

Supergrounds Project Guide Chapter 12

How to use this activity:

If you are creating a wildflower area as part of your Supergrounds project then use this activity first to find out what is already growing in the grounds and then to come up with a suitable planting list for your revitalised area.

Aimed at:

- Older pupils
- Teachers
- School grounds professionals

Curriculum focus:

- ICT – searching for information using the Internet
- Science – living things in their environment
- Environmental Studies – living things and processes of life

Purpose of the activity:

- To use simple survey or sampling techniques
- To use an online database to search for information
- To practise Internet search skills

Equipment and preparation:

- Having decided to create a wildflower area, and chosen a suitable location, the school will need to consider how the creation of the wildflower area will affect the grounds maintenance contract. Initial survey work of the area should have been carried out to determine what type of soil the area has, whether it is well drained or damp, and how sunny the area is
- Pupils will need Internet access. They could also use a spreadsheet or database program to record the information they collect. Pupils could present their final decisions using word-processing, desktop publishing or PowerPoint
- Quadrats will be useful for marking out sample areas for the plant surveys, or you could mark out squares using pegs and string
- You may need to arrange for an area of grassland to be left uncut for a few weeks to help you to identify the wild plants

What to do:

- Pupils should be introduced to why native plant species are important – this could be as part of Science work on food chains
- Pupils should carry out plant surveys in different parts of the grounds. Ensure that pupils wash their hands thoroughly after handling the materials. Alternatively, they could wear disposable gloves. Check hands for cuts prior to starting the activity. Avoid areas frequented by dogs! Different groups of students should survey different areas, and their data be combined
- Record the data in a format appropriate to your pupils. Pupils could also use books or the Internet to find out more about the plants
- Using the website given, pupils should choose some examples of plants native to the local area (defined by postcode). They should choose which plants they would like to grow in your wildflowers area. This task can be made more challenging by requiring pupils to think about the soil and situation requirements of each plant, and only choosing those which are suitable for your site
- Pupils should explain to the rest of the class what plants they have chosen and why. This could be verbally, or using word-processing, desktop publishing or PowerPoint
- Pupils could also investigate where you could get plants and seeds from. Sites to try include:

www.wildflowers.co.uk

www.wildflower.org.uk

www.reallywildflowers.co.uk

Follow up:

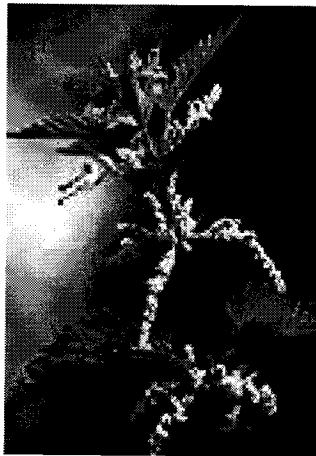
- Having done the research, pupils should be involved in planting and maintaining the wildflower area
- It is worth approaching suppliers to see if they will give you a discount, or even free seeds – they are bound to be impressed by the work your pupils have done!
- Pupils could go on to investigate why different parts of the grounds support different populations of wildflowers. They could also investigate whether areas with more native plants support greater insect populations

Researching a Wildflower Area



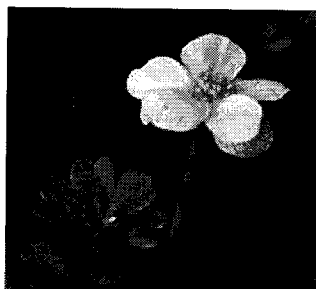
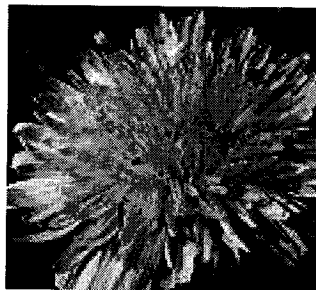
What have we already got?

- Measure a 1 metre square on the grass
- How many different types of plant can you find? Draw or photograph each type
- How many of each type can you find
- Make a chart to show what you have found



What could we have?

- Go to www.nhm.ac.uk/science/projects/fff
- In the Instant Search box type in the first part of your school's postcode and click Search
- The site will give you a list of wild plants that naturally grow in your area – native plants. Click on the names to get more information. You can also see pictures of ones marked with a **P**
- Choose 10 plants you would like to introduce to your wildflower area
- Explain to the rest of your class why you have chosen these plants



The Postcode Plants Database

Visit **Exploring biodiversity** - our new interactive education site

Introduction Search menu Instant Search: Enter first section of UK postcode. [Search] by SW7 5SD, UK

Database information News

Native species checklists Links

Sponsors & credits Nectar trials Native plant & seed suppliers

Go to NHM Botany Department homepage Email Flora-for-Fauna

The database is being compiled by Mike Sadleir and Deborah-Jayne Cassing, under the supervision of Professor Chris Humphries and co-ordinated by Jill Duchess of Hamilton. Programming by djinks

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