

**Outdoor &
Woodland
Learning**
SCOTLAND



Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland Bulletin **May 2015**

OWL Scotland is dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning.

Learning outdoors, be in in playgrounds, towns, cities, parks or our stunning natural environments, actively engages young people and connects their broader learning with the world around them.

OWL Scotland is supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and evolved out of the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) which has run successfully for over 20 years.

Nationally OWL Scotland supports outdoor and woodland learning for local OWL groups through provision of:

- **grants**
- **resources**
- **advice**
- **training**
- **networking opportunities**

OWLScotland Update:

Welcome to the new format OWL Scotland bulletin which is adapted from the Outdoor Learning Wales bulletin – thank you to OLW for letting us share their bulletin! If you have items for inclusion in the bulletin please send them to Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

OWL Scotland Launch – a smash!

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland was officially launch on 24th April at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as part of an OWL Scotland networking day. The launch was marked by a Silva the Owl Piñata being burst open to reveal OWL Scotland goodies. We were thrilled to have children from both Dregghorn Primary School and Dingwall Academy along to give us presentations on their outdoor projects, and we had excellent workshops on everything from Soils to Literacy in the outdoors. A full report will be available on the website. www.owlscotland.org

We were delighted to have the press along and appear on the national news as well as Radio Scotland.



OWL Scotland gets launched by Silva the owl.

Edinburgh OWL Group Launch

Edinburgh OWL Scotland group launched on Saturday .The focus of the event was 'Make Space for two's' and how you can engage the really early years with the outdoors. Jan White, early years consultant gave a fascinating keynote talk on 'Meeting the Needs of Two Year-olds Through Play Outdoors and in Nature' and this was followed by a superb choice of workshops; including gardening spaces, mud kitchens, art, music and minibeasts. The location, Cramond Kirk, was a cracking venue, with wonderful coffee and catering. The 60 or so participants were wonderful, totally engaged, and came with great spirit and enthusiasm and thanks for coming on a Saturday. Thanks to the OWLS group members and City of Edinburgh Council colleagues in the group for a great day. Oh and thanks to the weather too as the rain blew away and the sun shone!

Courses and Events:

There are a number of local OWL group launch events being planned. Argyll and Tayside Dates to be confirmed. East Lothian OWL group will be launched on 5th September. See [the website](#) for further details.



We are working on this year's series of CLPL courses which will include courses on Soils (for International Year of Soils), Fun with Fungi, Gaelic Tree Stories and more... More details to follow.

– If you would like to host one of these or have ideas or contacts to help run them please get in touch.

Quote of the month

"The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice."
Peggy O'Mara

Fact of the Month

Did you know owls can't move their eyes from side to side?

Collective noun of the month

A graft of tree surgeons

Activity of the Month

Clay Leaf Impressions

You can do this activity outside using air drying clay, plasticine or even mud!

Collect interesting leaves and flowers. Consider the impact on the local environment while you do this.

Shape your medium of choice and place on a flat surface. Apply your leaf or flower. You can experiment with how to make the best impression from pressing with hands to placing a bit of cloth and using a rolling pin.

If you are using air drying clay you could get creative with paint or make a pendant from the finished product



Plant of the Month

Cow Parsley / Anthriscus sylvestris

This is a short lived herbaceous plant belonging to the parsley family and are related to other plants from the Apiaceae family such as carrot, parsley, hogweed and hemlock.

These plants are also known as Wild Beaked Parsley, Wild Chervil, Queen Anne's lace and Keck. They are often called Mother-die especially in the United Kingdom. It is a native of various parts of Europe, Asia and Africa

These herbaceous plants have an attractive appearance with dark green leaves and small white flowers. They are among the most commonly seen plants in British countryside and grows to about 60 and 170 cm in height. The Stem is a hollow, slightly hairy branching into umbrella like flower clusters with small white flowers.

The triangular tripinnate leaves grow between 15 and 30 cm in length with ovate and subdivided leaflets.

These fern like leaves grow directly from the stems. They bear 6 mm long smooth lanceolate fruits.



These attractive plants are popularly grown for decorative purposes in wild flower gardens and as a companion plant for various types of ornamental grasses. They are cultivated as hardy biennials or short lived perennials.

Full sunlight is ideal for their proper growth.

However, these biennial plants also grow well under light shade. Warm temperate climates are ideal for them to grow properly.

