represent his blood.

Don't forget to share with us any of your photos of projects or activities from this newsletter. Socks would especially like to see how you school or class used the bio-diversity kits and photos examples will feature in our next newsletter. You can share any photos with us via email, facebook or instagram.

Outstanding!

DUNDALK TIDY TOWNS



AUTUMN / WINTER EDITION 2022



We have some fantastic biodiversity kits available for our local schools, filled with lots of interesting and exciting seeds, feeders and wildflowers. These have been provided to help you begin your own classroom or school biodiversity corner. What better way to bring nature closer to the classroom.



We are delighted to have won our 13th Gold Medal at the recent Supervalu Tidy Towns Awards.

WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN / WINTER EDITION OF OUR DUNDALK TIDY TOWNS NEWSLETTER FOCUSING ON BIODIVERSITY AS WELL AS SOME INTERESTING TOPICS AND INFORMATION FOR THIS END OF YEAR SEASON.



AT BAY ESTATE

Continuing on from our last newsletter edition and our feature focus on 'all things butterflies', we just wanted to let you know about the exciting butterfly spaces we are creating at Bay Estate. These planted beds will be stunning next year and will be filled with colour and a variety of plants that will attract some beautiful insects and butterflies for everyone to enjoy.



PLANTED BEDS FOR BUTTERFLIES AT BAY ESTATE

FACT:

DUNDALK TIDY TOWNS HAVE COLLECTED 460 BAGS OF RUBBISH SO FAR THIS YEAR.



A HUGE THANK YOU TO POBAL FOR SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT.

SOME NATIVE IRISH BIRDS

BIRDS ARE ONE OF THE MOST DELIGHTFUL PARTS OF BIODIVERSITY! FROM THE WONDERFUL SWALLOWS THAT VISIT US IN SUMMER TO THE LOVELY ROBINS THAT SING TO US THROUGH THE COLDEST DAYS OF WINTER. BIRDS ARE SUCH A WELCOME VISITOR TO ANY SCHOOL. IT IS IMPORTANT TOO TO LOOK AFTER OUR SMALL NATIVE BIRDS OVER THE WINTER.



CHAFFINCH



BLUE TIT



STARLING



MAGPIE



WREN



HOUSE SPARROW



BUILDING A BETTER HABITAT

BUG HOTELS ARE FUN

HOW CAN WE HELP IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY

CREATE A WILD SCHOOL GARDEN

THERE IS NO SPACE TOO SMALL FOR A GARDEN WILDFLOWER PATCH. EVEN A LARGE CONTAINER IS FINE IF SPACE IS TIGHT. WHEN CHOOSING YOUR SEED ENSURE TO ONLY BUY NATIVE IRISH WILDFLOWER SEED. ALSO, PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT PLANTING WILDFLOWER SEED ISN'T ALWAYS NECESSARY AND SIMPLY LETTING YOUR EXISTING GRASS GROW CAN BE JUST AS EFFECTIVE. SOME NATIVE IRISH SEEDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM US.

(BIODIVERSITY KIT - WILDFLOWER SEEDS)

CREATE A HOME FOR INSECTS

BUG HOTELS HAVE GROWN IN POPULARITY OVER RECENT YEARS AS WE'VE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE PLIGHT OF POLLINATORS AND THE NEED TO PROTECT AND ENCOURAGE THEM. CREATING BUG FRIENDLY SPACES IS VERY IMPORTANT AND DECAYING WOOD PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT HABITAT TO A RANGE OF SPECIALIST WILDLIFE THAT IS GROWING INCREASINGLY UNCOMMON IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, SUCH AS STAG AND BARK BEETLES AS WELL AS MANY SPECIES OF FUNGI.

(BIODIVERSITY KIT - BUG HOTEL)

PLANT NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS:

Grow a range of trees, shrubs and climbers, or a mixed hedge to provide food and shelter. As well as providing food in the form of flowers, fruits and seeds, they provide cover and nesting sites for garden animals; from insects to larger species such as birds. Examples include Rowan, Crab apple, Elder, Holly, Blackthorn and Hawthorn.

MAKE A ROCK GARDEN: Rock gardens attract specialised wildlife such as mason bees, which are important pollinators.

