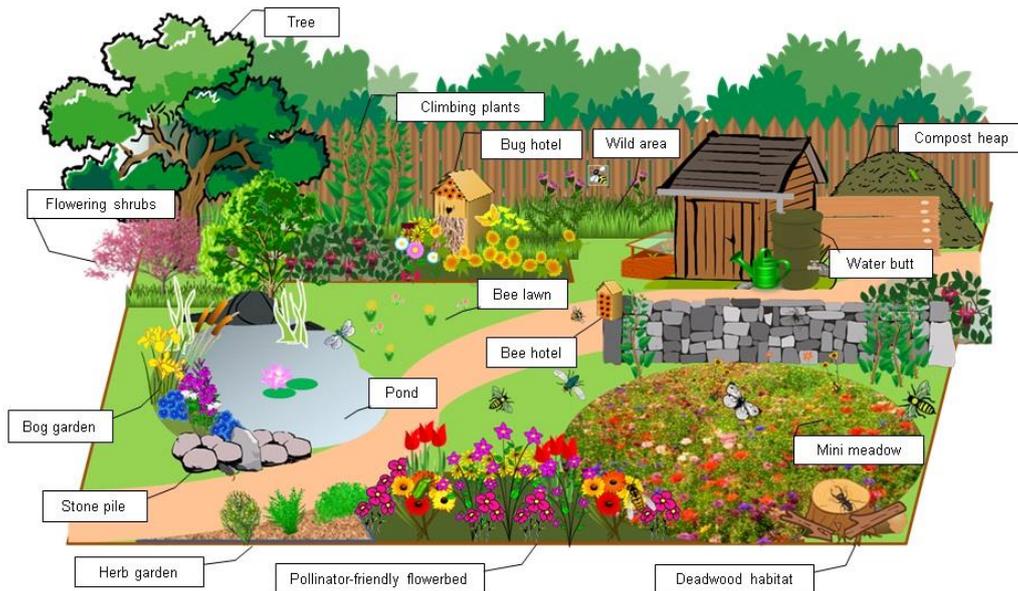


1 **The Pollinator Challenge**



Keeping children involved from the offset, planning ideas and designs for pollinator friendly school grounds, is a key part of the education process. Discuss what pollinators are, what they do and why they are so important.

How attractive do the children think the current school grounds are to pollinators? What could we do to improve on this? Challenge them to design, create and maintain pollinator friendly resources themselves wherever possible. Once their interest has inevitably been captured, young designers, engineers and horticulturalists will become a pollinator's best friend!

2 **Create a Wildflower Meadow**



School fields are perfect for children to scatter and sow a variety of wildflower seeds. A strip around the edge of the field that won't be disturbed by sports is ideal. Wildflowers attract pollinators and provide a food supply.

Use native species that easily thrive, and let the grass grow so that they can really settle in. Bluebells, daffodils, poppies and primrose, anemones and heather, even daisies and dandelions!

Save on maintenance and let some of the brambles grow! Bees love them and you will always see them buzzing around the blossom before the fruit arrives for the birds to enjoy. Bramble usually turns up by itself, so it's free to do!

If you don't have a field or space large enough to create a meadow, wooden planters are a fantastic alternative. Placed under windows, next to doorways, dotted around the playground or anywhere you can find space.

Fill them with soil and wildflower seeds, colourful plants and bulbs, grasses etc. and watch them come to life. They turn the most concrete of spaces into a beautiful, colourful haven for bugs.

3 *Plant a Sensory Herb Garden*



Planting a pollinator friendly sensory garden is great physical and educational activity for children.

Using raised beds, or free standing wooden planters and planter benches is the best way of doing this. They need to be readily accessible to all children planting, maintaining and visiting them, including those with restricted mobility who may not be able to reach down to the ground. Custom built high pressure treated play grade timber planters are best for schools.

They avoid splinters and scratches, and can be installed in different shapes and sizes as required.

Fill the planters with peat-free compost (children will love getting messy doing this!) and plant with a range of aromatic herbs: lavender, rosemary, chives, mint, thyme, oregano and marjoram.

Guaranteed to provide a sensory learning experience that smells and looks just as appealing to inquisitive children as it does to those pollinators waiting to come and have a feast!

4 Bug Hotels and Bee Nests



A Bug Hotel is a man-made structure created to provide a safe haven for all sorts of different mini-beasts, and an ideal observation resource for young learners.

Purpose built bug hotels for schools, made from natural materials and designed with many different access angles for insects and observers

alike, are a worthy investment. They get better with age, and over time will continue to encourage and host a whole range of small creatures.

Bug hotels built up from the ground support both flying and crawling insects, and pollinators will be sure to use them as a base if located near to a pollen source.

Children can get crafty making little homes for solitary bees, who like to nest in hollow plant stems. It's easy to replicate these nesting features in your school grounds.

Making bee nests, with short lengths of hollow bamboo canes tied or glued together in little bundles of differing shapes, is a great craft and design activity for young learners.

Hang them around the school grounds in sunny, sheltered positions a good metre off the ground, for the bees to come and visit!

You will know when a female solitary bee has set up home in a nest or bug hotel. She will seal off the entrances with mud or leaves where she has put pollen food parcels, or even laid an egg inside the hole.

5 Use a Composter



A composter is a simple, cost effective and environmentally friendly way to dispose of organic waste.

Filling it with fruit peel leftovers from break time saves space in your school waste bins, and the compost it forms is perfect for fertilising your plants to keep them healthy and attract more pollinators.

This article has been written by Emma Homan who is an Educational Copywriter for [Pentagon Play](#)