



nature hero awards

Schools making a home for nature

Guide Booklet 2026/27

In partnership with
Glenveagh
Home of the new.



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Introduction

The Nature Hero Awards is Ireland's largest outdoor learning programme across the education sector open to all pre, primary, secondary and homeschools across Ireland*.

To achieve a Nature Hero Award is a mark of excellence for a school, recognising exceptional work by students, staff and the entire school community to help biodiversity and strengthen our relationship with nature. It is delivered by Biodiversity in Schools in partnership with Glenveagh Homes.

Three levels of achievement are available including Bronze Badger, Silver Stag and Golden Eagle, each celebrated with a wooden plaque of varying size. All levels recognise excellent work done for nature. We hope that every school will maintain their level, gradually achieve a higher level of award from year-to-year, and eventually maintain the highest standard.

As in previous years, there are also prizes available for a select number of schools, as are outlined on our website.

In addition to this booklet, you can find more information here:

www.biodiversityinschools.com/nature-hero-awards

*See T&Cs & Privacy Notice on website

General Guidelines

- The programme consists of many actions aimed at benefiting biodiversity, while also increasing student knowledge of, and interaction with, nature. Actions are grouped into sections: Creating Plans, Creating Habitats and Creating Heroes.
- The main focus of the programme is on participation and incremental improvements - Rome wasn't built in a day, and a forest doesn't grow in a year!
- All actions should have strong student involvement as far as possible - this will look different for every school and setting. This might involve bird identification, finding your Grandmother tree, or a project to count plant species in a no-mow meadow. Just remember, NHA isn't a to-do list for the caretaker!
- At the end of the year, send a completed Application Form and Walkthrough Video to us via email (more details below).
- If you complete a large number of actions (see 'Summary of NHA Programme') to a high standard, you may qualify for one of the following levels: Bronze Badger, Silver Stag or Golden Eagle. Remember, a Bronze Badger is a mark of excellence, and an achievement of which you can be proud.
- You can work towards an award over multiple years, and enter multiple years in a row - we actually encourage this, as working up to an award over a longer time will likely be more sustainable for you and your team.
- Overall, we want this programme to be a fun, helpful and structured way to boost biodiversity and connect your students to nature. It may take time to move through the levels but we're here to help every step of the way. Prizes are just a bonus and please remember not everyone can receive a prize - it's about doing our bit to help nature now, and instilling a love of it with children for the future.

Summary of the NHA programme



Register your school
September 2026



Complete your actions
Sept to April

Creating Plans	Creating Habitats	Creating Heroes
Complete all. 1. School habitat map (20pts)	Complete at least 6 of 13. 1. Bug hotels (5pts) 2. Solitary bee sites (5pts) 3. Low-mow meadows (10pts) 4. Superhero species (5pts) 5. Native woodlands (10pts) 6. Native hedgerows (10pts) 7. Water worlds (10pts) 8. Bird boxes (5pts) 9. Bird care stations (5pts) 10. Bat boxes (5pts) 11. Dead hedges (5pts) 12. Biod. in small/urban schools (5pts) 13. Control of invasive species (5pts)	Complete at least 1, 2 & 3. 1. Outdoor learning space (10pts) 2. Indoor learning (10pts) 3. Communication (10pts) 4. Community (5pts) 5. Buddy School (5 pts) 6. Other actions (10pts)



Submit your form & video

Closing dates:

Early bird 30th April 2027

Final deadline 28th May 2027



Results announced

September 2027

Awards immediately reopen.

What's new this year?

- ★ **Year of Pollinators - No More Pesticides!** : This year, we want to focus on reducing the harm that comes to our wildlife and habitats from the use of chemical pesticides (herbicides & insecticides). Last year we formalised a ban on pesticides, if a school is to be considered for a Nature Hero Award. This year we hope to raise this to an issue of national importance for all schools - **more info to follow, stay tuned!!** This is also a great opportunity to increase your areas of meadow, pollinator planting and solitary bee habitat - our ecosystem rests on plants and bugs, so let's do everything we can to save them!
- ★ **Buddy system:** Ecosystems function best when everything is working together. We'd like schools to try to work together with another school near them, so that they register for the programme (and ideally, do loads to help nature and achieve an award!). In this way, we can create joined up refuges for nature across the landscape. If your partner school registers for the NHAs for the first time or after a break away, you will both get extra points on your application (p24).
- ★ **New category:** As well as Buddies, we have also added a category on Invasive Species (See text for details - p21)
- ★ **Preschool Programme:** We're delighted to collaborate with Early Childhood Ireland to offer a free online course for its members on taking the initial steps towards the Nature Hero Award. Check out their website for more info:
www.earlychildhoodireland.ie