CREATE WILDLIFE HABITATS

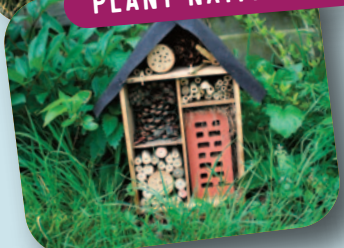
PLANT NATIVE WILD FLOWERS

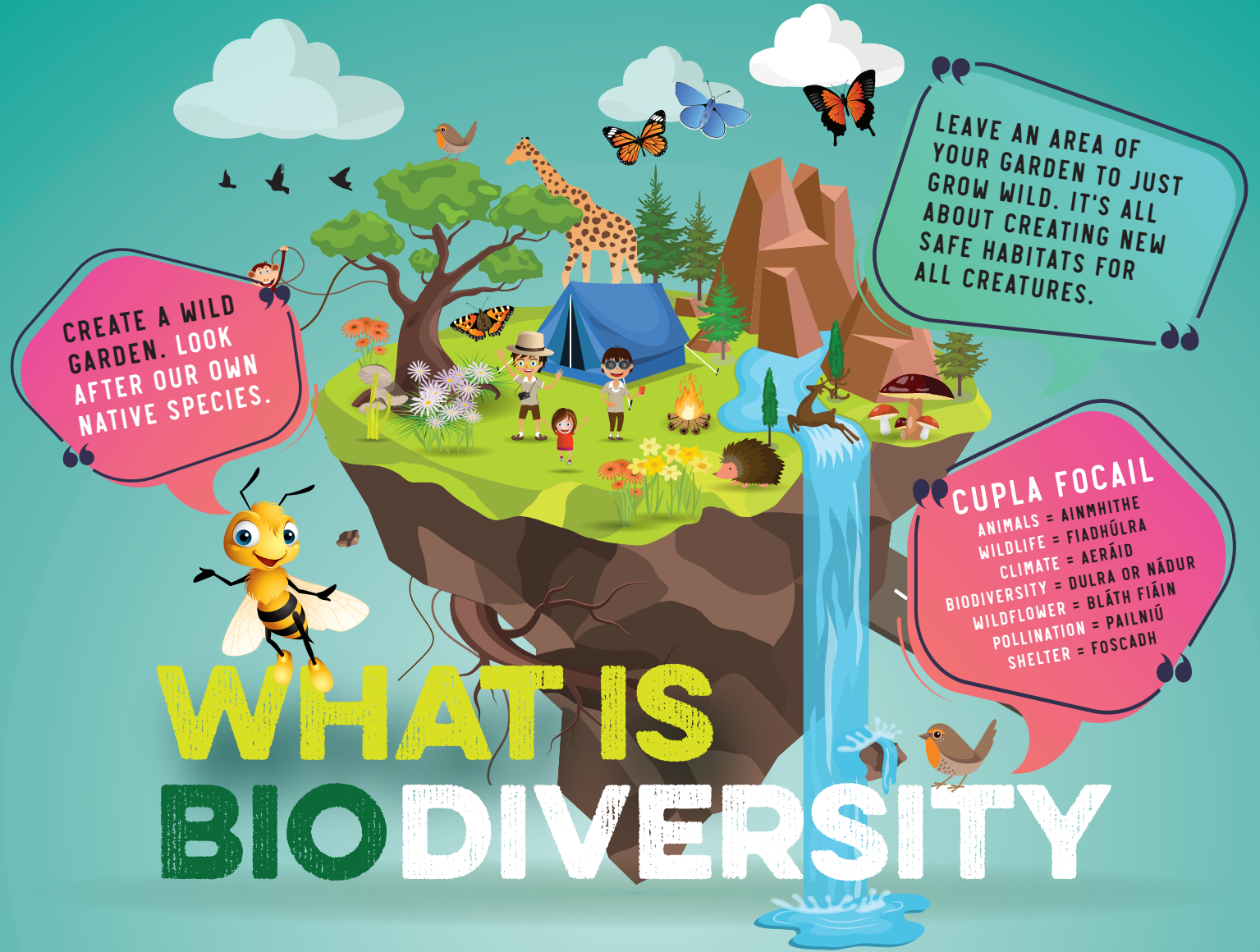
PLANTING POLLINATOR FRIENDLY FLOWERS: Flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects that perform the vital task of fertilisation - seed and fruit production would drop dramatically without them. Choose plants that provide pollen and nectar for as long a season as possible. (BIODIVERSITY KIT - CROCUS BULBS).

