

District Schools in Bloom 2020

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Competition guidelines

Thank you for entering the District Schools in Bloom 2020 competition! We hope you enjoy taking part, and once again the judges are looking forward to seeing all of the entries!

Why take part in District Schools in Bloom 2020?

The District Schools in Bloom 2020 competition provides an opportunity for pupils to get outdoors and discover the joy of gardening, as well as enabling them to learn and develop their gardening skills.

All the categories in this competition are also based on the theme of wildlife gardening. This will help pupils to understand the vital role that gardens play in providing habitats and refuge for nature and wildlife. Pupils will learn how to manage gardens for the benefit of wildlife, and how to create a wide range of habitats for a diversity of species.

The patchwork effect that gardens create is vast. This also plays a vital role as habitats continue to become lost and fragmented in the wider landscape, and as the impacts of climate change become more evident. No matter how small a garden may be, it can still be part of this patchwork, which helps to link urban green spaces with nature reserves and the wider countryside.

Categories

The categories that you can enter this year are below. You can enter as many of these categories as you wish:

- ✿ **Vibrant Vegetables**
- ✿ **Fabulous Flowers** (including the optional **Super Sunflower Challenge!**)
- ✿ **Scrapyard Scarecrow**
- ✿ **Water for Wildlife (*NEW*)**
- ✿ **Wonderful Wildlife**

This year, we also have an additional category called **Crafting Nature (*NEW*)**, which can be entered alongside one or more of the above categories, or on its own if you wish. Demonstrate your creative skills through natural art, and be a part of the **Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020!**



Judging guidelines

The judges are looking forward to visiting your school and seeing your entries during the first week in July (exact dates to be confirmed).

Judges will give **a total score out of 10** for each category entered. If your school has entered the competition before, the judges will be looking to see how your garden has developed since their last visit.

For those taking part in the **Super Sunflower Challenge**, the height of each sunflower will be measured during the judging week. This year, we are also asking entrants to re-measure their tallest sunflower at the beginning of September. **Please send us a photo of your sunflower being measured with a tape measure or other measuring tool. Please email your photo, along with the new measurement itself, to greenspaces@stalbens.gov.uk by Friday 18th September 2020 at the latest.** If we do not receive this in September, then the measurement taken by judges during the first week in July will be used for the competition.

All Winners and Runners-Up will be announced, and certificates and prizes will be presented, at the Awards Ceremony. This will be held on **Friday 25th September 2020, from 5:30pm to 7pm**, in the Council Chamber at the District Council Offices.