Other important info

★ **How to submit:** At the end of year, you send in a completed Submission Form and the Video Walkthrough (~5-10 mins, simple narration, no music/slideshows), by email. This greatly reduces the written requirements and the need for photos. The Submission Form is a slideshow format (Google Slides and Powerpoint are both available) - this can also be printed for your own use. The video requirements are detailed below. Both the Form and Video should be emailed together (video entries can alternatively be sent via Whatsapp, to 085 268 4762). Anyone experiencing technical difficulties can get assistance and every effort will be made to help you get your entry in successfully.

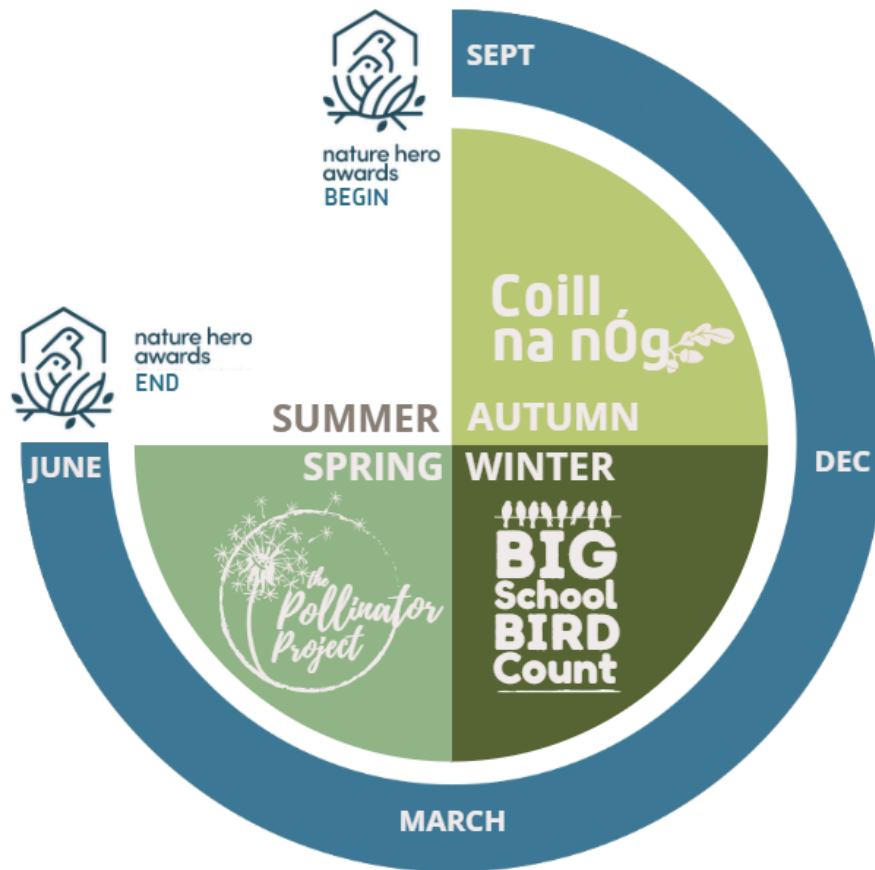
natureheroawards@biodiversityinschools.com

★ **Prizes:** There is a prize fund of €10,000. This will be won by outstanding schools* in different categories. The prizes, which are all to fund biodiversity improvements on your grounds, include:

- Overall National Winner - €5,000
- Best Preschool - €1,000
- Best Primary School - €1,000
- Best Secondary School - €1,000
- Spot prizes of €250 x8 for particularly good individual projects/worthy entries*

★ **Training webinars**  A series of webinars will be held on topics such as: Outdoor learning activities; Native trees and hedgerows; How to help pollinators; How to make a wildlife pond (topics are subject to change). A full schedule of these will be announced via email. 

★ For a range of free resources please check out our other programmes throughout the year: <https://www.biodiversityinschools.com/programmes>



*Main prizes not available to homeschools or schools in NI. See Terms and Conditions on our website. All judging decisions of Biodiversity in Schools are final.

