

BEATFREES X GROUNDWORK



CHANGING PLACES  
CHANGING LIVES

# RESOURCES PACK

BEATFREES X GROUNDWORK





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# WHY BE A VOLUN- TEER?



Local parks and green spaces rely on volunteers like you to keep running and remain accessible for people to enjoy.

Volunteering is a great way to get out and meet new people. Volunteers meet and collaborate with like-minded individuals to create bigger, more impactful projects that might seem overwhelming to do alone. Volunteering in parks and green spaces can take many different forms: organising a litter pick up, planting trees, hosting a nature event, and more. As varied as these activities are, they all lead to one thing: positive change. And not just for the spaces you care about - here are just a few of the many ways volunteering can benefit you.

## Boost your health & wellbeing



Research shows that spending time in nature has a positive influence on your health and wellbeing. **Acts of kindness are known to be highly beneficial** in a similar way. As an act of kindness performed in a green space, volunteering helps you benefit from both at the same time.

## Apply your skills and learn new ones



With all the different forms of volunteering (think path maintenance, wildlife monitoring, and more) there are **many skills to learn and avenues to apply what you have learnt.** This is also a fantastic opportunity to put your gardening skills to use!

## Add something special to your CV



**Volunteering is a great way to show your commitment to a charity or workplace.**

One of the key skills recruiters look for is initiative. What better way to showcase your drive than to explain the project you initiated or got involved in at your local green space? It not only shows that you can take initiative but that you care for your local community, a real win-win!

## Experience amazing landscapes and wildlife



Parks and green spaces are home to amazing creatures and house beautiful landscapes and cultural heritage. All of them are shaped by people and now more than ever **volunteers are needed to help** us preserve them!

**Volunteering is open to any and everyone, regardless of experience. Whether you have a great idea you want to implement or you just want to be told what to do, there is room for everyone. Remember, every little helps - so get involved!**

# STORIES

## RYAN

"I first heard about Future Proof Parks on Facebook. I saw they were advertising for young people to get involved in Elba Park and thought it would be a good opportunity to meet new friends and get some work experience for my CV."

"I've been involved in loads of different things – from litter picking, to planting! I've learnt loads of new things about local wildlife and natural heritage that I didn't know before and I've been involved in some local nature surveys in the river where we found fish and water bugs".

## SAM

"I've volunteered with Groundwork for a few years. Working on a natural heritage project has given me the opportunity to not only learn about the history of my local park, but also learn new skills, such as identifying butterflies, using hand tools and being taught how to plant trees."

"I'm going to college and I have arranged to continue volunteering, on placement as part of my course. I plan to become a member of the Friends of Park group and get involved with arranging events for next – I can't wait!"



Ryan and Sam, both 16, volunteered on Groundwork's Future Proof Parks programme – an initiative that brings young people and Friends of Park groups together to preserve heritage in local parks.

The Future Proof Parks Youth Action Group (YAG) was set-up for young people to learn new digital and media skills and start campaigns to encourage other young people to engage with their local green spaces. The YAG took place online.

# YAG

#Environment  
#Volunteering  
#newskills  
#youthledcampaign  
#localgreenspaces  
#mentalhealth  
#happiness  
#walkingdogs

When asked about their motivations for joining, the young people stated that they were interested in and passionate about **the environment** and wanted to take part in **volunteering**.

They also wanted to **learn new skills** by being involved in a **youth-led campaign** where they had the chance to make a difference to their own local spaces.

One young person also acknowledged that working to improve **local green spaces** would encourage people to enjoy nature closer to home and might therefore save on carbon emissions, compared to people travelling further afield to reach quality green spaces.

They also mentioned that being outside is **good for mental health** and that they realised how important nature and green spaces were for their **happiness**, especially throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The young people shared that the pandemic had made them more appreciative of parks and green spaces.

The young people described that YAG sessions have not explicitly focussed on heritage, but that the young people present in the sessions realised how important it is to **preserve green spaces**.

A young person shared that they live in an area that is proposing a large housing development on the local green space, but they themselves and other community members use the space daily e.g., for **walking their dogs**.





# SUSTAIN- ABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE





# Why revitalising parks can help climate change

Climate change has been impacting our planet for many years now, and global warming is directly related to human activity to our burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. As we have grown to understand more about what impact this is having on our planet there are small changes we can do to help make change.

Green space is so important; not only for our wellbeing and mental health but it also helps climate change adaptation.

