



Planning your project

A National Education Nature Park guide

The beginning of a project might feel very daunting, but it can help to look at how far you have already come. What have you already found out? What have you discussed? What have you experienced? You are probably already halfway there. Taking action will be exciting, and a great learning experience for educators as well as learners.

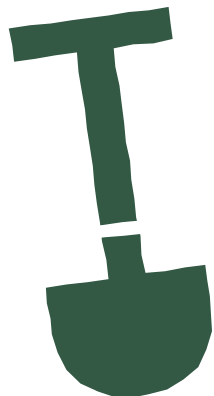


We have provided some guidance below to some key areas of project planning, such as timelines, health and safety, costs and responsibilities – as well as handy resources to complete with your children and young people to plan your next steps.

Involving children and young people in planning for their Nature Park can help develop the following skills:

- Understand the importance of working as a team when planning and implementing a nature-based intervention
- Implement different modes of communication to share ideas and views when planning change
- Develop a commitment to contributing to a long-term shared goal
- Begin to understand how making change together can promote positive emotions
- Use problem-solving and perseverance to overcome setbacks to stay on track and achieve goals

What shall we do, and when?



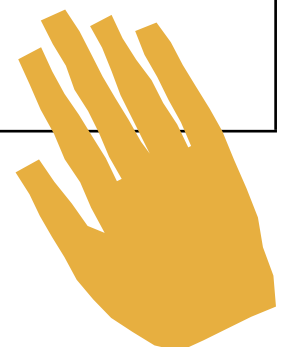
No matter the season or weather, there are actions you can take in your site all year round. Why not use a calendar or wall chart to plot activities and timelines with your learners? You could use our **Half-term Planner Template** to decide activities for each half-term with your children and young people.

There are apps and software available to help with project planning too – [Asana](#), [Trello](#), or even a simple spreadsheet can help you track tasks and timelines.



Here are some suggestions of seasonal actions you can take each term to get you started:

Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
Ponds or rain gardens		
Water butts		
Grasslands and wildflowers	Flowers, fruit or vegetables	
Plant trees		Grasslands and wildflowers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a bug hotel • Make a hedgehog house • Make a compost bin: <u>Top tips for making compost</u> <u>Composting for schools</u> <u>Leaf compost bin</u> • Plant spring bulbs • Harvest autumn crops • Sow hardy annuals and wildflowers: <u>Hardy flowering seeds</u> • Hold an event to fundraise for your Nature Park: <u>Raising money</u> • Protect your plants from cold: <u>Warming the soil</u> • Mulch: <u>Mulch your garden</u> • Plant trees: <u>Plant a tree</u> 	Plant green walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sow seeds outdoors: <u>Hardy flowering seeds</u> • Watering and maintenance: <u>Conserving water</u> • Harvest summer crops • Have a produce sale to raise money: <u>Raising money</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan what to grow and where: <u>What shall we grow?</u> <u>Grow your own</u> • Build beds or containers: <u>Creating raised beds</u> <u>Container gardening</u> • Prepare your soil: <u>Get the soil ready for planting</u> <u>Soil texture test</u> • Mulch: <u>Mulch your garden</u> • Sow seeds in pots or trays indoors • Build a bird box • After half term, start sowing seeds outdoors: <u>Hardy flowering seeds</u> • Build a pond • Make posters or leaflets to raise awareness 	





Health and safety

Most of the activities suggested within the National Education Nature Park will not require any further paperwork beyond the annual permissions from parents and carers, and standard health and safety measures in place for regular outdoor activities such as playtime and PE.

Things to consider when taking learning outdoors include:

- Levels of supervision
- The environment – hazards, identifying the area you want to use for an activity, setting some clear guidelines for learners when outdoors
- Taking care around wildlife and animals – for learners' safety as well as the wildlife!
- Plants and fungi – teaching learners not to eat plants they find or touch fungi
- Appropriate footwear and clothing

For more information on health and safety guidance, take a look at the [Nature Park health & safety considerations](#). Health and safety guidance is also provided for each of the [suggested Nature Park interventions](#). Specific gardening safety resources can be found on RHS Campaign for School Gardening, see [Health and safety in the garden](#) and [Tool safety](#).

How much will things cost?

Prices for plants and materials can vary depending on quality and supplier. This rough guide outlines suggested costs for plants and hard materials or structures for your site.