Video walkthrough guidelines

Your video is the main way we will have to assess your work. It is designed to replace photo submissions (you are still allowed to submit 12 optional photos at the end of the form). It should be as short and as simple as possible. It's as easy as taking a Whatsapp video of your garden work to send to anyone you know. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- The video will be as short as possible to convey your work; ideally 5-10 minutes in total.
- The video will be taken with a reasonably good camera/ phone, walking through the school grounds, stopping to clearly show each project, with clear, simple narration¹. Please ensure to clearly show the full scope of your projects, e.g. a full overview of a no-mow meadow, all bird boxes, etc. If something is distant, in shadow, etc., we often cannot make it out when judging, so please be mindful to show things clearly (ideally check how it looks on a computer before sending).
- Keep to as few shots as possible, ideally all in one (cuts or pauses may be needed for a big campus).
- There should be no visual effects, video filters, music or sound editing on the video.
- There should be no photos, slideshows or video montages included.
- Children (or adults) do not need to be in the video. If including children, please ensure you have the full permission of their guardians.
- There should be no AI generated content.
- In short - **keep it clear and simple!**

¹ *Is féidir an scéal a insint i nGaeilge, ach beidh gá le haistriúchán Béarla leis ar mhaithe le hinrochtaineacht fhoireann mholtóireachta NHA. Narration can be in any Irish, but will need to be accompanied by English translation for accessibility of the NHA judging team.

Details of Actions

Note: All actions *MUST* involve students, as much as practically possible, and they should learn about the habitats and species being aided, thereby increasing their ecoliteracy. Can they be involved in building or painting a bird box? Can they help to dig holes for trees, or plant seeds to help pollinators? When working on ecoliteracy, ideally you would work outdoors e.g. doing a bug hunt and plant count in your no-mow area. For younger learners, you can also use a Nature Table as a focal point for nature-related learning throughout the year.

Section I: Creating Plans

- 1. Creation of a school map and a team of Nature Heroes (required; 20pts).** Students should create a map of the school grounds, and be active participants in deciding what could be done and where. Identify what you have before you start and identify where to focus your efforts. Include what nature you already have e.g. trees, flowers, hedgerow, etc. This is called habitat mapping and will guide where to focus your efforts. Please note that a screenshot from Google Maps is not a habitat map.
- 2. Decide what actions to take & create a schedule.** Using the map you made, make decisions about what action can be carried out and where. Are there areas that would be ideal to allow a rewild/ no-mow area? Is there a wet area that would be ideal for a wetland? Where could an outdoor learning area go? You might aim to have bird boxes installed in the first week of October, trees planted by November, etc., as well as a schedule of regular tasks related to the school garden. You don't need to submit this action plan; it is just for your own guidance. See the 'Action Planner' in the Submission Form for a simple outline plan.
- 3. Keep a record.** Don't forget anything you have done! Take some photos as you go for your own interest and keep notes so that you don't forget all your hard work by the time you come to fill out the submission form. Then take a single video showcasing all your work, to be included in the final submission (see above).

Section II: Creating Habitats

1. Bug hotels (5 pts) (including small constructed bee homes)

These are a very popular feature of school grounds, from 'Air Bee'n'Bees' to 'Buggingham Palaces'. They are a concerted effort to build a habitat out of all the messy stuff that creepy crawlies like. A common sight is a pallet tower crammed full of a diversity of materials from straw to rocks, logs to bamboo. They can be as simple or as fancy as you like. They will provide homes for an array for bugs from ladybirds to woodlice, earwigs to centipedes (and yes, also bees). Unlike our own preferences for a hotel room, they like it dark and damp. Remember to always keep the materials topped up, and **avoid using plastic**.



2. Solitary Bee Sites (5 pts) (does **not** include 'built' options)

Background: While beekeepers look after honey bees in hives of thousands, most bee species do not build hives, and many don't live with their own kind at all, but are solitary bees. They make nests for their larvae by tunneling into bare soil, sandy banks, stone walls, and even dead logs.

Action: The most effective method to help solitary bees in Ireland is to create a bee bank - essentially a mound of dry soil/sand in a sunny spot for the bees to burrow and lay their eggs. For these and other strategies, see the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan's booklet [Creating wild pollinator nesting habitat](#).



It is essential if you are providing shelter for bees to also provide food (refer to 'Low-Mow Meadows' and 'Superhero Species' above).

