Green-Schools
Seminar 2026

Green-Schools
An Taisce

Global Citizenship
Food & Biodiversity Theme

Green-Schools Themes



What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity, or *biological diversity*, is the variety of living things; from the tiniest flower on your lawn to the largest animals at sea





The more diversity the better for the health and resilience of the planet!

Why is Biodiversity important?













Why is Food an important topic?

Environmental	Personal
Litter & Waste ✓	Diet ✓
Energy ✓	Activity Levels ✓
Water ✓	Mental Health ✓
Travel ✓	Behavioural issues ✓
Biodiversity ✓	Social skills ✓
	Practical life skills ✓
	Knowledge ✓





Green-Schools 7 Steps



Step 1: Green-Schools Committee



Step 1: Green-Schools Committee

- **Essential**
  - Students (N.B. student led)
  - Co-ordinator

- **Optional**
  - Sub-Committees for previous themes
  - Other staff
  - Parents
  - Community Members

- Remember! Whole school involvement!



Step 2: Environmental Review (.....before you take action!)

There are 2 Essential Actions:

1. Food and Biodiversity Awareness Survey
2. Compile a Food Habitat Map

Other optional actions:

1. Assess Soil Health
2. Assess school grounds biodiversity



2026 Food and Bio Awareness Survey

1. What % of students and staff have grown food before?	
2. What % of students and staff have eaten food that they have grown?	
3. What % of students and staff have cooked with food that they have grown?	
4. What % of students and staff can name **two** ways that we need biodiversity to help us grow our food?	
5. What % of students and staff can name **two** ways that our food choices might actually harm biodiversity?	

Food Habitat Mapping

- Provide a base to plan improvements
- The map will show:
  - layout of school
  - any and all types of food related items on it including:
    - veg patch/fruit trees/raised beds
    - wild food areas
    - the school canteen
    - food waste bins
    - vending machines



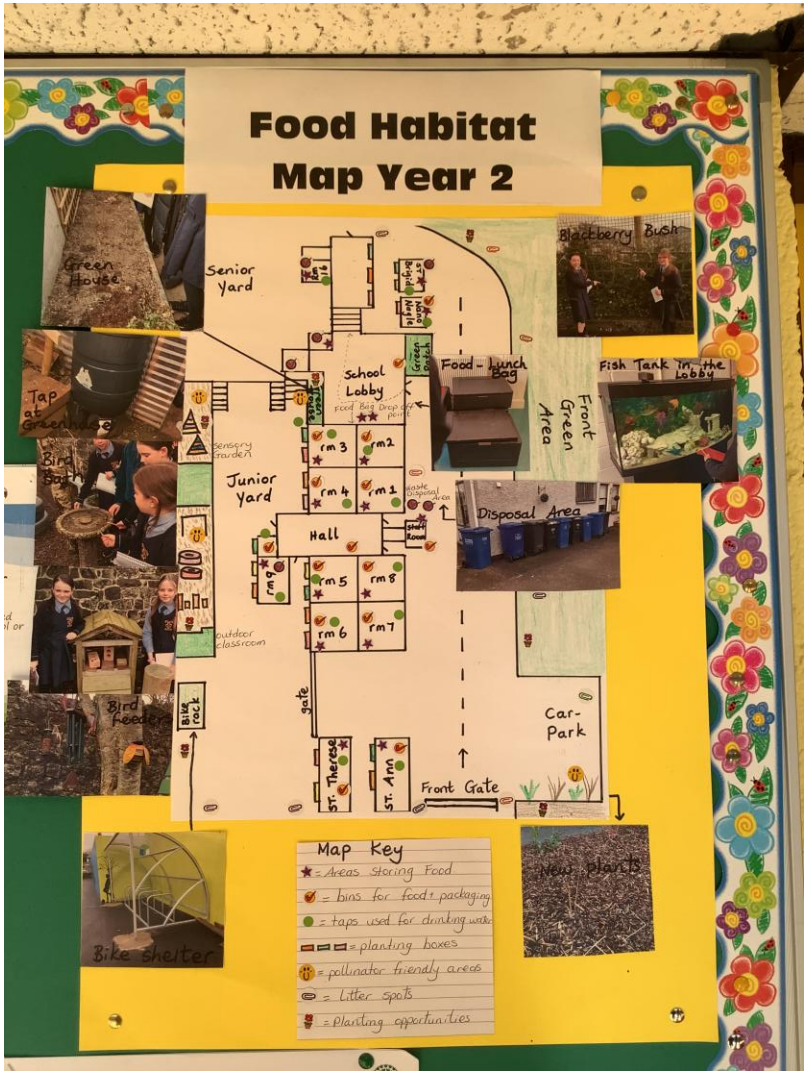


Food Habitat Mapping

A visual representation of the school and grounds that shows the connections to food and growing.