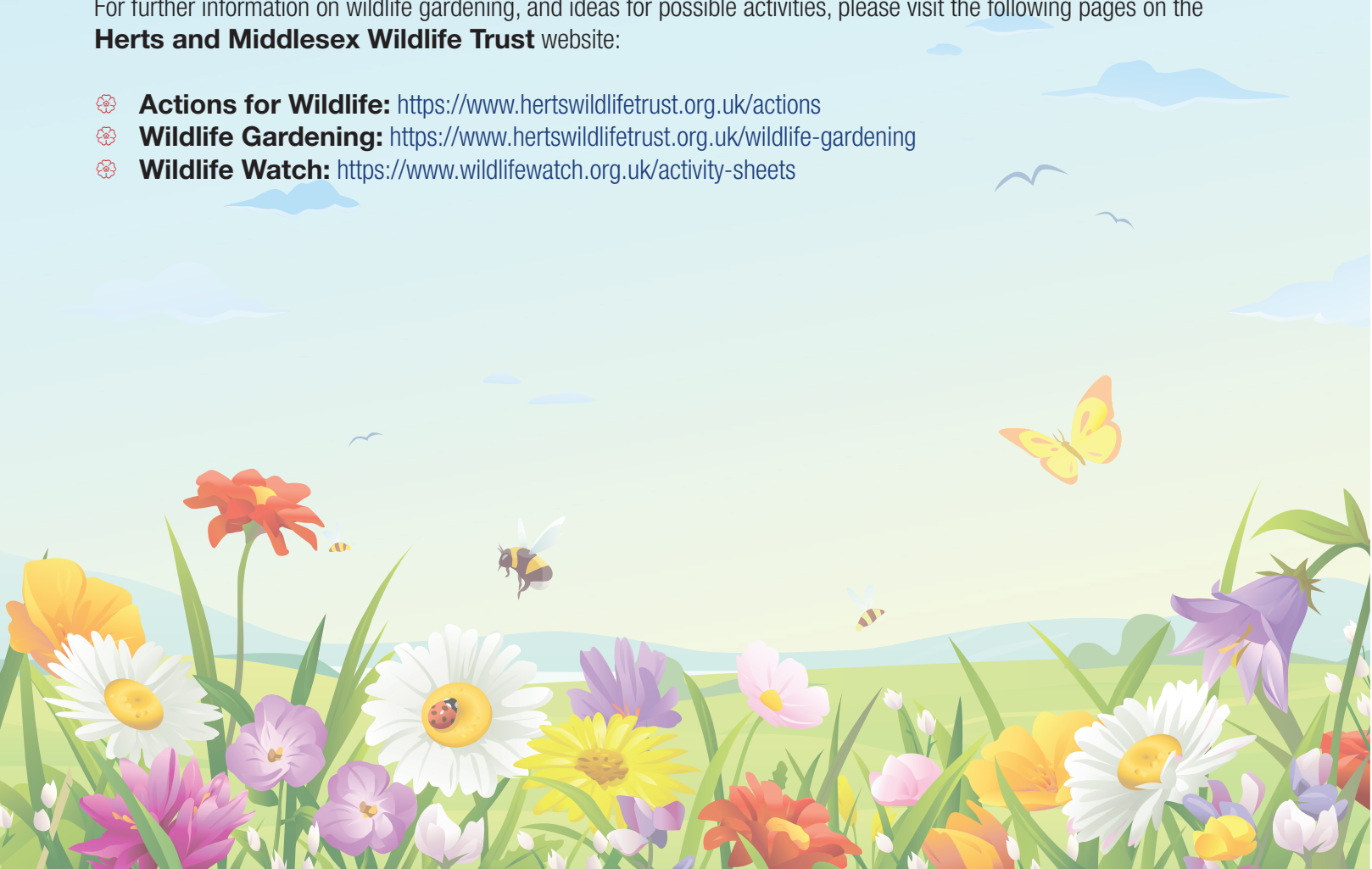
What the judges will be looking for in each category:

To help you with this year's competition, please see the competition guidelines overleaf. This will give you an idea of what the judges will be looking for.

For each category, we have suggested some possible wildlife gardening activities, as well as some environmental topics that you could cover with the pupils. We will be looking for one or more of these topics and/or activities in your entries.

For further information on wildlife gardening, and ideas for possible activities, please visit the following pages on the **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust** website:

- 🌸 **Actions for Wildlife:** <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/actions>
- 🌸 **Wildlife Gardening:** <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-gardening>
- 🌸 **Wildlife Watch:** <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets>



Fabulous Flowers

Pupils could:

- plan, plant and maintain a flower garden, or a small wildflower meadow
- learn about the parts, structure and purpose of a flower
- show the importance of flowers for food, seed production and pollination
- learn about the process of pollination, and grow the best flowering plants for pollinators and for wildlife
- grow plants from seed or cuttings, either directly in the soil or in pots, and look after them
- use organic pest control, rather than chemicals
- learn about the benefits of compost, and make compost from green waste and/or use compost to grow plants
- learn about the importance of sensory plants, both for wildlife and for people
- create a sensory garden, and identify the benefits of each plant within the garden
- demonstrate how water can be saved when growing and looking after flowers, by using water saving methods and/or equipment such as water butts
- make features or equipment from reused/recycled rubbish, to show how this can be used in a flower garden and/or wildflower meadow.