Please check out the top 10 list of recommended flowers to plant in school:

[Top Ten pollinator-friendly plants for different situations](#)



3. Low-mow Meadows (10 pts)

Background: Natural grassland habitats are highly endangered in Ireland. Wild meadows (which are naturally low in nutrients like nitrogen), with all their native wildflower, pollinator and bird species, have become vanishingly rare with changes in agricultural practices over decades. Traditional grassland management practices (no fertilising, mowing infrequently, no reseeding) helps to slowly increase diversity in any patch of grass.

Action: Dedicate a grassy area that will not be cut for at least a month, but ideally much longer (the longer between cuttings, the more plants can flower and the more benefit to wildlife). It could be as little as a few square metres - or as much as the whole school! Just remember that **grasslands need cutting (eventually) to stay as grasslands**. There are many ways to do this - cutting different areas of the ground on different weeks or months, cordoning off one area not to cut for 3-6 months, or cutting just once a year. The All Ireland Pollinator Plan has lots of advice and ideas for this (see below).

Consider letting any and all grass areas grow without cutting over holidays – especially the summer! (Remember in practical terms to only let an area grow as wild as your caretaker can later manage with the equipment available.)

See the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for excellent ‘How-To’ guides:

[All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: Resources](#)



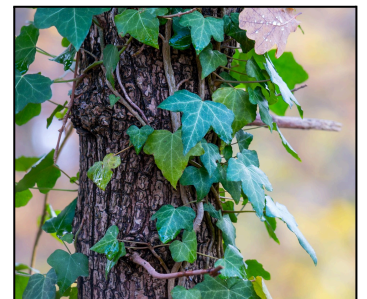
Left: “Don’t mow, Let it grow!”; signage helps to communicate your projects. Right: This school pitch is left uncut from mid-May until the end of August; a local farmer helps with the cutting before school starts. No herbicides or fertilisers are used.

4. Superhero species (5 pts)

Background: Some of the best plants come completely free without even trying! Often these are called 'weeds', but they are very important species for biodiversity - botanically there is no such thing as a 'weed'. These are often very important for pollinators, and larvae of many other insects.

Action:

- Not everyone likes **nettles** but they are the nursery plant for many Irish butterflies. No nettles, no butterflies! Allow an area of nettles to grow on the school grounds.
- While often cut back on school grounds, wild **ivy** is actually a superhero plant for biodiversity. It provides habitats for insects and birds (even smaller bats), opens its flowers in autumn for hungry bees without other sources of food, and produces berries in winter for wildlife. Allow ivy to flourish in areas around the school. It is a myth that ivy kills trees - in fact it very much likes trees alive and growing, clinging to the outside of the bark as a natural climbing frame so it can be higher up when it flowers.
- Also reconsider other species such as **bramble**, **thistles** and **dandelions** - the birds and insects will thank you for it.



5. Native Woodlands (10 pts)

Background: Ireland was once almost entirely covered in native woodland - now that is down to less than 2% of the country's area. Needless to say, this situation is very bad for our native trees, and all the species that depend on them to survive.

Actions: Retain old trees, and plant new trees individually or a group to create a mini woodland habitat (see the 'Miyawaki method'). Only choose native Irish species for planting. Schools with large areas need to be ambitious here (if space is an issue consider a planting project off the school grounds with the local community).

