



Growing Schools is a [DCSE](#) project managed by [FACE](#).

## Welcome to the Growing Schools Newsletter for Early Spring 2010

Happy New Year from the Growing Schools team. We are all looking forward to a good growing year, and if you would like a colourful Growing Year Planner to guide and inspire you, just [click here to order one](#).

In this issue you'll find details of two new wildlife-focussed teaching resources, a scheme to get free coach travel for school visits, a wriggling new society and competition to create a Shakespearian scarecrow.



We hope your gardens have survived the winter's rain and snow, and you'll soon be enjoying the green glow of spring's emerging new shoots.

Rose and Tom, Growing Schools  
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## News

### Ministerial support for Growing Schools



More than 60 Growing Schools partners came to a reception at the House of Commons in December to celebrate the successes of Growing Schools and to hear about plans for the future. Gisela Stuart, MP for Edgbaston, (who launched the Growing Schools garden at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in April 2008), kindly hosted the event.

Diana Johnson MP, DCSF Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, praised the Growing Schools programme for its important contribution in supporting schools to provide stimulating and enjoyable learning-outside-the-classroom experiences

for young people. She highlighted some key strengths – the website; strong partnerships, particularly the Development and Delivery Group; and the library of high quality resources.

The Minister also highlighted the Growing Schools gardens in Birmingham and Eltham, and the inspiration and resource they provide for schools. Work is now progressing on the Growing Schools Garden award scheme whereby existing gardens – wherever they are found be it in schools, botanical gardens, local authority parks – can become Growing Schools Gardens. These sites will demonstrate how gardens can be used for active learning across the curriculum; and provide advice and training for schools. The first gardens will be announced in the next Growing Schools newsletter.

## FREE nationwide coach travel for schools from Reciproc8™

Schools can gain free coach travel nationwide through the Reciproc8™ Recycling Scheme. You can book transport for school visits to farms, field study centres, botanic gardens, in fact almost anywhere. Reciproc8™ offer 49-55 seat coaches on a return travel basis with nationwide coverage to and from virtually any destination in the UK.



Simply, you can gain Rewards Points for the mobile phones, inkjet cartridges and toners that you collect for recycling, then exchange your Points for items in the Rewards range. You can use your Reciproc8™ Points to exchange for transport with the added benefit that Reciproc8™ arranges it for you. Register at [www.reciproc8.co.uk](http://www.reciproc8.co.uk) or call 0845 194 8288 and speak to the Reciproc8™ team.

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## Events Diary

### Growing Schools Conference, Thursday 25 March 2010



Based at Oxford's historic and attractive Botanic Gardens, this national conference is the ideal opportunity for learning, debating and networking; and we extend a warm invitation to everyone with an interest in using the living environment in education.

For more information, and booking details, [download the flier here.](#)

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## Resource Highlights

### Hedgerows, a new hedge-ucation resource from Hedgelinek

Hedgerows can be found in all areas of our countryside and towns. As well as providing us with blackberries, sloes, hazelnuts and elderflowers, they're vital for food and shelter to many birds, insects and animals, including many of our rarer species.

Aimed at children aged seven to eleven, this resource includes fun, interactive games to help them learn about hedgerows and the wildlife they support, as well as background information and activity sheets. Children can learn how to look after hedgerows, and take part in a hedgerow survey.



For more information, visit the microsite [www.hedgelinek.org.uk/hedgerows](http://www.hedgelinek.org.uk/hedgerows)

## Bee Scene, a survey and resource pack from Plantlife



Plantlife is calling on all primary teachers to join a new survey this spring. It involves taking a class out to a local park, field or any other natural space between April and July and completing a simple survey. Then heading back to the classroom to help plant a virtual meadow online, linking your findings with hundreds of others across the country.

The survey and activity pack will be available online from mid March 2010, and will provide a range of resources to promote a deeper understanding of food chains, pollination, biodiversity and adaptation as well as the conflicts that can occur where there are competing uses of land.

For more information [download the order form](#) or contact Felicity Harris: tel 01722 342740 / 07506 428580; email [felicity.harris@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:felicity.harris@plantlife.org.uk)

## New Earthworm Society launched



Earthworms are crucial to healthy soils whether this is in the garden, farmland or the natural environment. Despite their familiarity, much is still unknown about the 26 species of earthworm found in this country.

The Earthworm Society of Britain aims to promote the study of earthworms and increase public awareness, so we can understand more about how they help us, and how we can help them.

Visit the website for more [www.earthwormsoc.org.uk](http://www.earthwormsoc.org.uk)

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## Updates from Partners

### National Association of Field Studies Officers Conference

Nafso staged another very successful conference earlier this month, in Swanage, Dorset. Delegated enjoyed activities including keynote addresses on sustainability, and the value of learning outdoors, workshops on beach art and bushcraft skills, and a variety of fieldwork site visits.



For a fuller report, [download the report](#).

### Royal Horticultural Society Competition



The RHS is challenging all pre-schools and primary schools from the south-east counties of England, who are registered with the RHS Campaign for School Gardening, to create their very own Shakespeare's Comedies Scarecrow. The scarecrows will be pre-selected from photographic entries in May 2010 and

displayed at the Hampton Court Flower Show. The classes involved will also get free entry to the show on preview day. Visitors will vote for their favourite scarecrow and the winner will receive a trophy and £200 of garden centre vouchers.

For more information, and an entry form [visit the campaign website](#).

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## Screengrabs

### The Growing Schools Garden Website

The two Growing Schools Gardens mentioned in the first item provide inspiration and a host of practical ideas for using gardens as a setting for teaching and learning.

If you cannot visit in person, you can take a virtual tour of the Birmingham garden as it was first created for the Hampton Court Flower Show. The site also has a host of case studies, practical projects and videos of schools putting it all into practice.

[www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk](http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk)



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## Training



Gardens and gardening bring rich educational benefits to children and young people of all ages. The RHS arranges CPD courses for teachers, early years practitioners, support staff, school governors and others who are involved in teaching and inspiring children about plants, gardening, and keeping animals.

This term over 50 CPD day courses are taking place, covering all ages from Early Years Foundation Stage to the 14-19 Diploma in Land-based Studies, and including the new Primary Curriculum.

For more details, go to [www.growingschools.org.uk/training](http://www.growingschools.org.uk/training)

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If you have any questions about visits or growing send your questions for possible inclusion in the next issue to: [growingschoolsqan](mailto:growingschoolsqan)