



One Planet Matters

Nature-based Intergenerational Activities



Activities that bring older and younger generations together to connect with one another as well as the nature around us.

CONTENTS:

About our Intergenerational Growing Initiative	2
About this activity pack	2
A note on 'natural elements' - safety & sustainability	3
BioBlitz & drawing activity	4
Tree handprints	5
Plant pressing	6
Nature mobile & wind chime making	7
Making dried flower arrangements	9
Multisensory Nature Hunt game	10
Natural painting & art-making	12
Tree planting	13
Gardening	14



About our Intergenerational Growing Initiative:

One Planet Matters works to reconnect people with their community and local environment. As part of our work, we support nature-based intergenerational connections by linking care facilities with schools, Scouts and other youth groups, and providing resources for nature-based activities. We work with older and younger people within communities to facilitate relationship-building, where seniors and children can learn from and with one another through fun and engaging activities, while creating meaningful connections which enhance personal and social wellbeing.



Get in touch - we would love to hear from you!

If you are part of a school, Scouts group, care home, community group, or anyone else who would be interested in us supporting intergenerational nature-based activities with you, please get in touch! Drop us an email if you are interested in working together to restore our connection to community and wildlife.

Contact Kayla at kellis@oneplanetmatters.com

About this activity pack

We believe that strong intergenerational connections are important, both for individuals and communities. We also believe that nature-based knowledge which is passed on between generations is a vital part of protecting and regenerating a healthy and sustainable relationship with nature.



These are activities which have been put together to be used by people of a range of ages and interests, and can be adapted for varying needs. They can be used to facilitate connections between older and younger generations, where people in early and later stages of life can come together to explore common ground, learn with and from one another, and connect with their natural environments at the same time.

Please see our blog post on [connecting generations through nature-based activities](#).

A note on 'natural elements' - safety & sustainability

Many of the activities in this pack involve using 'natural elements' - by which we mean anything that you might find in your natural environment, such as twigs, leaves, flowers, stones, acorns, and so on. It is really important, when exploring and collecting natural elements, that we make sure that we do this with safety and sustainability in mind.

Here are a few things to consider when exploring nature:

- **Collect responsibly!** A good rule of thumb to collect plants sustainably is to make sure you only collect a few individuals of each plant, especially if there aren't many of those plants in sight. If there are lots of those plants in sight, just make sure you leave plenty for other wildlife to use for food and shelter, and so that the plant can keep growing to reproduce for next year.
- **Pick carefully** - pick one plant at a time so that you don't accidentally kill any bugs or snails by grabbing bunches of plants at once, and so that you can more easily watch out for any thorns.
- **Use scissors** to snip flowers and grasses so that collecting the plants is easier and doesn't damage their roots. Child-friendly scissors will work well if you are concerned about safety - otherwise, if you'd prefer not to use scissors, just make sure that everyone is being gentle when picking plants.
- **No nibbling!** Unless you are with an experienced forager, make sure everyone knows not to put any part of any plant into their mouths - there are many plants out there which are perfectly safe (and delicious!) to eat, but there are also many that are dangerous, and often unsafe plants can look similar to safe plants. Take extra care in the Autumn when there are lots of tasty-looking berries around.



BioBlitz & drawing activity

Use our [BioBlitz activity pack](#) to have fun tracking the wildlife and plants in your local green space or garden! A Bioblitz is a fun event that brings people together to try and identify as many species as possible in a specific area over a certain amount of time. It helps us understand our local ecosystems better and gives everyone a chance to be a scientist! It is an especially fun activity to do when you combine it with a drawing or painting activity. It is also a lovely way for older and younger people to come together and chat in a relaxed environment.



