

Royal Hospital for Sick Children & Department of Clinical Neuroscience

Edinburgh, Scotland

Brookfield Multiplex

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Temporary

Project overview

As site is being set-up we are awaiting completion of temporary electric works so we can create a 'biodiversity garden' next to site offices.

In the meantime, we created a smaller 'biodiversity corner' next to our security / visitors cabins using old hats and reused tubs from skips on site.

A selection of pollinators such as lavender and violas and evergreen shrubs were planted to encourage insects onsite. Lengths of cane were also cut into bundles to create an insect habitat or 'bug hotel'.

A water butt was installed to harvest rainwater to maintain the area. We also decided against using weed killer around site walkways and left wild flowers e.g. poppies growing.

Five people were involved part time over 1 week to plan, source materials and plant flowers/plants. Area covers approx. 5m². Total cost £50 (saved money not buying weed killer).



Photo: Insect habitat

Located within site compound close to nearby golf course, wooded area (suburban).

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The site has some wild flowers around edges of walkways but in the 'biodiversity corner' there was almost no biodiversity, only man made materials like concrete and metal hoarding.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

As a company and at project level we feel it is important to reverse biodiversity decline and the culture has noticeably changed on our building site.

Whereas before workers could not see a link between construction and biodiversity, they now increasingly see the benefits of pollinating insects.

The added colour and greenery also brings a smile to faces of visitors and workers especially since we used old hats as hanging baskets.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Yes this idea could be replicated anywhere there is construction site hoarding.

The area will be low maintenance – the Sustainability Advisor for the project will dead head the flowers and coordinate a watering schedule with the site labourers.

The adjacent rain water harvester will provide ‘free’ water for the plants. The measures taken are innovative in that it is self-sufficient with the water supply coming from the roof of the adjacent cabin.

The ecological value of the habitat will be low because this is a temporary measure until we can access the larger area.

However, we felt that doing something small was better than doing nothing at all, and next year we can build on it and improve.

We reused waste materials found on site and engaged help from workers for ideas e.g. old coat hooks and screws used to hang the ‘baskets’, old soup containers used as pots, only out-of-date hard hats were used.



Photo: Planted lavender

This is only the beginning of an ongoing biodiversity project to help provide space for pollinators and other insects.

Two members of staff volunteered their time to A) help select / purchase the plants B) assist in designing the area.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The measures have only been in place for a few days so it is too early to see results.

This is a part of an ongoing process which will culminate in a larger biodiversity garden within the site compound.

The objectives have been met in that we have increased the ecological value of the compound and added to the biodiversity.

In the next few weeks we should have access to the larger areas where the generators currently sit. We will develop that into the 'biodiversity garden'.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Personally, I believe humans have become too detached from other species (plants and animals), to the detriment of all. Restoring links by boosting biodiversity and quality of habitats benefits other species' health and our own.

I also like how some people laugh at green initiatives but actually really appreciate them once they are implemented.



Photo: Water butt and planters