

# Our Living Planet – nature & food

## Primary Keynote Activity Ideas



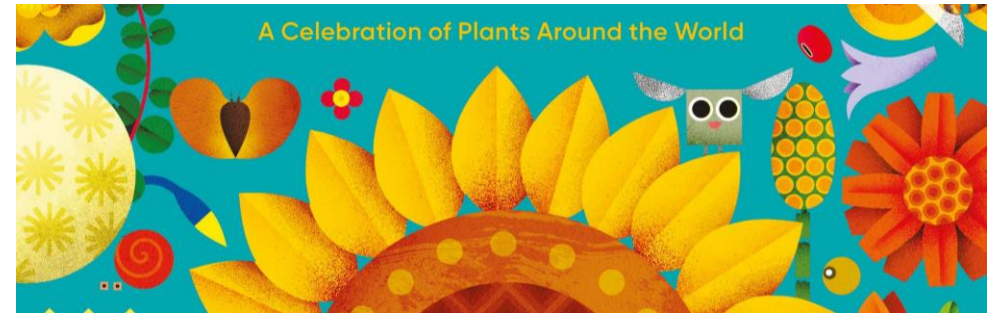
### Welcome

Hello, my name is Michael and I'm a self-employed nature educator (sometimes called an environmental educator). I teach peoples of all ages and walks of life about and in the natural world. For most of my life I have been really interested about nature and after realising I wasn't smart enough to be a vet (I didn't do too well with my A-Levels), I studied Ecology at university which gave me a really broad foundation of knowledge about nature and how all things are connected (including us).

I wrote a book all about the wonderful world of plants, called 'I Ate Sunshine For Breakfast' and some pages and activities from it are featured here.

I am passionate about growing things and upcycling things that would otherwise end up in the rubbish or recycling bin and I'll share some of these ideas with you too. I hope you enjoy them and find this interesting.

Happy Growing!



### Quick idea

#### How many plants have you used today?

This is a simple activity to do alone, in a pair or in a group. Just think back to this time yesterday and all the things you have done in those 24 hours. Where have you used plants and how have plants helped you in that day?

**The image below from my book here is a bit of a hint –** but is just about the plant-based food in our lives. What about your plant use in the bathroom, bedroom, toilet or at and on the way to school or work?

## I ATE SUNSHINE FOR BREAKFAST – AND SO DID YOU!

While you eat your breakfast, millions of other meals are taking place in your garden, street, neighbourhood and even down the back of your sofa. From microbes through to invertebrates, small mammals and birds – everyone has to eat something.

You may have had some toast with butter and jam on it for your morning meal. If so, you ate some wheat, (or maybe rye, oat or barley, depending on what bread you like), strawberries or raspberries, sugar and oil, from either plants or animals. In food chain form, your breakfast would look like this:



If you happened to eat a bowl of breakfast cereal this morning, then you basically ate a whole load of mashed up grass seeds – perhaps maize, wheat, oats, rice and rye. Most of them include some sugar, either from sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum*) or sugar beet (*Beta vulgaris*).



## Lesson idea

I've seen many excited responses Venus Fly Traps, enormous banana leaves and giant seeds at Chelsea Physic Garden (a great place to visit if you haven't done so yet), but was surprised when I saw children getting as excited when they saw an onion growing out of the ground or an apple growing on an apple tree.

**The Shelf Life project** is a way to bridge this 'missing link' between the plants in our environment and the plant-based products in our lives.

You can grow wheat in the breakfast cereal, peanut in the peanut butter jar, strawberries sprouting from the jam jar and potatoes in the crisp packets and more. It also gives the packaging a second life.

List some other fruits and vegetables that grow in the UK. Can you think of what products you find them in?

## The Upcycled Kitchen Garden

Why not try reusing packaging as plant pots?

This reduces what is thrown away, saves you money and can be the source of many thoughtful gifts for family and friends.

There's so much of it in our lives – take away containers, tins, cartons and bottles can all make really good homes for houseplants and the seeds are all in our homes too – lemon, avocado, chilli, and tomato seeds are in our fresh foods, while dried chick pea, kidney bean and others can all grow quite easily.



Climate action is... home grown

[CLICK HERE](#) for a 'how to' video tutorial from my YouTube channel: 'Bringing Your Kitchen to Life':

## Beyond the Classroom

### Local Living Landmarks

This is a nice way of getting to know the plants in your neighbourhood through the seasons, recognise and identify a selection of local plants and get some good exercise too. **See the illustration on the next page for ideas.**

1. Print a map of your local area and stick it into a notebook. Zoom in as much as possible before printing – it needs to be big enough for you to add your own notes and labels.
2. Find a walking partner by asking a family member or friend to head out with you. You'll be out for about 1 hour.
3. Choose a direction and walk for about half a mile. This would normally take about 15 minutes but you'll probably be stopping a lot to look at plants
4. Mark the location of interesting trees and other plants you see on the street and in gardens. If you don't know what they are, take a picture or draw the leaves in your notebook..
5. You'll see different animals on and around the plants, such as bees, flies, butterflies, and birds. Make a note of these too, to make your map more detailed.
6. If you take at least one walk per season. You'll get to know what the plants look like at different times and get a good understanding of their life cycles.
7. Once you get home, check online or use an app to help identify the plants you drew or photographed.
8. Don't forget to look out for tiny plants and flowers as well as marking big trees.

Share what you discover...

@wfcouncil

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#WF4Climate Action

Michael Holland is @pond\_dipper on Instagram and Twitter, his YouTube channel is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDZK20xF65SJTEY6DJ0IZvA/videos> and [www.growingunderstandings.co.uk](http://www.growingunderstandings.co.uk) is him too.



# DIY: LOCAL LIVING LANDMARKS

Get to know the plants in your neighborhood through the seasons by taking part in this eco-activity. You'll learn your way around your local neighborhood and get to know its living landmarks.

## You Will Need:

- A map of your local area
- A notebook and pencil
- A comfy pair of walking shoes
- A camera (optional)
- An adult to accompany you

## What You Need to Do:

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