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May 2021

## What's on this month?

- **The Great Big School Clean**
- **Schools competition to celebrate Biodiversity Day**
- **Celebrating Dacorum's eco-schools**
- **Easy ways to get an Eco-School Award**
- **Eco planning from now until the summer holidays**

## Join the Great Big School Clean throughout May and June!



**We are calling on all schools in Dacorum to take part in tidying up their local green spaces.**

After a year where our outdoor spaces were relied on more than ever they also became subject to more litter pollution, particularly COVID related litter. That's why this year's [Great Big School Clean](#) and [Great British Spring Clean](#) campaigns organised by 'Keep Britain Tidy' are more important than ever.

This year, Keep Britain Tidy has added a new goal of litter picking a million miles around the UK. The ambitious target is based on the idea that it takes an average of 20 minutes to litter pick a mile. They are asking all participants to [pledge](#) how much time they'll be litter picking for – the form takes less than a minute to fill out.

We will also be keeping track of how many miles have been litter picked around the borough and will publish the results at the end of the campaign. Any litter picks that are completed between now and the end of June will be counted towards the campaign.

Setting up your own Great Big School Clean litter pick can be as easy as a quick pick around the school grounds or a larger area such as a nearby park or field. All you need to do is send us a quick [email](#) and complete a short equipment loan form. We can provide litter pickers, recycling bags and refuse bags and even schedule in a [free virtual school talk](#) for your class or the whole school.

Running a litter picking event can also be a great way to help get your school get an [Eco-Schools Award](#).

The SEED Team would like to thank Aldbury C of E, Hammond Academy, Greenway Primary, Micklem Primary, Potten End Primary and South Hill Primary schools for their participation in the 2020 Spring and September Cleans.

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## Schools competition to celebrate Biodiversity Day

**[Biodiversity Day](#) is taking place on Saturday 22 May and to celebrate we are running a competition for the chance to win an [insect sit-and-study centre](#). The competition is open to all primary schools in Dacorum.**

To enter simply complete this short [application form](#) before the deadline on midnight Thursday 20 May. The winner will be contacted and announced on Biodiversity Day on our [Facebook page](#). Please make sure you read through our [terms and conditions](#) prior to entering.

The insect sit-and-study centre allows you to create your own study habitat for a great range of insects such as bugs, ants and small insects. You can grow herbs, plants or flowers on either side to attract the small animals you would like to watch. Just place any other plant material and the provided bowl filled with sugar in the middle and build a path for ants to walk from one side to the other. This prize offers a unique way to study a variety of insects as it allows you to inspect and view insect activity, providing fascinating entertainment and education for pupils. Setting up a project around the sit-and-study centre can also be used towards an Eco-School award.

Learning about biodiversity is crucial as it goes hand-in-hand with other environmental issues such as climate change and plastic pollution. Since 1970, global wildlife populations have plummeted by 68%! This [short video](#) explains more.

The theme for Biodiversity Day 2021 is '*we're part of the solution*'. We couldn't agree more – we believe that a collective approach is key to the success of the environmental movement which is why we are running this competition.

There are lots of ways you can [celebrate Biodiversity Day at your school](#). Online resources such as [WWF's biodiversity toolkit](#), [Wildlife Trusts activities guide](#) and [Earth School's quests](#) can help you with lesson plans and activities in the days leading up to Biodiversity Day.

If you are celebrating with your school, we would love to see images and hear about what you get up to – please [email](#) them to us.



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## Celebrating Dacorum's eco-schools

**Eco-schools around Dacorum have been working hard despite the pandemic.**

This past year's journey with the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges to eco planning. While navigating the various transitions between virtual and in-person learning, Dacorum schools showed incredible resilience with their environmental curriculums.

In March, while adhering to COVID guidance, two year four classes at **South Hill Primary** school planted nearly 100 small trees around the school grounds. Saplings were planted in a dug out square, where they will grow for the next two years and then be given out for free to the community. The event was organised by Ms Tomsa, the school's Eco Leader, and supported by the UK based charity [The Earth Restoration Service](#), which kindly donated these trees.

Many schools also planned special events for [Earth Day](#), which took place on Thursday 22 April. In the days leading up to Earth Day, Ms Wadmore the Project Leader and Year 4 teacher at **Jupiter Community Free School** organised daily litter picks with their students. In total 400 children took part, collecting over 10 bags of rubbish throughout the week. The daily litter picking events culminated in a special Earth Day virtual talk which was streamed into classrooms. One eco council's at **Gaddesden Row JMI's** have also created their own [Eco Code](#).