There may be lots of ways to save money such as upcycling existing materials or containers, encouraging parents, carers and staff to donate materials, or partnering with a local supplier for discounted seeds and plants. It is also important to consider the environmental impact of your materials – choosing existing, natural or responsibly sourced materials for your Nature Park will help to make your vision a reality.





Rough guide to planting costs

Size of container	Plant type	Cost
Modular trays	Annuals and perennials	£2+
Plug plants	Annuals and perennials	From 60p each
9cm	Annuals and perennials	£4.00-£8.00
1 litre	Annuals, perennials, shrubs	£4.00-£15.00
2 litre	Perennials and shrubs	£8.00-£20.00
5 litre	Perennials, shrubs, trees	£8.00-£35.00
10 litre	Specimen or impact plants and trees	£20.00-£60.00+
10 litre +	Specimen or impact plants and trees	Price on application

Rough guide to materials and structures costs

Type	Cost
Topsoil	From £40 a tonne depending on quality
Peat-free compost	From £90 a tonne depending on quality
Gravel, slate and cobbles	From £30 a tonne depending on material
Weed suppressing membrane	From £5 per sq metre
Reinforcing grid	From £10 per sq metre
Seating	Wide range of costs, a 2-seater bench can start from £75
Sleepers/decking	Sleepers from £20 each, decking from £80 per sq metre for professional installation
Outdoor shelter	Wide range of costs, gazebos can start from £40
Greenhouse	Small plastic greenhouses from £20, walk-in greenhouses from £200
Polytunnel	Temporary tunnels from £60, permanent tunnels from £300
Water butt	From £30 depending on capacity and design





What are everyone's roles and responsibilities?

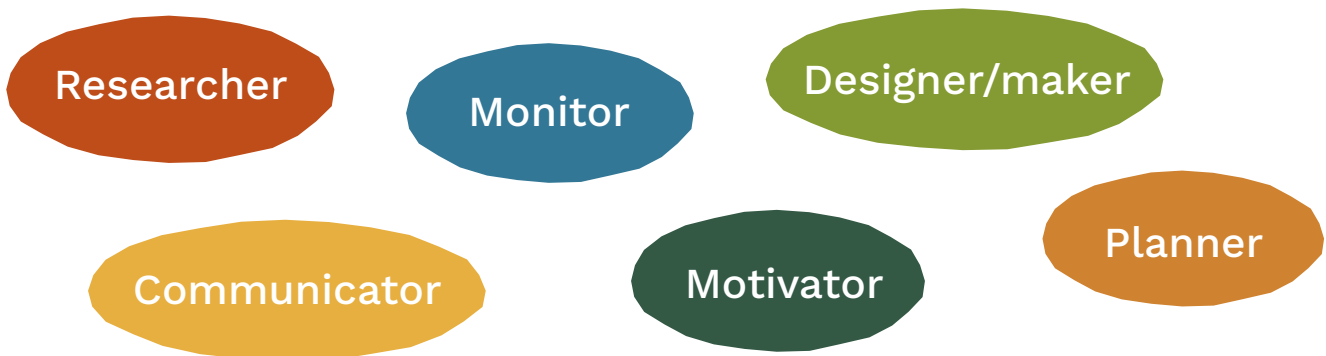
Being a part of the Nature Park means that everyone in your learning community can get involved, no matter their experience, skillsets or interests. As well as your own role, consider children and young people's roles, and other staff you can call on.

There are lots of skills that will be useful as you start to take action for your Nature Park – from plant and biodiversity knowledge as you make planting decisions and monitor improvements, to organising people and responsibilities as you make changes around your site. Skills in measuring and building can help if you plan on creating new structures in your outdoor space, and communication and marketing skills can help you raise awareness and share your story.

Some questions it may be helpful to consider or ask others:

- How much time can you contribute to the project, and when? (Can they offer regular help, or more ad hoc support?)
- Do you have prior knowledge or experience that will be valuable during a certain action or activity?
- Are there any other ways that you can contribute to the project (e.g. painting signs, donating plants, collecting orders from the garden centre)?

Use our **Nature Park Project Plan template** to complete with your group. This is helpful to keep learners on track and remind them of their goals, but could also be shared with your senior leadership team or rest of your school community to share your ideas and plans – and get more people involved. It can be helpful to ask learners to think about the different roles necessary when working as a team. Why not ask them to think about what their interests are to help them consider what tasks they might enjoy the most? Here are some ideas of roles that can be a good start:



It is important to remember that these roles are not set in stone, and can change and cross over – everyone, no matter their role, can help throughout your Nature Park journey!



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