Lesson plan and checklist for carrying it out here.

Presentation and Seminar Recording



Step 3: Action Plan

Over-arching aims…



1) Increase Awareness
   - Environmental impacts of food production
   - The positive impacts biodiversity has on food growing.

2) Increase practical knowledge & skills
   - In the garden
   - In the kitchen

Step 3 (sample) Action Plan

Sample Action Plan

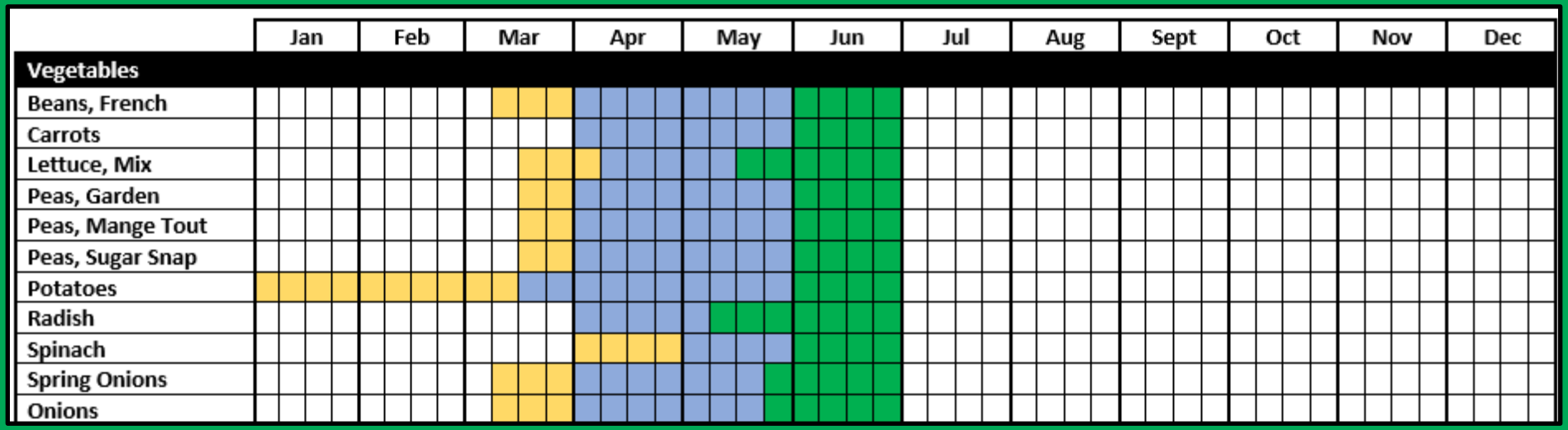
Action	Person Responsible	Target Date
Establish a committee for (Year 1 of) the new theme	GS Coordinator	September 28th
Conduct the Food and Bio Awareness Survey	Committee	October 15th
Create a 'Food Habitat Map' of the school	Committee	Last week of November
Finalise what crops will be grown by each class	GS Coordinator	December 11th
Decide what parts of the school grounds can and will be used by each class for growing food	Coordinator, Caretaker and all staff (at staff meeting)	January 15th
Prepare all growing spaces for growing	Class teachers and caretaker	January to February inclusive (deadline Feb 26th)
Source seeds, pots, containers, compost and any other materials required for growing	All classes	December to February inclusive (deadline Feb 26th)
Plant seeds, care for crops indoors, etc	All classes	February - April
Move plants outside as necessary	All classes	March - May
Care for and harvest crops as necessary	All classes	May – June
Have harvest celebrations - share Harvest Recipe Cards, and talk to all staff about what they are planning to cook/prepare	All classes together or separately	May - June (as crops are ripe and ready)
Summer Break		

Step 3 – Action Plan

	Autumn / Winter	Spring	Summer
Year 1	Introduction to Theme	Grow Crops	Harvest Celebrations
Year 2	Study ‘Global Topics’	Grow Crops	Harvest Celebrations