## SOME GREAT THINGS 1 X TREE CAN DO

Provide  
oxygen for  
you and a  
friend



Produce  
2,500  
apples



Prevents  
less water  
damage



Creates  
cooler cities



Helps stabilise  
the climate



► Parks and smaller green spaces can help mitigate climate change: in addition to reducing harmful carbon pollution, they help protect people, wildlife, and infrastructure from increasingly harsh storms, sea-level rise, heat waves, and drought. The loss of natural land cover in major urban areas contributes to a warmer environment by reducing shading and, most importantly, reducing evaporative cooling - the process of plants converting water to water vapour using solar energy.

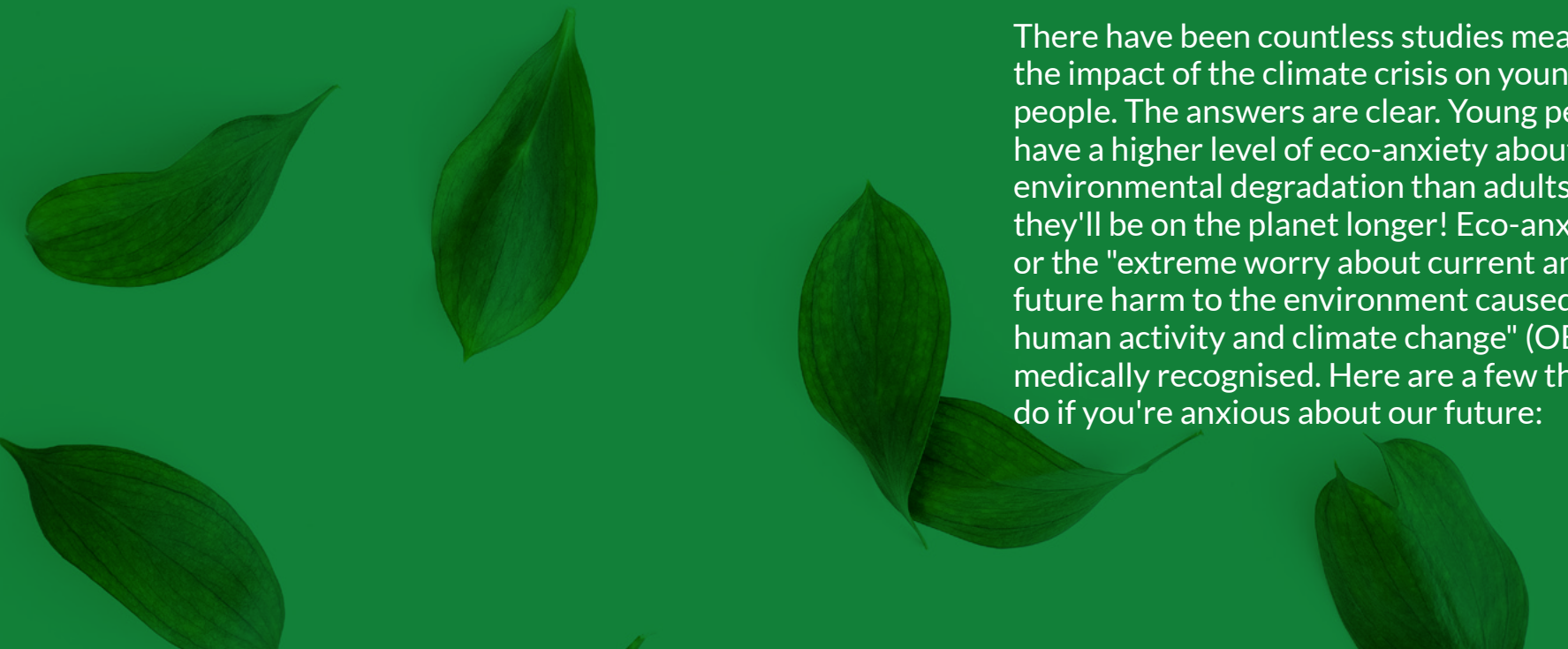


# ECO- ANXIETY



**75% of young people believe the "future is frightening"**

There have been countless studies measuring the impact of the climate crisis on young people. The answers are clear. Young people have a higher level of eco-anxiety about environmental degradation than adults, as they'll be on the planet longer! Eco-anxiety, or the "extreme worry about current and future harm to the environment caused by human activity and climate change" (OECD) is medically recognised. Here are a few things to do if you're anxious about our future:



## Volunteer with groups who are making change

Finding a community can give you a sense of shared belonging and support. Someone in your group might have gone through the same thing! **Working together to**

**create change** can give you a feeling of control, which can help massively when you feel overwhelmed. There are so many groups to join, either online or in-person, no matter how much time you have to commit. If you only have a day, try a day long event like a litter pick. If you're keen to meet on a regular basis try **Friends of the Earth, Extinction Rebellion** or **Force of Nature**.