These herbal medicinal plants have numerous health benefits to offer:

- The leaves and stems of Cow Parsley have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, anti-epileptic, antiviral and fungistat properties.
- The expectorant properties of these herbs make them beneficial for cough, cold and asthma.
- These plants are also believed to be able to prevent cancer.
- These anti-depressant, anti-anxiety and anti-stress herbs are beneficial for insomnia and sleeplessness.
- They are believed to be able to fight infertility
- Various researches show these plants to have the potential for working as an alternate medicine for various health disorders such as alzheimer's disease, crohn's disease, parkinson's disease.
- They are also beneficial for diabetes and leukemia.

These herbal plants are quite rich in various nutrients that help in the growth and immunity of human body. The leaves, flowers, stems and roots are used for various culinary and medicinal purposes. The leaves are widely used as herb despite having a strong and unpleasant aroma resembling that of carrot.

- These edible leaves are used in cooking as herbs.
- Cooked roots of these edible plants are consumed as food.
- The common name of these herbal plants Wild Chervil denotes that they are sometimes used as a substitute for the cultivated herb called Chervil even though they have a stronger aroma.
- Dried leaves of this plant are used for making herbal tea.

Other Uses

- A brilliant green dye can be obtained from the leaves and stems of Wild Chervil.
- This herb is directly applied to skin as a mosquito repellent.

There are no known side effects of using this herb in moderate amounts. However, they can cause different side effects in some people. One should be very careful while selecting and using the fernlike leaves of these herbal plants, as they look very similar to another poisonous species.

- The Cow Parsley seeds should not be planted around common carrot seeds as they ruin the carrot seeds by hybridizing with them.

www.onlyfoods.net

Recipe of the month

Wild Garlic Pesto

1 large bunch of wild garlic, washed
1 small bunch of curly parsley, washed
60gms pine nuts, toasted



60gms parmesan cheese
150mls olive oil (I mixed half extra virgin, half normal)
Squeeze of lemon juice
Salt and pepper

Place all the ingredients into a food processor apart from the olive oil and blitz for a minute or two then slowly pour in the olive oil until blended. Use for pasta, mash, dipping etc.

www.greatbritishchefs.com

Species of the Month

Hoverfly

Hover Flies (known in America as Flower Flies) belong to a large family of small to big flies. They are true flies or Diptera, with only one pair of wings in the Family Syrphidae. (Wasps and bees have two pairs). Although these brightly-coloured insects look like bees or wasps, they do not sting.

Hoverflies are excellent examples of Batesian mimicry (named after H W Bates who first described it in 1862). They generally mimic bees and wasps – insects that sting and also taste unpleasant, so are avoided by predators. Drone-flies mimic honey bees, *Volucella Bombylans* has several different forms mimicking bumblebees, while others species are very convincing wasp mimics.

In Britain there are about 270 species are known at present, but significant species and numbers can migrate.

Hoverflies have spots, bands or stripes, of yellow, brown against a dark-coloured background, sometimes with dense hair covering the body surface (emulating furry bumble bees). Their fast flight, motionless flight and, in some species, their size are astonishing feats. Some Hovers are among the biggest flies of Central Europe. Many species are very colorful. It is not always that easy to identify hover flies. Some thick-headed flies and bee flies are similar and dark coloration makes it hard to identify them correctly at a glance. Bee flies tend to be longer hairy, have snouts and are a study in themselves! The Marmalade Fly is one of the most common hoverflies to be seen in the garden. The distinctive double stripes on the abdomen make it almost unmistakable.

Hovering is a specialty although other flies can also hover - the head of the insect remains absolutely still whilst in flight.

Many are seen in the summer season in number mixing with butterflies, bees, bumble bees and other flower dependent insects. Male Hovers tend to emerge and mature first, earlier in the season to ensure reproduction is successful. The degrees to which they contribute to pollination are also ironically poorly investigated but no doubt are important for Carrot, Onion and fruit Trees.

You can generally see plenty of adults on flowers throughout spring, summer and autumn. Hoverfly larvae are varied too – some even resemble small slugs. They all have different feeding habits. Adults eat drink nectar and eat pollen and honeydew. Some species feed on dead insects. The larvae of different species eat different things. Some eat aphids. Some may eat plants; feed on rotting wood and fungi, attack bulbs or parasitise other insects. They may be seen "nectaring" on many wild and garden flowers where they are amongst the most frequent of visitors

They can be seen between March and November, depending on the species. Hovering near and resting on flowers. Many seem prone to entering conservatories and greenhouses.