Step 3: Action Plan- The Crops



- Coordinators given list of recommended crops but you can grow anything you like! These have been chosen as they fit in the school year and many can be grown in small spaces.
- Coordinators to assign crops to classes/groups, with Harvest Recipes in mind for May-June time.
- Schools are not asked to grow anything over the summer but can if they want.
- Herbs are also a great option to grow in small containers

Step 3: Action Plan- Adding Spaces for Growing and Nature

Practical improvements



Create growing areas

- Raised beds
- Herb beds
- Plant pots
- Window planters
- Plant fruit bushes/trees etc

Create places for wildlife

- Build bird boxes (unused/old wood)
- Create a pond/log pile/leaf mould/wildlife area/'mini-beast' hotel
- Leave areas 'unmanaged' (hedgerows/grass areas)

Step 3: Action Plan- The Harvest



- School runs a number of harvest celebrations in June.
- Consider options like a mini farmers market, school bake off or sustainable lunch day.
- We have created a variety of Harvest Recipes which are based on the suggested crops but you can do anything!
- Consider collecting a cooking kit for a few weeks in May/June so that students can prepare food with any of their harvested crops.
- Use whatever crops you have but you can also supplement (especially if you have a big school!). Growing herbs means you can make your harvest go a long way. Add to sandwiches, pizza toppings or herbs like mint to make lemonade!

Step 3: Action Plan- The Global Topics



Coordinators given list and decide with Committee on one (or more) core theme for the whole school to study

1. Our Diet and our Rainforests
2. Pesticides and Wildlife
3. Our Diet our Climate
4. Protecting Pollinators
5. Food Waste
6. Food Miles
7. Who is your farmer?
8. Crop Diversity

Step 3: Action Plan – Supports and Resources

Following the Env. Review, schools opt into carrying out workshops and lesson plans, over the two-year cycle including:

- **Workshop Resources Autumn-Spring**
  - Food Choices and Labels Activity
  - Seeds Workshop
  - Crop Cards
- **Spring/Summer :**
  - Harvest Recipes
  - Cooking Skills Demos/Workshops
- **Autumn Year 2:**
  - Global Topic Sheets



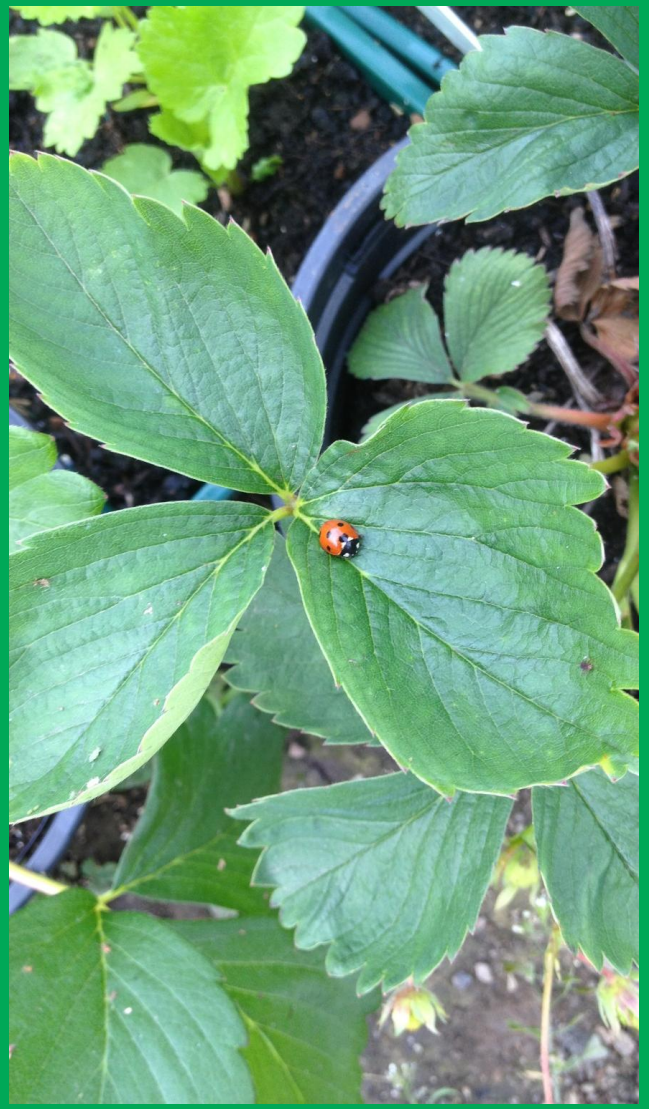
Step 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