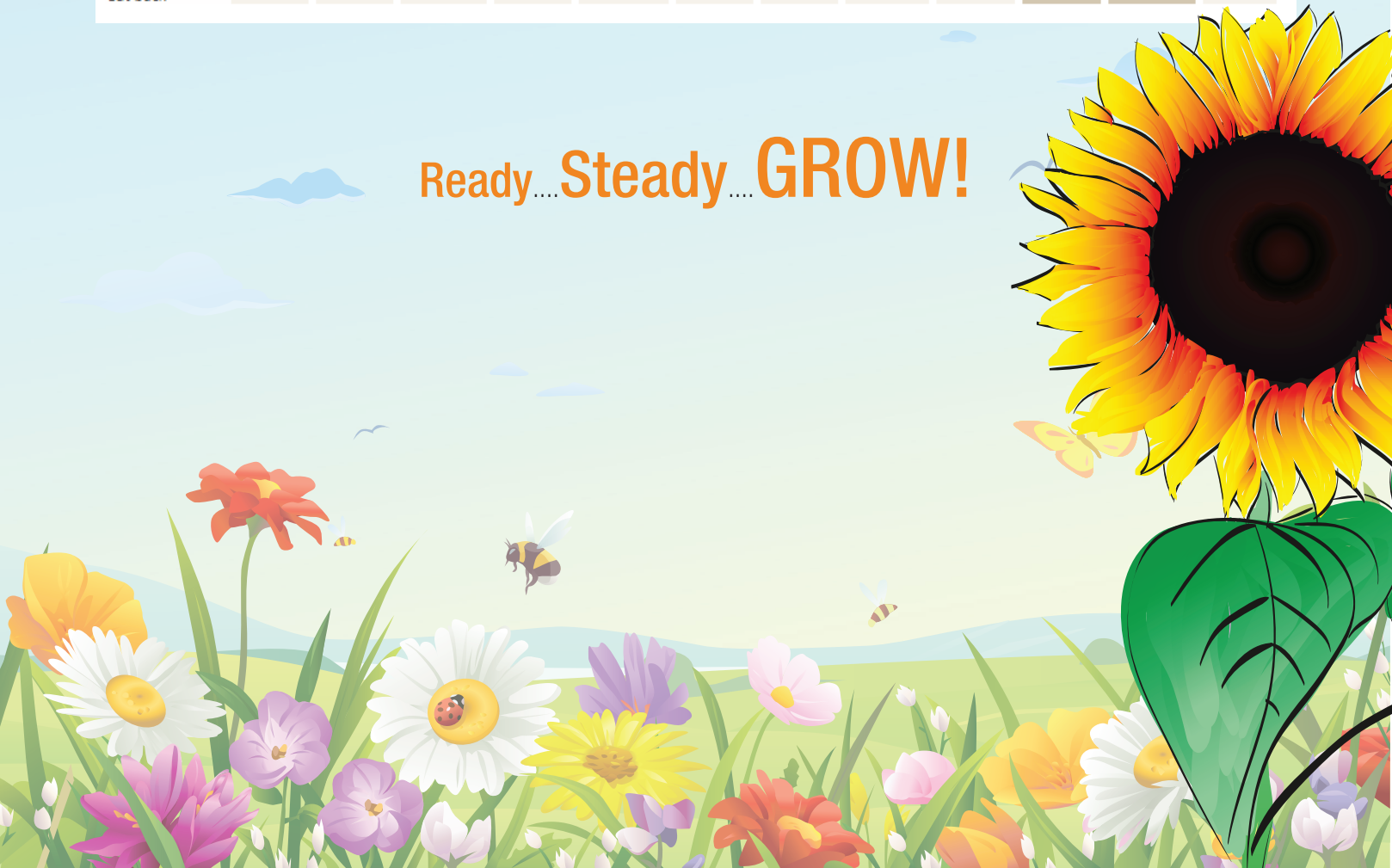
The Super Sunflower Challenge

We hope that you'll also take part in the optional **Super Sunflower Challenge!** The winner will be the school that can grow the tallest sunflower!

Please see below some tips on growing sunflowers, from the Gardeners' World website:
<https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to-grow-plants/how-to-grow-sunflowers/>

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sow												
Plant												
Flowers												
Cut back												

Ready....Steady....GROW!



