National Trust

SPECIES SURVIVAL FUND

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WEST CUMBRIA RIVERS TRUST

Bridekirk Dovenby School Annual Management Plan



Transforming school outdoor spaces into a natural learning environment



We hope you enjoy your new wildlife area as much as we enjoyed working with you to create it!

Your management plan is shown in the tables in **Section 1** and has every area we have worked on, and the essential tasks to maintain it with the children each term.

There are also links to cross-curricula ideas for practical sessions to enrich the children's learning; we have printed off a selection of some of the best must-do activities.

https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk for wildlife friendly gardening tips and newsletter and https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/school-gardening for free teaching resources, online training courses and there is an awards scheme too. Another fantastic resource full of free outdoor learning opportunities is here

Section 1: Management plan per term

Autumn term (September to Christmas)

Area	Tasks	Curriculum Links	Troubleshooting
Raised Beds 	Shrubs: • Cut back lightly if getting too big • Clear fallen leaves from the base • Add mulch to protect roots and retain moisture Perennials & Wildflowers: • Cut down old plants and compost the cuttings • Collect seeds to sow next year and store in a cool dry place • Leave some seed heads for the birds Bulbs in Pots: • Let foliage die back naturally (if not already done in summer) • Check pots for drainage and top up with mulch (only if dry) General Maintenance: • Weed all beds and compost	Autumn plant ID Add more bulbs and learn about their lifecycle	
Bug Hotel 	• General check in September; replace any wet bits • Winter; disturb as little as possible for hibernating/sheltering residents (Contents need replacing every 2 years, see section 3)	Make more bug hotels	
Compost Bin 	• Add dead leaves as winter approaches • Add weeds and grass cuttings • Add some cardboard/shredded paper in layers between the green waste • Keep the lid on to stay dry • Turn or mix the compost once each half term • No food waste yet (first year)	Start your compost journey in September Spread the word in school that you have a compost bin in its first year, make it a project for the gardening/wildlife group?	Too wet & smelly, add more browns; cardboard, empty loo rolls, dry leaves
Other Autumn Term Activities	• Seed Gathering Season, Sept–Oct treecouncil.org.uk • Recycling Week, late September recyclenow.com • Green Careers Week, early November greencareersweek.com • Outdoor Classroom Day, early November outdoorclassroomday.org.uk	Woodland Trust's Outdoor Learning pack is full of more ideas	

Area	Tasks	Curriculum Links	Troubleshooting
Raised Beds 	Shrubs: • Cut off any dead or damaged branches • Add compost or mulch if the soil looks dry (use your own compost when it's ready) • Water during warm spells, especially from late March if no rain for 5–7 days Perennials & Wildflowers: • Tidy away old stems • Pull up weeds around emerging shoots • Water if newly planted or during dry spells from mid-March Bulbs in Pots: • Let leaves die back naturally – only cut back once they turn yellow • Check pots for moisture and water weekly during dry weather from mid-March General Maintenance: • Weed all beds and compost	Join the Edina Trust bulb project	No new growth – wait, might be overwintering Not sure if a plant is dead or just overwintering? Gently scratch the stem—if it's green underneath, it's alive.
Bug Hotel 	• Check all is still dry • Observe any residents • As little disturbance as possible	Do a minibeast hunt with ID sheet 1 and ID sheet 2 (keep results to compare to summer)	
Compost Bin	• Keep adding weeds, grass cuttings etc • Start adding a small amount of fruit and veg peelings (no cooked food) • Mix in torn cardboard or shredded paper • Turn or mix the compost once each half term • Keep the lid on to hold in warmth and stop it getting too wet	Continuing composting this term	
Other Spring Term Activities	• Join global recycling day 18th March annually • Do The Great Big School Clean in March/April		

Area	Tasks	Curriculum Links	Troubleshooting
Raised Beds 	Shrubs: • Cut off any dead or damaged branches • Add compost or mulch if the soil looks dry (use your own compost when it's ready) • Water during warm spells, especially from May onwards if no rain for 5–7 days Perennials & Wildflowers: • Deadhead faded flowers to encourage more blooms • Pull up weeds regularly • Water regularly (especially first year) during dry periods Bulbs in Pots: • Cut back leaves once they have fully turned yellow and dry • Water only if bulbs are still in active growth and the soil is dry General Maintenance: • Weed all beds regularly • Top up mulch if beds look dry and exposed	Search for ladybirds amongst your flowers Learn about Get Cumbria Buzzing Enter your school into Cumbria in Bloom	
Bug Hotel 	• Monitor use • Top up dry material	Do a minibeast hunt with ID sheet 1 and ID sheet 2 and compare to Spring	
Compost Bin 	• Keep adding weeds, grass cuttings, and garden waste • Add fruit and veg peelings regularly (no cooked food) • Mix in cardboard or paper to balance wet waste • Turn or mix the compost once each half term • Keep the lid on to keep in heat and stop it drying out	Keep composting through the summer term	
Other Summer Term Activities	• Cumbria Wild Watch, end of June: https://www.cbdc.org.uk/get-involved/cumbria-wild-watch/ • World Environment Day: 5th June worldenvironmentday.global • The Great Big Green Week; June greatbiggreenweek.com • Plastic Free July plasticfreejuly.org		

Section 2: Bug Hotel Makeover Guide

Every 2 years in September, your bug hotel needs a makeover to keep it safe and comfy for insects

Why do it in September?

- Most insects are finished nesting by late summer
- Hibernating insects haven't moved in yet
- New materials can settle and stay dry before bugs return

How to refresh your bug hotel:

- Carefully remove the wire mesh (it's stapled on)
- Empty out all the old contents and compost them
- Clean or replace bamboo tubes (you can drill them out)
- Add fresh, dry natural materials (twigs, pine cones, stems)
- Staple the mesh back on securely once it's refilled
- Check the structure is still sturdy and safe



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