



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh



Teddy Bears' Trail:

Plant Care Activity Pack

This pack has 4 activity cards with a variety of suggested activities on them that link to S.W.A.F. as often as possible to help your pupils remember this important message.

Activity cards in this pack are:

1. A Plant's Needs for Life [[Page 2](#)]
2. Caring for Plants [[Page 3-4](#)]
3. Plants in their Habitats [[Page 5-6](#)]
4. Growing Wildflowers [[Page 7-8](#)]



A Plant's Needs for Life

Key Statement: Plants need shelter, water, air and food (S.W.A.F.)

Activity Ideas:

- **Plant some seeds.** Hold a class discussion on the needs of plants and the things that your pupils will need to do to help their seed grow.
- Pupils could **make posters** on how to care for their seeds or create a display using a watering can, some soil, a picture of the sun, etc.
- **Read a storybook** such as 'Jasper's Beanstalk' by Nick Butterworth and Mark Inkpen (Early Year's – P1); 'Jack's Garden' by Henry Cole; 'Ten Seeds' by Ruth Brown. As well as looking at the growth of plants these books look at how other animals get food from plants and can introduce food chains.



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh



Caring for Plants

Key Statement: We can help plants grow

Activity Ideas:

- Using the seeds that they planted, pupils can **care for their plants** over a period of several weeks, observing how they develop and grow.
- Some groups could **experiment** with different types of shelters such as cloches made from lemonade bottles.
- **Experiment** with what seeds need to grow (germinate) by putting some seeds in the dark, cold, not watering, etc.
- At the end of the project, pupils are awarded a 'Plant Care Certificate' (included in the 'Additional Resources' section in the Teddy Bears' Trail online area).



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Examples of plants for the Caring for Plants activities might include:

- **Cress** - grow in a saucer on cotton wool on a windowsill or try making a [cress head](#)
- **Wildflowers**, e.g., bee-friendly plants - grow from seed in pots.
- **Salad crops** - grow in a pot, grow-bag or plot in the garden.
- **Pea shoots** – plant dried marrowfat peas (available in supermarkets) thickly into a pot or re-used strawberry/grape container. After a few weeks they will have grown shoots which you can cut with scissors and eat.
- **Peas, beans, sunflowers, etc.** - can be started off inside in pots, then planted out in the garden or sow the seed straight into the ground/outdoor container from May onwards.
- **Trees, e.g., fruit trees** - plant in the school grounds and provide with aftercare including watering, rabbit guards and a mulch of compost or chipped bark.



Plants in their Habitats



Key Statement: Plants obtain their needs from where they live

Activity Ideas:

- **Explore a natural area**, such as a local wood, park or churchyard or even your school grounds. Get pupils to look at and think about how the plants they see obtain the things they need.
- Once your pupils have discussed the needs of plants, **place coloured flags** or laminated S.W.A.F. letters near a chosen plant to show that their needs are available. **Take photos** as evidence.
- Back at school pupils can **draw** the trees and plants that they saw and attach labels to show how the needs of the plants are being met.



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Shelter (Green)

- This is a tricky one because plants are adapted to where they live so if they are growing in the right place they won't need shelter. You could think of it in terms of somewhere to live, e.g., in soil or climbing up a tree. Some plants provide shelter for each other, e.g., trees shelter understorey in woodland. Some plants, e.g., vegetables might need to be in a glasshouse or under a cloche made from lemonade bottles when it is very cold. We also might protect young trees with rabbit guards or deer fences.

Water (Blue)

- Watering thoroughly once or twice a week is better than a little every day. You can give them some dilute fertiliser every 2 weeks in the growing season. NOTE: this is not 'food' but gives the plant extra nutrients. Think of this in terms of our diets. Remember plants from the desert will need less water than plants from Scotland or other houseplants, many of which come from hot rainforest areas.

Air (Yellow)

- Plants give out oxygen which we need to survive but they need carbon dioxide that is breathed out by animals to make it. Perhaps this is a little complicated at this level, but it's good to know that we need them to survive at this basic level.

Food (Red)

- Plants make their food using energy from the sun mixed with water and carbon dioxide in their leaves through the process of photosynthesis. At this level it is good enough to know that plants can make their own food and don't need to eat like animals. Notes: Venus fly traps catch insects to 'eat' because they live in soils without much nutrient content, so these flies provide fertiliser.



Growing Wildflowers



Sow a plot or container with wildflower seeds to provide food for invertebrates. If you grow a wildflower meadow you should cut the grass twice a year – once at the end of autumn and once at the start of spring.

Once the wildflowers have established themselves they will provide food for many different kinds of insect.



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Plants to Encourage Wildlife

Here is a list of plants that can be grown in your school grounds to attract wildlife and 'useful insects' such as ladybirds that will eat garden 'pests' such as aphids. This information was produced by [Scottish Natural Heritage \(SNH\) Garden for Life](#)

Plants for a Wildlife-friendly Garden

Cornflowers	Herbs	Buddleia	Honesty	Native hedge
Bugle	Honeysuckle	Sunflowers	Scabious	Rowan
Sweet William	Ivy	Marigold	Fruit bushes	Fruit trees

Plants to attract pollinators, e.g., bees or hoverflies

Angelica	Borage	Chives	Love-in-a-mist
Geranium	Pot Marigolds	Poached Egg Plant	Dill