ENCOURAGE WILDLIFE INTO YOUR GARDEN:

- * Encourage wildlife into your garden birds by feeding the birds.
- * Hang bird feeders in view of a window so you can enjoy the different types of birds that visit the garden
- * Keep food fresh and offer a mix of food including peanuts, sunflower seeds, seed mixes, coconut and fat balls.
- * Don't forget that a supply of clean, unfrozen water is just as vital for our feathered visitors
- * Keep out of reach of any cats.

(BIODIVERSITY KIT- BIRD FEEDER / BIRDHOUSE / BIRD SEED)





CREATE A WILD GARDEN. LOOK AFTER OUR OWN NATIVE SPECIES.

LEAVE AN AREA OF YOUR GARDEN TO JUST GROW WILD. IT'S ALL ABOUT CREATING NEW SAFE HABITATS FOR ALL CREATURES.

CUPLA FOCAIL
 ANIMALS = AINMHITHE
 WILDLIFE = FIADHÚLRA
 CLIMATE = AERÁID
 BIODIVERSITY = DULRA OR NÁDUR
 WILDFLOWER = BLÁTH FIÁIN
 POLLINATION = PAILNIÚ
 SHELTER = FOSCADH

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY

'BIO' MEANS LIFE AND 'DIVERSITY' MEANING VARIABILITY

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive: food, clean water, medicine, and shelter.

WHY IS BIODIVERSITY IN DANGER?

Since 1970, populations of the earth's wildlife have decreased by 68%. Just think about that - 68%! This includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Why is this happening? The main reasons are:

HABITAT LOSS is when a species loses its home. This can happen in many different habitats but a common example is when forests are cut down. This is called deforestation and it's happening at a shocking rate. Globally, one acre of forest is lost every single second. This is the same as an area the size of Croke Park every 3 seconds.

An **INVASIVE SPECIES** is one that invades a habitat and causes harm. There are dozens of other invasive plants and animals across Ireland damaging native populations and costing around €200m to the Irish economy every year.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists have studied the earth's climate for years, and have realised that we were burning way too much coal, oil and gas to make energy. We have released too much carbon dioxide gas into the atmosphere as a result of burning these fossil fuels, and these gases, are called greenhouse gases as they contribute to the greenhouse effect by trapping heat within the earth's atmosphere. Our human activities have increased carbon dioxide levels by 45% which has resulted in a global temperature increase of about 1 degree celsius. Although it might not sound like a lot it has started to change our climate and weather. Plants and animals are finding it hard to deal with this change and will struggle to survive in their changing habitats.

POPULATION GROWTH

Every day the world's population grows by 246,015 people. That equals 171 extra people every single minute. Just like us they require the basics like food, water and somewhere to live. However, the more room us humans take up, the less space biodiversity has. Quite often biodiversity loses out as we build more houses, roads, schools, farms and factories.

POLLUTION

Pollution is anything we add to the environment that makes it unhealthy. It can come in many different forms and affect different parts of the environment such as land, sea or air. A type of pollution that scientists are becoming increasingly worried about are plastics. It's estimated that up to 13m tonnes of plastics enter the sea every year. A single drinks bottle can take up to 450 years to decay, and unbelievably, we buy 20,000 of these bottles every single second around the world.

EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is basically being greedy. It's what happens when we act in an unsustainable manner and take too much from biodiversity, resulting in its collapse. This could be taking too many fish from the sea before letting their population recover, cutting down too many trees without planting more or hunting endangered species.

ENCOURAGE BIODIVERSITY INTO YOUR GARDEN OR SCHOOL - ELEMENTS OF YOUR BIODIVERSITY KIT WILL HELP YOU ACHIEVE THIS!