1) Evaluate levels of awareness

- Repeat the Food and Biodiversity Awareness Survey

2) Evaluate progress on practical knowledge

- Repeat the Food and Biodiversity Awareness Survey
- Repeat the Food Habitat Map



Step 5: Curriculum Work



Step 6: Informing & Involving

- Green-Schools Notice Board
- Local Press
- School Newsletter
- Action Day
- Parents/Grandparents/ Neighbours
- World Kitchen Day



Step 7: Green Code

Aim: To state the objectives that demonstrate the school's commitment to environmentally friendly actions

- Display on your Green-Schools notice board
- Poster/slogan competition
  - -Rap
  - -Song
  - -Poem
  - -Code of Conduct

Green code example:

"Growing food at school,
Is really very cool,
It is healthy, fresh and green,
Which will keep our planet
super clean!"

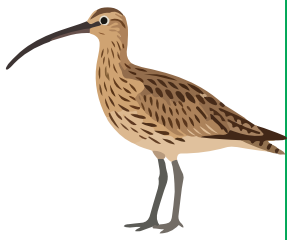
Events and Dates for your Diary

- Tree Day, Thursday October 1st at 11am. Register here to join us.
- Global Topic Webinars. Throughout November we will be holding webinars linked to the Global Topics. These will be recorded and available on our YouTube channel afterwards.
- World Soil Day, December 5th. Complete our soil workshop in the areas you plan on planting.



Events and Dates for your Diary





Thursday, November 12th at 1pm

Celebrate Science Week with us for this interactive webinar with Alena Kunkel from Breeding Waders EIP- Breeding Waders EIP.

Learn about some of our Wading birds like Curlew, Dunlin and Oystercatcher and hear how they are being impacted by Climate Change. Plus, the projects taking place to protect them. This webinar is aimed at secondary and third level students.

Register here



BREEDING WADERS EIP

Green-Schools An Taisce

Renewal Process

- If you have been working on the theme for two years and have completed the 7 steps, you are eligible to apply to renew your Green Flag.
- Online Application Form – **to be submitted by Friday, March 19th, 2027**
- **You must have received a renewal visit before you submit your application form. This can be booked with your EAO or Green School Officer.**
- Renewal visit can take place at any stage during Year 2
- You will be invited to the National Awards Ceremony in May if successful.
- Flag raising ceremony in your own school



New Application Forms

The application form has been significantly reduced. As well as the basic information about your school, you will be asked to input the results of your awareness survey and tick the boxes to tell us what crops you grew and recipes you made.

In addition to this information, you will be asked to upload a PowerPoint Presentation that shows how you completed the rest of the 7 steps. A PowerPoint Template has been created to help you and can be downloaded **HERE**. It contains a page for each of the 7 steps. A tutorial video can be accessed **HERE**.

Student's on the committee can help to create this PowerPoint.

You can change the format, design, colours etc if you wish

You can mostly use pictures or you can include text descriptions if you prefer.

Why not use your PowerPoint during the renewal visit.

Step One – Green Schools Committee

TEMPLATE

Add a copy of minutes from a committee meeting **or** a recording **or** something to show what happened at a meeting

Add a photo **or** a list of names **or** something to represent your Green-Schools Committee

We love to see Green-Schools Committees that are student led and have support from the whole school community

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Please feel free to add another slide with any other information on your committee

www.greenschoolsireland.org

Key information on Global Citizenship Food and Biodiversity on the theme page: Global Citizenship Food and Biodiversity | Green-Schools

- Presentations / Workshops / Lesson Plans
- Resources
  - Crop Cards
  - Harvest Recipes
  - Global Topics
- Case studies
- Links



Grants and Supports

- Order a free Tree – Tree Council for Tree Day (October 1st)
- Education for Sustainability Development Grant- Dept of Education. Schools can apply for up to €2500. September!
- Hare's Corner- funding in January, 2027. Specific Counties only.
- GIY- raised beds, soil and seeds. Waitlist only at the moment.
- Tree Planting- November to March
  - How can I help? – Easy Treesie, Coill na nÓg | Biodiversity In Schools