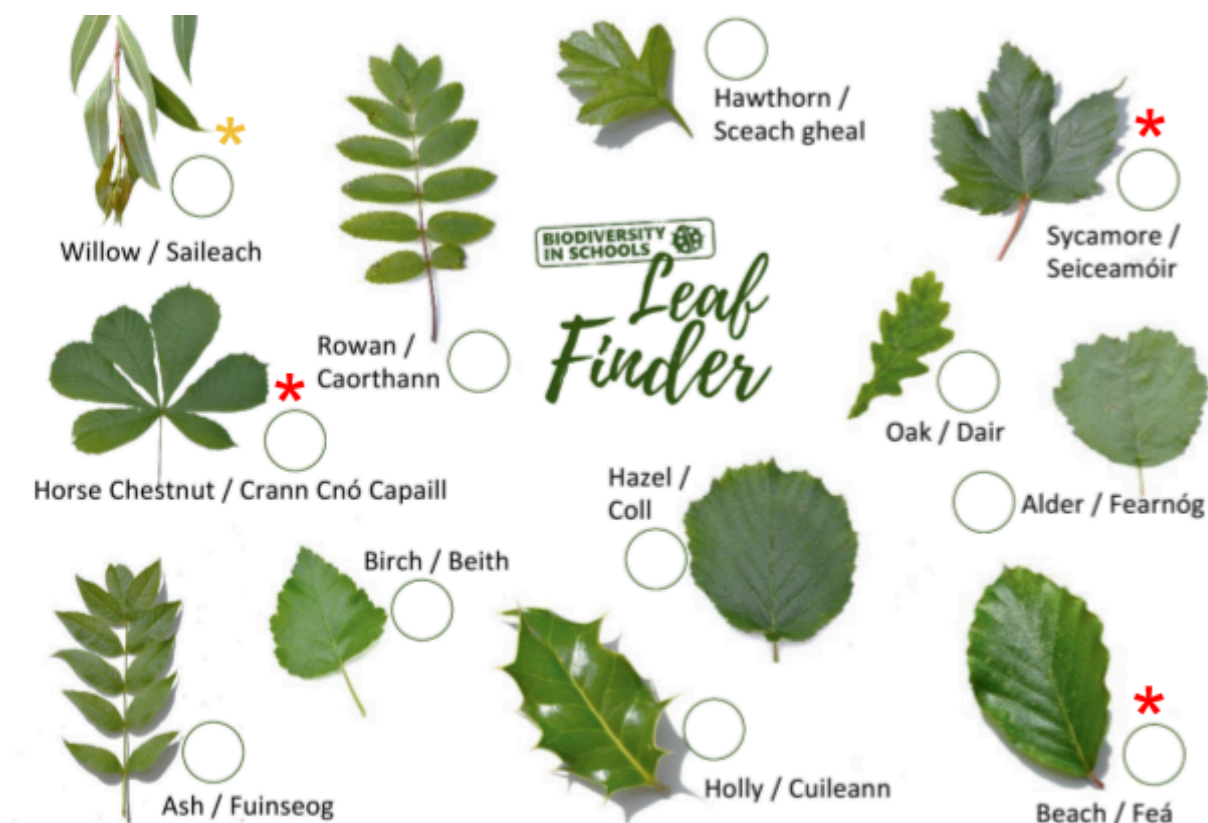
Older trees have many nooks and crannies for other species to live in - you might choose to retain old non-native trees for this reason.

Please see below for native Irish trees, and some common non-native species (a full list of native species is available from the [Tree Council of Ireland](#). **Note: Beech and Sycamore are not native**, even though they are common - as such they have much less benefit for our wildlife, and in some cases may even be harmful, compared to our own native trees. **It is also important to source trees grown in Ireland from Irish stock**, wherever possible (to avoid importing pests and diseases).



Old trees house rich communities of animals, plants and fungi in their roots and branches; newly established woods also have many benefits, and if stewarded carefully will become the complex woodland habitats of the future.

 Watch out for our **webinar** on native woodlands and hedgerows! 



* Not native to Ireland (less beneficial/detrimental for wildlife)

* Some native and some not - depending on exact species

Scientific names of some native trees

Cherry

- Bird - *Prunus padus*
- Wild - *Prunus avium*

Crab Apple - *Malus sylvestris*

Juniper - *Juniperus communis*

Full list from the Irish Tree Council:

<https://www.treecouncil.ie/native-irish-trees>

Oak

- Pedunculate - *Quercus robur*
- Sessile - *Quercus petraea*

Willow

- Eared - *Salix aurita*
- Pussy/Goat - *Salix caprea*
- Grey - *Salix cinerea*
- White - *Salix alba*

Common non-native species - these should not be planted in a native woodland:

Beech - *Fagus sylvatica*

Sycamore (invasive) - *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Horse Chestnut - *Aesculus hippocastanum*

Maple - Other *Acer* species

Laurel - any of several different species

Cherry Laurel (invasive) - *Prunus laurocerasus / rotundifolia*

6. Native Hedgerows (10 pts)

Background: Ireland has a huge network of semi-natural habitat in the form of hedgerows, much of which has existed for hundreds of years. These hold a mix of species from many natural habitats, feeding and sheltering many animals, as well as acting as corridors for wildlife such as rabbits and hedgehogs, and even birds and bats which can use them to navigate in the landscape. A mature hedgerow habitat has a diversity of



large and small tree species (not just hawthorn!), along with annual flowering plants, ferns and even fungi and mosses, where conditions are right.

