

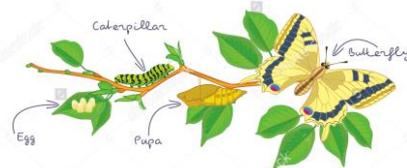
# Autumn in the school garden



Room 12 have been working really hard in the school garden since the school re-opened for the Autumn term. Autumn can be a very busy time in the garden and it is always exciting to see what surprises the flora and fauna have to offer. Every new term brings new lessons and this year has been no exception.

In early September the garden looks just like a jungle. All the wildflowers have overgrown and gone to seed and nettles and milkweed have taken over. We are delighted to see this wild jungle because we have learned that these plants are ideal habitat for our September friend- the butterfly.

The butterfly was in abundance in the school garden for the past two months and we hunted out and identified live samples from all stages of the life cycle.



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Tortoiseshell, Wall, Painted lady and Peacock butterflies. They were feeding in our native flora flower beds which were full of nectar rich blooms. The Tortoiseshell was the most common species this year.

We examined live adults in the classroom and located eggs and caterpillar colonies in the garden. The larvae were feeding in our cabbage patch and our nasturtium beds. We were so excited this year to be able to harvest some caterpillars and incubate them in the classroom. We watched five caterpillars morph into pupa and chrysalis stages. We are waiting patiently for the butterflies to emerge.

Did you know that the Tortoiseshell butterfly hibernates in the bird-boxes in our garden all winter?



The Peacock butterfly...he disguises himself as a fox peeping from the bushes to escape hungry birds.

Hungry caterpillars



TRUE STORY!

## The caterpillar who loves Maths!!

After incubating our hungry caterpillars in our safe box in the classroom, we arrived back into school to discover, that one speedy wriggler had managed to escape! He had climbed the wall and cleverly disguised himself as a chrysalis on the Maths language board! He can stay in pupa form until next Spring when he might emerge as an adult butterfly. I wonder which Maths chapter he will enjoy the most while he's hanging around!

**PLEASE FEEL  
FREE TO VISIT  
ROOM 12 AND  
WE WILL SHOW  
YOU OUR  
HIBERNATING  
PUPA**

# The Irish Native honeybee

We were delighted that our butterflies shared the garden this year with a colony of Native Black Honeybees. These are the darkest of all European species and also one of the most resilient.

LIVE SCIENCE LESSON WITH A RELUCTANT AND LONELY HONEYBEE VOLUNTEER FROM THE GARDEN!



Drowsy Queen bee stumbling around the garden



Examining the worker bee

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Most honeybees are not wild but are visiting gardens from farmed hives.
- The Native Black honeybee is exclusive to Ireland and has been endangered in recent years because their colonies were attacked by nasty mites. Also imported species are threatening native colonies.
- Male bees, called drones, remain in the hive while female workers gather the nectar for the hive to build a honey store for the hibernation season.
- The queen bee can be killed by the colony if she gets old or is not as strong as the new queens bred in the hive.
- Immature queens are fed royal jelly instead of nectar to make them stronger and larger than drones or workers.
- The weaker queens are thrown out of the hive at the end of the season. They gather some workers to create new colonies.

## EDIBLE GARDEN

We harvested our vegetables in early October. The best growers this year were our herbs. We also managed to get some nice juicy tomatoes, some turnips and some carrots. We left the cabbage for the caterpillars.

We also had a huge supply of nasturtiums which are edible flowers.

## OTHER PROJECTS



We will soon be getting ready for our winter bird garden. We will make feeders and drinkers from recycled plastics and set up safe feeding spaces for our little feathered friends during the cold winter months. If you are passing the garden stop for a few minutes to watch our little birds feeding. See how many species you can name.

Our garden is always very popular with wild birds as it is a predator free zone for meal times.