What to do:

- Print off our [BioBlitz activity pack](#) - you will need a few copies if you want to do the activity with a group of people.
- Have a drawing/painting table set up ready so that you can come together after the BioBlitz to do some artwork together.
- Put everyone into small groups based on your needs - this may mean putting younger and older people together in pairs, or perhaps into larger groups. These groups will move around your chosen area looking for wildlife and plants.
- If you are working with older people with mobility limitations, they can either get started with some art while the BioBlitz activity is going on, or ideally they can watch the activity from a seat nearby.
- In order to do the art activity, make sure you take photos of the different wildlife and plants you find. You can also collect some of the plants you find - we suggest only picking one of each type of plant to protect the wildlife in the area, or collect fallen leaves.
- For the art activity, you can use paints, crayons, colouring pencils - or any other materials you would like, to make pictures all together of the wildlife and plants you found. Why not make a big poster or bunting out of the pictures?
- Make sure to put the date on the art you make, and then you can redo this activity in different seasons to see how nature changes over time!

Tree handprints

Make tree handprints for each season using the colours of that season. This is a fun activity which encourages a bit of messiness, and which can be adapted in many ways.

What you'll need:

- Paints - brown for tree trunks, and then whatever colours reflect the colours of the trees at that time (perhaps green for Summer, orange and yellow for Autumn, or pink for Springtime blossoms).
- Paper
- Paint palettes
- Water bowls and a nearby tap for washing hands
- Waterproof aprons, or clothes that can get messy
- Pens or pencils if you want to draw or write around the hand paintings



How to:

The basics of this activity involves painting a tree using your hands, and incorporating the colours of the season you are in. You could also:

- Do this activity after doing the [Bioblitz activity](#) (page 3), in order to keep a record of the wildlife that you find in each season. You could paint, draw, or write the names or pictures of the wildlife you have seen. You could also stick some leaves or flowers that you have seen onto your picture.
- Incorporate conversation prompts - this is a lovely activity to do where older and younger people can talk about their favourite things about each season. Perhaps you'll want to have some conversation starters such as "What are your favourite activities to do in Autumn/Spring/Summer/Autumn?" or "What are your favourite animals or plants to see during this season?" You could draw or write these things around your tree handprints.

Plant pressing

Pressing plants is a very easy activity to do with beautiful results - all you will need is a heavy book and some brown paper or card!

What you'll need:

- Books - hardback are best
- Sheets of brown paper (optional but recommended - see tips below)
- Plant identification books (optional - for if you want to add some investigating and learning your activity)



How to:

1. If possible, go outside all together, perhaps in your outdoor area or perhaps go for a walk to find flowers and leaves to press. See how many different types of plant you can find! How many different colours, sizes, shapes, and patterns can you find? Do you know the names of any of the plants you are picking?
2. Once you are back at the pressing station, all you need to do is fold each sheet of brown paper in half and place the plants you want to press in them. Then slot each sheet of paper into the book and place the book under something heavy for a few weeks - we like to put our pressing books at the bottom of a stack of books.
3. After a few weeks of pressing, you could come together again to make pictures with your pressed plants! (Usually, thin plants like petals or leaves should take around 2-4 weeks to dry fully in the book, while thicker plants can take a few months as they have more water in them).

Plant pressing tips:

- It is best to pick plants on a dry day so that they don't mould while pressing.
- Brown paper is optional, but it makes it easier to take your plants out of the book as you can just pull out the folded paper and slot it back into the book if the plants aren't yet ready. Pressing your plants in folded paper within books means you can choose to use books with any kind of paper - even glossy paper, which you normally wouldn't want to press plants in as it isn't very absorbent.
- Press plants with similar thicknesses together - if you press something very thin, like a leaf or a petal, with something very thick, like a big flower head, then sometimes the thinner plant won't end up well pressed.

Nature mobile & wind chime making

You will need:

- A table to get crafting on, with enough room for everyone to get creative
- String
- Sticks or twigs
- Natural elements such as:
 - Acorns
 - Conkers
 - Feathers
 - Leaves
 - Flowers
 - Seed heads
- Beads for extra decoration (optional) - you could even make beads out of air-drying clay - visit [The Artful Parent](#) for info on this.
- Paint & paint brushes (optional)
- Tape (optional)



Photo: [The Artful Parent](#)

How to:

1. **Collect a bunch of different natural elements**, such as those listed above. What you find will depend on the time of year and where you are looking, but you can generally find some great things to use in wooded or meadow areas. Shells are also amazing to use if you are based near the sea! Depending on the mobility of your older activity members, either everyone can go searching together, or the younger activity members can collect the natural elements and then meet the older activity members at the craft table.
2. **Make the frame** - Note that this beginning part may require an adult helper. There are many different ways of making a windchime or mobile (and we encourage creativity!) but whatever you do, you will need to create a frame using sticks, which the natural elements will hang from. Have a look at the pictures below for some more design inspiration. You could use two sticks and tie them together, like in the photo, or you could use three sticks tied together, or even just use one stick which would make a 2D design which you can hang on a wall. Once you have your chosen sticks, use some string to tie them together like in the photo. Make sure you keep a length of string attached at the top to tie your wind chime / mobile up with when you're done.

3. Tie lengths of string to each stick - you can tie as many lengths as you like. You can either make them long and hang one thing at the end of each once, or you can make them shorter so that you can hang a natural element onto the ends, then tie more string onto the natural element and hang something else onto the end.
4. Decorate! - Tie your natural elements onto each bit of string. You can also use tape to attach leaves onto lengths of string to add some extra decoration.

Some more inspiration:



Photo: [Sense](#)



Photo: [Ipswich Museum](#)



Photo: [Fanny and Alexander](#)

Making dried flower arrangements

This is another activity that can be done in many varying ways, making it especially fun because it encourages creativity. Dried plant arrangements can last for years, so these can also act as lovely decorative memoirs of time spent together.



You will need:

- Scissors (multiple if possible, to share out)
- String

How to:

1. **Collect flowers** - You could organise this activity so that everyone goes and collects flowers together, or the young people involved can collect flowers to bring back to the craft table to arrange with the older people.
2. **Get creative!** There are many ways to make flower arrangements - have a look at the photos above for some inspiration.



- Hanging the flowers upside down means that once they are dried, you can put them in a vase and they will stay upright. Or keep them upside down for a lovely hanging decoration!
- You could create dried flower bunting by tying each plant or bunch of plants together along a string.

Multisensory Nature Hunt game

A brilliant effect that nature has on us is its ability to bring us back to our senses. There is so much that we can see, smell, touch, and hear in nature, and we can connect with the nature around us as well as the people around us when we do multisensory activities in our environments, such as this one. Nature is also very evocative in terms of memory, and we like to incorporate this into this activity because it is a lovely way to open up conversations between different generations.



Preparation:

Make some prompt cards which outline what to look for and chat about in the nature hunt. We recommend laminating them to use again next time. Here are some examples of what you might want to write on the different cards:

See:

- Something white
- Something shiny
- Something small
- Something beautiful
- Something colourful

Hear:

- Something that makes a sound in the wind
- Something that makes a sound under my feet
- Something that rustles
- Something that buzzes

Feel:

- Something smooth
- Something rough
- Something bumpy
- Something fluffy

Smell:

- Something that smells sweet
- Something that smells floral
- Something that smells earthy

Memory:

- Something that reminds you of someone
- Something that reminds you of an experience you have had

- Make sure the prompts have space beside them for writing, as there will be certain natural elements which cannot be collected, such as the memory prompts and perhaps others such as “something that buzzes”.

You will need:

- Prompts - enough prompt cards printed for each pair to use

How to:

This activity involves *noticing natural elements* using your senses as well as *collecting natural elements* using the cue cards.

Here is one way you can do this activity:

1. Read out all of the cues together so that everyone understands what they are looking for and what they will be discussing with their partner. Ideally you will have enough cue cards for each pair to have a copy.
2. Pair everyone up, with older and younger people together.
3. Each pair goes into their environment - this could be a garden, woods, park, etc. - and looks for natural elements which fit the cue cards. These can be collected and brought back with them, and the pair can also discuss the conversation points and any prompts which they can see, hear, or smell, but cannot bring back with them.