Action: Retain established hedgerow, and with expert advice, see if there are parts that might be improved (e.g. by replacing non-native species with native ones). Remember that cutting hedges is banned from March to August in Ireland - this is to allow nesting birds some time to complete their life cycles, as well as letting the bushes flower and set fruit - feeding the birds, and completing *their own* life cycles!

Plant native woody shrubs and small trees in **double or staggered rows** to establish a new hedgerow habitat - there are several methods available. Even a single line of willows, as below, is a start! Those with a large area need to be extra ambitious here. Please note non-native species do not count (see above for the list of native trees and shrubs). If space is an issue consider a planting project off the school grounds with the local community.



Recommended species for hedgerow habitat at school: Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Honeysuckle, Guelder Rose, Willow - but almost any of our native species will be beneficial.

7. Water Worlds (10pts)

Background: This action includes wet areas of all kinds - no school garden is complete without an area for frogs and friends! With drainage of land and urban development, these wet habitats have largely disappeared over huge areas. There is a Water World to suit **every** educational setting - it may just require a bit of thought and creativity to come up with the right one. It could be a damp, boggy area, a micro-pond as small as a sink, a rainwater planter, or even a large wildlife pond secured with fences.

 We hope to hold a webinar to explore options and learn from what has worked for other schools. 

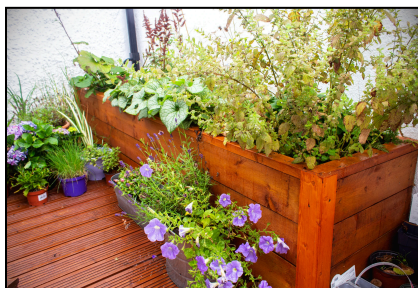
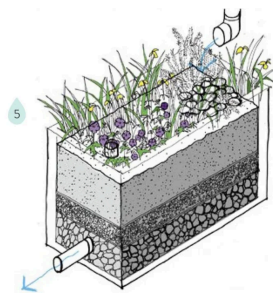
Action: **Make sure to include an escape route like a log** for animals that might fall in. Ideally include different depths in the design, and larger ponds will need submerged water plants to help with oxygenation. Clean stones and gravel are also very important as microhabitats for pond insects, such as baby dragonflies.

A small amount of leafy debris is normal for ponds, but do not let grass clippings or fertiliser enter - **grass cuttings should be taken out immediately** before they can rot.



Mini and larger ponds can all be beneficial for wildlife; a guide to building a full wildlife pond is available [here](#).

Rainwater planters are an increasingly popular option, especially in tight spaces - suitable for woodwork/ engineering projects. Guides to building them are linked below; some commercial options are also available.



Rainwater planters are an increasingly popular option to reduce flooding in the school ground, especially in urban areas. See building guides:

1. [Pollinator-friendly Rainwater Planter | AIPP](#)
2. [A how-to-guide for Rainwater Planters | DCC](#)

8. Bird boxes (5 pts)

Provide additional habitat for birds who are nesting. This can be as traditional wooden nest boxes, but some birds like robins will nest in almost anything, so get creative - just make sure it is strong enough to hold the bird and her eggs securely!

Different types of boxes will suit different birds, so add a variety where possible. Some are open at the front, others have small or large circular entrance holes. Some schools even have swift, house martin and owl boxes! Follow the instructions on the box or plans, and if purchasing only buy FSC, sustainably made boxes. In your video submission, please show all bird boxes you have installed.



Remember that some kinds of birds will always shun man-made boxes for natural options - see the notes on retaining old trees and established hedgerows above for even more impactful bird nesting habitat.

9. Bird care stations (5 pts)

You can help to look after your local birds by providing food such as seeds and a drinking water bath throughout the entire year, but particularly in winter. Care stations should be checked and topped up regularly - a rota can be drawn up for maintaining this (cleaning may need to be done from time to time - please follow the advice of BirdWatch Ireland).



Even a water bath by itself will attract many birds, as accessible sources of drinking water for small birds can be very scarce. A care station should have at least 1 bird bath

per 5 feeders (feeding only dry food without a source of water just means birds have to fly further to find water after coming to your feeder).