The SEED Team recently met with Eco-Schools National Manager Lee Wray-Davies and Development Coordinator Francis Hyland. Lee and Francis were excited to reveal that there had been an increase in Eco-Schools registrations and award applications as the pandemic unfolded. Zoe Wiggins, our Environmental Projects Lead, said, *“It is inspiring to hear of all the progress schools have continued to achieve despite COVID. The dedication schools have shown instilling environmental values in their students must be recognised.”*

Term time can be a hectic period, which only adds to our constant amazement of all the innovative and inspirational initiatives all our local schools still manage to do. If your school has written an eco code, completed an eco event or is planning on doing one, send us an [email](#) and we'll promote it in the next SEED. We are always happy to support eco projects and can offer helpful advice.



**Students at South Hill Primary School planting trees**

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## Easy ways to get an Eco-School Award

Working through the [Seven Steps](#) and applying for an Eco-School award is easier than you might think.

Did you know, Eco-Schools need to renew their award every two years? Whilst this may sound like a lot of work, the good news is that achieving a [bronze or silver award](#) can easily be done within a term, or even quicker for really enthusiastic eco clubs. Once your school has received a bronze or silver award, you are more than half way towards completing the work needed for a [Green Flag award](#).

To show the range of actions, small to large, that can help achieve an Eco-Schools award we've put together a list of projects that can be used for your award applications:

**Bronze** – completing steps 1-3 of the Seven Steps

- Steps 1-3 can be tackled at your next whole school assembly. Ask for any students interested in being on an Eco-Committee to let their teachers know. Over the next few weeks, hold a meeting or two to complete an [Eco-Schools Environmental Review](#) and start taking down ideas for an action plan.

**Silver** – completing steps 4 & 5 of the Seven Steps

- [Step 4](#) is focused on linking three environmental issues into your school's curriculum. This can be done by coordinating with the Science and/or Maths lead to plan some lessons outside in order to carry out [bug surveys](#).
- Another way to tick off step 4 is by organising an eco-themed day that has lessons for all year groups based around an environmental issue. For example, as May 22 is [Biodiversity Day](#) you could plan an assembly and classroom activity to be done throughout KS1 and KS2.
- [Step 5](#) emphasises communication and outreach in the form of creating an Eco-Board that monitors and documents your schools progress. This will likely be something that forms naturally at your eco club meetings and can be actioned by including Eco Updates in emails to parents, to the school's website or even a school social media account (if applicable). Getting any interested governors involved can also be a great way to help spread the word.

**Green Flag** – completing steps 6 & 7 of the Seven Steps

- Completing the **free** [Learning About Forests](#) (LEAF) programme is a great way to both gather topic evidence for your Green Flag application, as well as bringing outdoor education and forest ecology to your lesson plan.

If you'd like to check your school's status or want help achieving an award feel free to [get in touch](#) and we will be happy to help! If you haven't yet registered as an Eco-School, follow the link below



[Register as an Eco-School >>](#)



## Eco planning from now until the summer holidays

On Friday 11 of June world leaders will convene in Cornwall for the annual G7 summit. One of the key policy priorities will be climate change and preserving ecological biodiversity. At the same time, schools around Dacorum will have just completed their first week back from their last half term holiday of the year. With three months left to pack in lesson plans and annual targets, it's understandable for some topics to slide off the table. However, just like the international leaders are keeping the environment on the agenda at the G7, there are plenty of opportunities to do the same in our schools.

Action days include:

- [World Environment Day](#) on **5 June**
- [World Oceans Day](#) on **8 June**
- [World Rainforest Day](#) on **22 June**.

June is also the perfect month to engage with your students on longer campaigns. The Pod will be running their [What's Under Your Feet](#) campaign – a long running citizen science survey looking at the health of soil invertebrate abundance and the impact it has on UK bird populations.

If looking for bugs doesn't appeal to your students, The Wildlife Trusts [30 Days Wild](#) campaign is providing a month of outdoor activities for kids, including a free goody bag to help plan your events.

End the last few weeks of the 2020-2021 school year on a plastic free high with [Plastic Free July](#). See how long your students can go plastic-free by having them sign up to the international [challenge](#). The challenge can provide a useful example of how much plastic we can actually use in our daily lives,



something that might surprise even the most eco-minded students.



## Did you miss us?

If you're new to the SEED, but want to read more, you'll be pleased to know that all past copies are now available on our website.



[Find past copies of the SEED >>](#)

## Crafts

### Upcycled garden baskets

Teach your students about upcycling while making a handy basket for the garden. The activity can be done inside or outside and takes about 30 minutes to do. This could be a great way to teach your class about the growing cycle or just a fun "crafternoon". For full instructions, and other ideas, visit the Royal Horticultural Society [website](#).



Tried this with your class? [email us](#) with the details and pictures of your upcycled baskets and we'll feature you in the next edition of the SEED.

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