Suggested method adaptations:

There are different ways that you can do this activity depending on your group's needs and how much time you have. The way that you do this activity will mostly depend on what the participants would like to do, and what they are able to do most comfortably. Alter the activity however you need - here are some suggestions for alternative ways of designing the method of this activity:

- Decide if you want to do your nature hunt individually, in pairs, or in groups. For example, you could work:
 - Individually - everyone does the nature hunt individually, and then gets into pairs or groups to talk about what they have found.
 - In pairs - an older and a younger person doing the hunt together, then all pairs coming back together at the end to show and tell what they have found.
 - In groups - older people in one group and younger people in the other. Everyone gets together into pairs or groups at the end to talk about what they have found.
- Depending on how much time you have, you can either have everyone looking for all of the different prompts, or you can have each person, pair, or group looking for just one or a few of the prompts.

Natural painting & art-making

You will need:

- Cups of water
- Paint palettes
- Mortar and pestle
- Paint brushes
- Elastic bands
- Paper - heavy duty paper or card is best as the paints can otherwise soak through
- Natural paints, which you can make out of:
 - Mud or soil
 - Flower petals
 - Leaves
 - Grass
- Natural elements - things like:
 - Flowers - dandelions and poppies are great for making colours
 - Leaves
 - Seed pods
 - Acorns
 - Twigs
 - Anything else you can find outside in nature!



How to:

- You can make paints from natural materials in a few different ways:
 - Mix mud and water to make brown paint - you can add food colouring to make different colours .
 - Make a colour paste by using a mortar and pestle to grind up petals or grass to paint with.
 - Put coloured flower petals in a little bit of boiling water and wait for 20 minutes to get watercolour paint! You can make yellow with dandelion petals, or red from poppy petals, for example.
- You can also use natural elements such as flowers, acorns, seed pods etc. to make paint stamps. To do this, simply dip the natural element into some paint and then press it onto paper. If you do this gently, you should get some really lovely textures come through!
- You can also make paint brushes from leaves, grasses, and other plants by making a small bunch and tying this to the end of a stick using an elastic band. You can then dip your natural paintbrush into some paint and start making artwork!

Tree planting

During the Winter months, One Planet Matters plants fruit trees in communities with local people. This is part of our Orchards Initiative, where we work with communities to create community orchards which provide free food for the locality while supporting biodiversity.

Planting trees can be a wonderful intergenerational activity where older and younger people can leave a shared legacy which benefits people and wildlife! There are many opportunities to connect, such as through planting trees, tracking the biodiversity that the trees support (see our BioBlitz activity), harvesting fruit from orchard trees in Autumn, and cooking together using the harvested fruit!



Images: Planting a June Berry tree at Asra House Care Home with their residents along with pupils from Abbey Mead Primary School, Leicester. This tree will produce beautiful flowers which will encourage biodiversity to the site as well as creating a wonderful multi-sensory experience for residents. The intergenerational connection between Abbey Mead and Asra House is made possible by Ruth Sinhal from The Linking Network, who we work with in the area, as well as Shabin Ikram from Abbey Mead and Shabbir Aswat from Asra House. It is a pleasure to be able to support them and watch these connections flourish.

If you would like to plant some fruit trees (or other trees which are particularly beneficial to wildlife) on your site, or if you would like to get involved with tree planting in your area, get in touch with us and we can organise a planting session with you!

Find out more about the benefits of planting community orchards [here](#).

Gardening

Growing vegetables, herbs and flowers is a great activity for younger and older generations to do together. Children get to learn how to grow food and nurture plants, gaining a valuable skillset as well as encouraging care and confidence, while these activities benefit older peoples' memory and allow them to impart their knowledge to younger generations. Older people can share the value of their experiences in nature with children, passing on the excitement of being involved with the natural world with the younger generation who will become caretakers of their environments.

Another major reason that this is such a great intergenerational activity is that older and younger people can share the experience of a beautiful outdoor space which is full of multi-sensory stimulus - smelling the flowers, listening to the bees and birds, feeling their fingers in the soil, tasting fresh herbs, and seeing the gorgeous array of colours and biodiversity. These kinds of nature experiences reconnect us with our bodies and our senses, contributing to a healthy and active lifestyle and a stronger sense of Self.

If you would like to explore intergenerational food growing, get in touch with us and we will look at how we can work with you!