10. Bat boxes (5 pts)

Background: Bats are an often-overlooked part of biodiversity. Our bats, all 9 species protected by law, are important for naturally controlling insect populations - especially midges! Bats are more closely related to hedgehogs than any rodent (known to science as Chiroptera, 'hand-wings'). With few large caves or big old trees remaining in Ireland, they often depend on our buildings for shelter. See [Bat Conservation Ireland](#) for more information.

Action: You can place bat boxes around the school on buildings and trees to help these flying mammals, away from bright lights. Follow the instructions on the box and if purchasing, buy only FSC, sustainably made boxes. **See the links below for plans on how to build your own box.** Try to also hang onto old trees and large areas of ivy on walls or trees - bats roost in the crevices created by the vines.



1. [Making a bat box | from Bird Watch Ireland](#)
2. [Creating Roosts - Bat Boxes | from Bat Conservation Ireland](#)

11. Dead hedges (5 pts) (human-made)

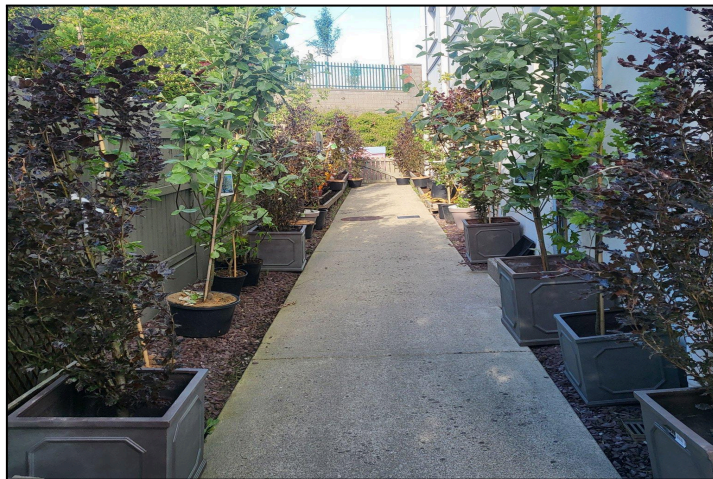
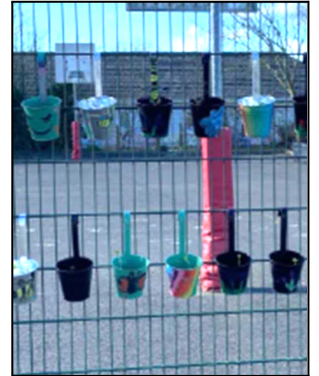
We often forget about the circle of life when it comes to nature, tidying away the dead stuff to make way for new stuff. However, this is a massive lost opportunity. **Man-made dead hedges** are a great way to provide habitat for a wide range of plants and animals, from bugs to birds and hedgehogs and even fungi, with very little maintenance compared to living hedges. It is also a good way to use branch cuttings on-site for the benefit of your



local wildlife. In a nutshell you're building and weaving a hedge from dead materials. This function also applies to similar features such as log piles, leaf mould piles, rock piles.

12. Biodiversity in small/urban schools (5 pts)

This is applicable to schools in urban areas, or those with highly restricted green space - **if you have a large outdoor area, this does not apply to your school.** You may have to do a little extra work to create space for nature, but it absolutely can be done. See below for just a few examples of creative uses of 'hard', vertical, or otherwise unused space. Look around - where is there space that you could adapt for nature? 🖥️ We intend to hold a webinar on this to learn from what has worked for other schools. 🖥️



A mini woodland in pots.



Planters along footpaths where there is no garden.

13. Control of invasive species (5 pts)

It is a simple but unfortunate fact that invasive plants run rampant across the Irish landscape, including in the built environment. This is rarely the fault of schools, if ever. However if you do discover invasive species on your grounds, we ask that you let us know, and share your plan/discussions in the school for dealing with these, as they are very damaging for our own native species and wild habitats. Worse than litter, they can make more of themselves, and take over wild spaces and natural habitats!