Scrapyard Scarecrow

Pupils could:

- 🌸 learn about the concepts and benefits of reducing, re-using and recycling rubbish
- 🌸 learn about a topical environmental issue, such as plastic pollution or the impacts of landfill sites on the environment
- 🌸 use reused/recycled rubbish to build a scarecrow(s) based on an environmental theme, which demonstrates a good understanding of a topical environmental issue
- 🌸 demonstrate the horticultural benefits of scarecrows, perhaps by using the scarecrow to grow plants or vegetables!

🌸 *The more creative the scarecrow(s) the better!* 🌸

Vibrant Vegetables

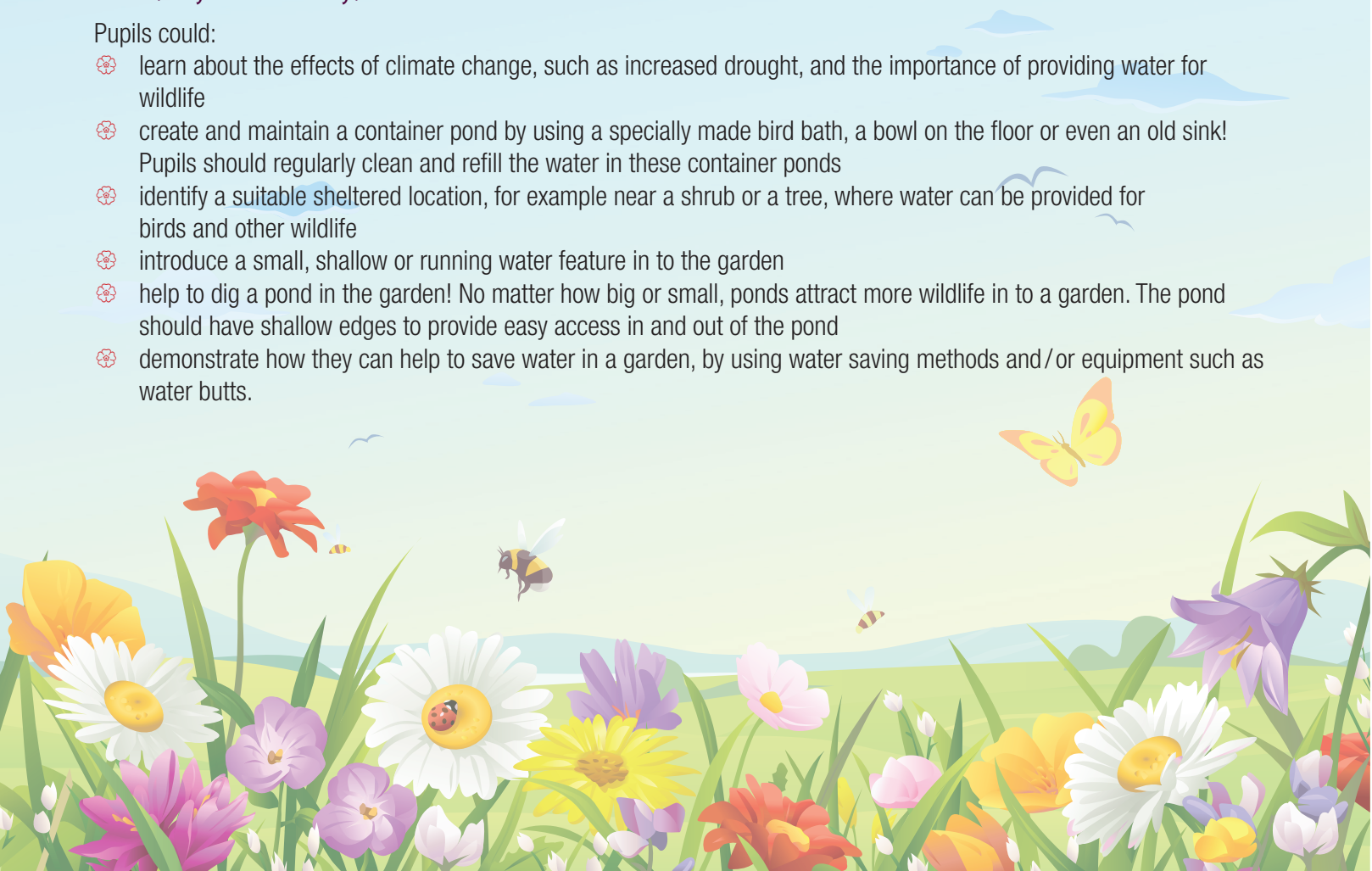
Pupils could:

- 🌸 learn about the process of growing vegetables, and how this can be done sympathetically with nature
- 🌸 plan, plant and maintain a vegetable garden
- 🌸 learn about the process of pollination, and select the best plants and flowers to attract wildlife and pollinating insects in to a vegetable garden
- 🌸 learn about the benefits of compost, and make compost from green waste and/or use compost to grow vegetables
- 🌸 use organic pest control, rather than chemicals
- 🌸 demonstrate how they can help to save water in a vegetable garden, by using water saving methods and/or equipment such as water butts
- 🌸 make features or equipment from reused/recycled rubbish, to show how this can be used to support vegetable growing
- 🌸 show how vegetable produce can be used – vegetables could be sold to raise money for the school, or perhaps they could be used in school meals and/or in cookery classes.

Water for Wildlife

Pupils could:

- 🌸 learn about the effects of climate change, such as increased drought, and the importance of providing water for wildlife
- 🌸 create and maintain a container pond by using a specially made bird bath, a bowl on the floor or even an old sink! Pupils should regularly clean and refill the water in these container ponds
- 🌸 identify a suitable sheltered location, for example near a shrub or a tree, where water can be provided for birds and other wildlife
- 🌸 introduce a small, shallow or running water feature in to the garden
- 🌸 help to dig a pond in the garden! No matter how big or small, ponds attract more wildlife in to a garden. The pond should have shallow edges to provide easy access in and out of the pond
- 🌸 demonstrate how they can help to save water in a garden, by using water saving methods and/or equipment such as water butts.



Wonderful Wildlife

Pupils could:

- 🌸 plan, plant and maintain a wildlife garden
- 🌸 show how a wildlife garden can support a diversity of species, by creating a range of habitats – these could include wild areas, water, dead wood and well established plants to support insects, small mammals and amphibians

Consider marvellous minibeasts!

- 🌸 learn about the importance and interdependence of invertebrates in an ecosystem
 - 🌸 create a range of habitats specifically for invertebrates – these could be artificial habitats, such as ‘Bug Hotels’, or natural habitats such as piles of logs / dead wood
 - 🌸 monitor invertebrates found in each of these habitats, possibly by carrying out regular ‘Minibeast Hunting’ activities or invertebrate surveys
 - 🌸 develop pupils’ invertebrate identification skills, perhaps using invertebrate identification sheets to help identify species.
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- 🌸 learn about the process of pollination, and grow the best flowering plants for pollinators and for wildlife
 - 🌸 grow plants from seed or cuttings, either directly in the soil or in pots, and look after them
 - 🌸 show how additional garden features or equipment can support wildlife – these could include bird feeders, bird tables, hedgehog boxes, bat boxes and / or features made from reused / recycled rubbish
 - 🌸 learn about the benefits of compost, and make compost from green waste and / or use compost to grow plants
 - 🌸 demonstrate how they can help to save water in a wildlife garden, by using water saving methods and / or equipment such as water butts.
 - 🌸 use organic pest control, rather than chemicals

Crafting Nature

We hope that you’ll also take part in our new additional category called **Crafting Nature**. This has been introduced as part of the **Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020!**

This is a natural art category! We are looking for the most creative piece of artwork made entirely from natural materials!
Get creative and be inspired by nature!

For further details on the **Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020!**, please see the following link:
<https://www.creativehertfordshire.com/resources/year-of-culture-2020/>