Féile Scéalta na hIthreach – A focus on Irish and our environment



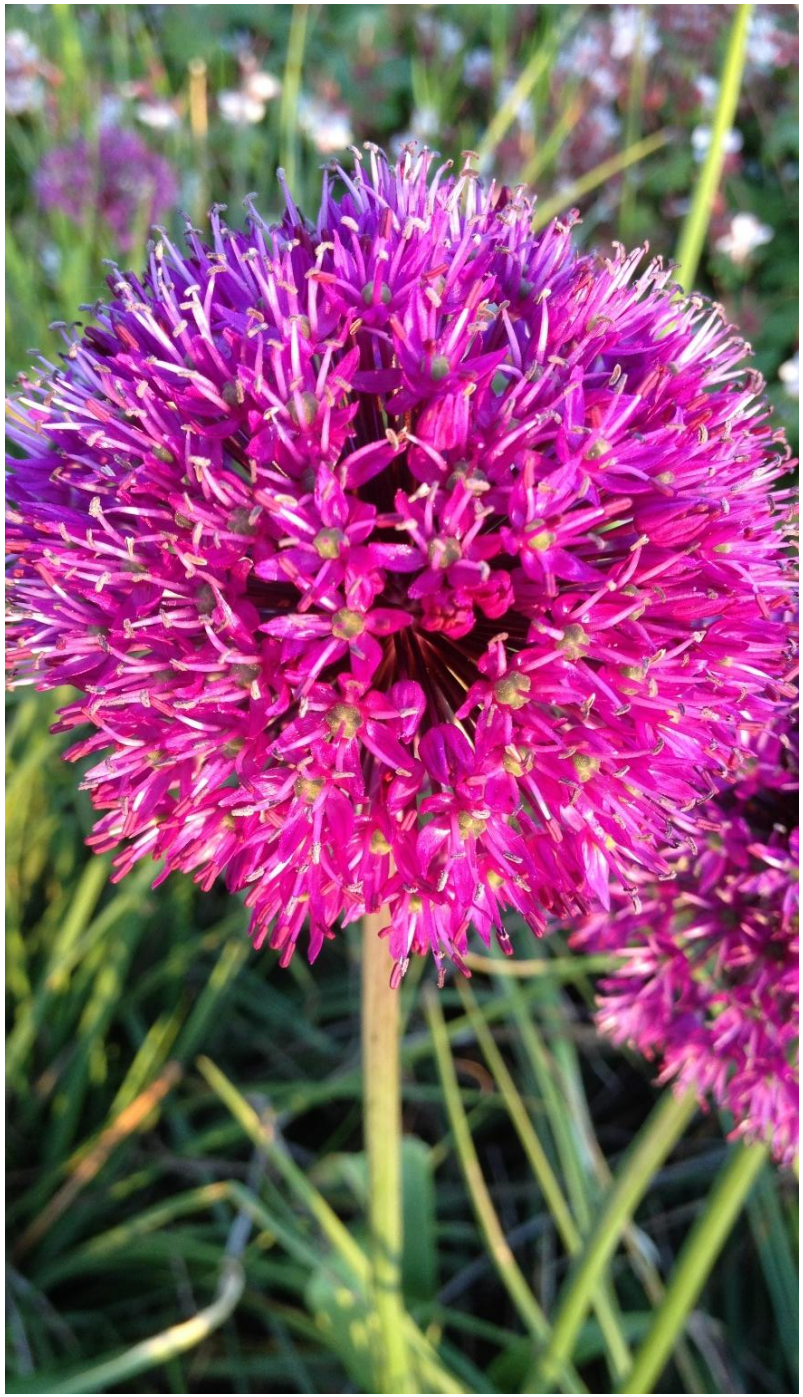
Check out the insightful seminar about Irish placenames featuring an expert from logainm.ie, Ireland's placename archive:

New Festival: Féile Scéalta na hIthreach | Green-Schools

Through the Irish language, come up with a **Poem, Song or Drama** that tells an amazing story about a local placename that connect with nature.

Deadline for entries: Friday 23/10/2026, 11am

Finals: 26/11/2026 with singer songwriter John Spillane as special guest!



Thank you!

Contact: Clare Patten or Roisin O'Connor Flanagan

E-mail:

bioevents@antaisce.org

cpatten@antaisce.org

Helpful Resources

- Food and Bio Handbook English and As Gaeilge
- Awareness Survey (English and As Gaeilge)
- Food Habitat Mapping
- Easy Cardboard Bed
- Application Forms (submit.com)
- Food and Biodiversity Intro Page
- Crop Cards (English and As Gaeilge)
- Video Case Study
- YouTube Playlist
- Order a free Tree