- Japanese knotweed - Rhododendron - Cherry Laurel - Cotoneaster	- Sycamore (seedlings/saplings, leave mature trees) - Montbretia <i>a.k.a.</i> Crocosmia - Winter Heliotrope - Himalayan Balsam
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More information available on [Invasives.ie](https://invasives.ie), including identification guides:
invasives.ie/resources/identification-guides

Section III: Creating Heroes

1. Outdoor Learning Space (required; 10 pts)

Numerous studies from across the globe consistently show the benefits of outdoor time for children's development, especially for cognitive and physical development. You might use a polytunnel, a school garden, an 'official' outdoor classroom, a mini-woodland, your local park, even your hedges - all are valuable places for both structured and unstructured learning opportunities. Maybe you have no green space at school, but can avail of a local park, or take field trips - or maybe students are lucky enough that you are an entirely outdoor school - this is fantastic (but still rare in Ireland)!

Whatever your circumstances, it is important to dedicate outdoor time in a dedicated space for students - and you will feel the benefits yourself!



2. Indoor Learning (required; 10 pts)



This action is about the aspects of ecoliteracy that happen within the school building. A seasonally changing **nature table** is a great way to bring nature into the classroom - and once you establish it, generally children will bring in their own finds. You can add relevant photos and books or info cards. You might also start

growing seeds that will later be planted out. With older students, dedicated space to show research into native Irish species, especially those found by students themselves, is a great way to highlight your biodiversity while



practising composition and presentation skills for peer-to-peer learning. There are many ways to fulfill this action - most importantly it must be effective for students.

3. Communication (required; 10 pts)

This action refers to communicating your work with the whole school community extending to parents, guardians and neighbours.

It has happened time and again at schools and in communities - one person doing good work to try to improve their local environment finds it all destroyed by an innocent mistake, by someone who didn't know or appreciate what was trying to be achieved. There is no point doing this programme in secret! Spread the good word, and bring others on board - many hands make light work.

Signage around sites for no-mow and wild flowers can be particularly important within the school. If these can be **visible to the public** and school visitors, all the better. You might also dedicate a Nature Heroes notice board, share updates in a newsletter or on your website/social media page, or write an article for the local paper. Some schools in the past have even created poster campaigns, murals and podcasts! The list is almost endless.



4. Community (5 pts)

(This action will not apply to all schools. It is especially suitable for **smaller schools**, which may not have much area to work with on their own grounds.)

If you have **collaborated with local community groups**, individuals in the community, or just in a community space for the benefit of nature, you can share that with us here. Past entrants have donated and planted trees in local parks, worked with Tidy Towns and Men's Sheds groups (both on, and off, school grounds), and even helped to create biodiversity trails in their community. Workshops from national organisations do not count for this action.

5. Buddy School (5pts)

We want to spread biodiversity across the land! If every school registered for the Nature Hero Awards year managed to get one new school to join the programme, we would have every single primary and secondary school taking part in less than 5 years (feel free to check our maths!).

Only by all working together, in our schools and communities, will we help to turn the tide on biodiversity loss. If even a quarter of all Irish schools signed up, we would make a significant positive impact on nature - and that's very achievable. Let's go!

6. Other actions (10 pts)

There are countless ways to help biodiversity in your local environment. If there are other actions that you have taken, for nature education or directly for wildlife, you can tell us about them in this section. However the word count is limited, so you will have to be selective. If we really like your activities here, we may ask you later for photos or video, so do keep that in mind.

Prohibited

Please note that use of **peat-based compost**, or use of **pesticides** are prohibited and will result in exclusion from the programme. Use of these products would undermine all your other biodiversity actions.

Use of **AI** to create images or answers is also not allowed.

Further explanation:

- Peat is extracted from bogs - this is direct destruction of one of our most important natural habitats. In addition to the loss of all the specially adapted flora and fauna that call bogs home, the effect on carbon emissions is enormous. Use **peat-free compost** instead. See the [Peatlands and Climate Change Action Plan 2030](#) for more information.
- Those plants commonly sprayed as 'weeds' are almost always our **native wild plants**, which form the basis of the food chain and support a host of native insects, molluscs, arachnids, amphibians, in fact every major group of animals.
- Similarly, insecticides, and other pesticides, directly harm our biodiversity. Insects also feed a great many animals above them in the food chain, as well as pollinating wild plants and crops, making them a crucial component of nature. In a time when [insect populations are collapsing](#), showing us the biodiversity crisis, use of products that kill them simply cannot be supported in a biodiversity programme. You can read more about this [here](#).
- Use of generative AI, like any energy-intensive technology, similarly does not support the overall aims of the programme, while creating overly-long and irrelevant answers. We strongly ask that you refrain from using it for this programme.