This group is a useful indicator for evaluating site ecology, being a day active, with a varied range of larval habitat specialisations

www.rspb.org.uk
www.microscopy-uk.org.uk

Landscape of the Month

Marine Protection

Our seas are home to some of the best marine wildlife in Europe, with a wide diversity of underwater habitats and species. Many of our marine habitats and species are particularly rare and therefore of international importance.

Marine reserves aim to protect habitats and species in our seas by contributing to an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas. The marine environment is coming under increasing pressure from human activity, which can damage and further threaten marine ecosystems.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are places at sea where human activities such as fishing are restricted. They are a tried and tested means of conserving habitats and wildlife at sea and there are many around the world.

MPAs don't just protect wildlife. They can have an influence beyond their boundaries, as growing wildlife populations spill out into the surrounding (non-protected) sea. In the UK there is a well-researched example of this at Lundy in the Bristol Channel where lobster in a 'no-take' zone were growing to be larger than those in the surrounding fished area as they were protected from fishing. Eventually the lobsters in the surrounding fished area became larger as they spread out from the area excluded to fishing.

If they are in the right place and part of a wider well-managed network of protected areas, MPAs can bring even greater benefits; improving the overall health of the marine environment and helping it recover from past impacts and sustain current pressures – living seas.

To achieve this, MPA networks must protect not just rare and threatened wildlife, but the whole range of 'typical' habitats and wildlife found in healthy seas. For us in the UK this includes habitats like our cold water reefs, sea grass meadows, kelp forests and sandy, gravelling or muddy sea floors.

In the UK Marine Protected Areas is the name we give to all types of protected area at sea.

However there are a number of different sites which make up our network of MPAs.

Marine protected areas are any area of sea, seabed or shore reserved by law or other means for the protection of the environment within. In Wales this includes:

- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Ramsar Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Marine Nature Reserve

By protecting our marine environment now, we can ensure that our seas, which are a common resource, will continue to contribute to our society for generations to come. [Further information](#) can be found here.

Other News:

House Martin Count Survey 2015

This will involve volunteers visiting 2,000–3,000 'random' (i.e. pre-selected) 1-km squares throughout the UK.

By surveying random squares, we will be able to assume that our results are representative across a wider area, and produce a robust population estimate against which changes in the future can be measured.

How can I help?

We need volunteers who are willing to carry out two or three visits to a 1-km square between late May and mid-July, to look for House Martins and their nests.

Contact: <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-survey-2015>

Muddy Faces

Free "frog activities" information download

I hope our free froggy download will help to inspire you with some ideas. It includes frog pebble painting, making a clay frog, together with some songs and interesting links. As well as offering 10% off products in our Living World section, we are also offering 10% off our Gardening resources too (with code FRG15N). Have you a garden or school pond with spawn? Freshwater Habitats Trust needs your help. Why not take part in this year's Big Spawn Count by counting the number of spawn present and record your findings.

Contacts: www.muddyfaces.co.uk

BBC Wildlife

BBC Wildlife is on the hunt for schools that are leading the way in natural-history education. Our new Schools' Digital Wildlife Award will celebrate the most innovative teachers and the most enthusiastic classrooms around the country. We are asking classes to submit a digital presentation from the classroom. It could be in the form of a three-minute video or a concise Prezi-style presentation that can combine words, video and pictures. As long as the presentation relates to wildlife, you can choose any topic you like. In fact we'd like you to be as creative as possible when deciding your theme, but we've suggested some ideas below to help you get started. Your school wildlife zone -Your digital project could focus on your school's wildlife zone, reporting on the different species that live there, the behaviour you've seen and any seasonal changes. International conservation -You could report on a conservation issue somewhere in the world using research that has been discussed in the classroom – anywhere from Africa to the Antarctic, from rainforest to desert. Species-specific - Whether you've been studying birds, mammals, ocean wildlife or invertebrates, you can create a presentation that looks at groups of animals or even just a single species. Local wildlife Report on a wildlife reserve nearby, local conservation efforts or a specific species that is found in your area.

Contact: <http://www.discoverwildlife.com/competition/schools-digital-wildlife-award-2015-call-entries>

Contact Us:

To contact your local OWL group please go to the [OWL Scotland website](#)

Or contact us:

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Join us on Facebook – “Forest Education Initiative” group (we have over 3000 members so were unable to change from our original name!)

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