## Start your own project to make a change

Making a change can help you feel in control of your problems, starting in your own backyard. **If you see a problem that you want to fix, go for it!** Follow the directions in this resource pack to find other like-minded people to work on your project with you or if you feel like you can handle it yourself, power to you! Making change with your own hands can be a visual reminder that you have power to change and improve the environment around you, giving the confidence you need to build the future you dream of.



## Mindfulness, Meditation and Breath-work

There are ways to cope with anxiety that might help. Analyse or **be mindful of your thoughts**. When you're feeling anxious you get stuck in a negative look of thinking of things in the worst-case scenarios or black-and-white thinking. Being mindful of your thoughts can help you step out of the negative loop and reach out to someone. Anxiety-disorders cause people to turn inward. When you sense you're isolating yourself, share your feelings with others, it might help. Finally, try to align your emotions with your actions, which will give you peace.

## Spend time in nature or green spaces

Take time outdoors with nature. Ground yourself, take your shoes off and feel the grass, look at your surroundings, or find something to touch like a rock or twig.

**Grounding is a technique suggested to help with anxiety**, when you're feeling overwhelmed or disconnected.

Spending time in nature can also help you by creating a positive personal connection with the environment, which massively helps feelings of eco-anxiety.





# WELL- BEING



# Five ways parks can boost your mental and physical welfare

## 1 Parks can improve perceptions of health.

A study by Berman and colleagues found that adding just **10 trees** to a city block has a huge impact on people's perception of their own health and well-being, equivalent to **the effect of earning £7,000 more per year.**

## 2 Parks and green spaces can improve our health and wellbeing.

To be more precise, **access to nature** can **improve** sleep, reduce stress, increase happiness, reduce negative emotions, and help generate a greater sense of meaning to life.

## 3 Parks reduce pollution.

Urban vegetarians can absorb harmful pollutants. Evidence is emerging that exposure to these pollutants can damage the central nervous system and is linked with certain mental health conditions such as **depression.**

## 4 Parks improve our cognition.

In fact, being in a green environment boosts various aspects of thinking, including **attention, memory, and creativity** in people, including those who live with depression.

## 5 Greenery alleviates fatigue.

The hyper-focused thinking we are used to in our everyday life is draining, with negative consequences for our mood. The wide range of stimuli we find in nature provides a restorative environment that **alleviates this attention fatigue.**





# Tips for your meditation sanctuary



Zen gardens were developed by Japanese monks as meditation aids. They are intended to help visitors achieve a sense of mindfulness and inner peace.

Consider using your garden as a **sanctuary** for **Zen meditation**. There is no limit to how creative you can be when designing your Zen garden: stone pagoda lanterns, or polished pebbles to create the perfect atmosphere. Do not forget to get a rake as well! You can use your rake to draw lines around your rocks and stones. Once everything is to your liking, you can enjoy the space and relax in your paradise garden.



Using rocks, water features, moss, pruned trees, sand or gravel raked to represent ripples in water, it creates a miniature stylized landscape. **There is no randomness in a Zen garden!** Natural elements are represented by each stone. Each element of the garden can have a symbolic meaning: for example, the river can be a metaphor for our journey on the river of life.

Authentic, flat Zen gardens are an **eco-friendly, water-saving option** no matter where you live. You can omit herbs like sage and trees like ginkgo if you find that they are too much to handle.



# Colour

## The language of flowers

Colours represent different emotions, choosing a selection of flowers and plants to grow in your green space can really impact people's moods in many different ways.

Here are some examples of colour emotions;



### ORANGE

Bold,  
excitement,  
enthusiasm



### RED

Respect, true love, passion



### YELLOW

Joy,  
happiness,  
friendship



### PURPLE

Royalty,  
success,  
dignity



### BLUE

Relaxation,  
tranquility  
and can  
release  
stress



### GREEN -

Renewal,  
optimism  
and good  
health



### LAVENDER

Youth,  
elegance,  
grace







## Colour & Mental Health

Colour can affect how we feel in small ways. For example, Fanta uses the colour orange to encourage a feeling of fun and confidence, while Apple uses grey to convey modernity and neutrality. Similarly, spending time in nature can be an effective way to **balance your mind and mood**. The various shades of green in a natural environment manifest **sensations of wellbeing** and **peacefulness**.

That said, we all interpret colours differently, so tuning into your senses and identifying which colours enhance your mood is important. Knowing your preferences makes it much easier to choose types/colours of plants for your garden.



# HOW TO GUIDES



# How to plant a community garden

## STEP 1

### Know Your Garden

Squeeze some soil from your garden into a fist using your hand. Then try to smooth the mass on a surface. Does it crumble or hold its shape?

Sandy soil -Drains well but hardly retracts nutrients.

It really is good for growing:

**LAVAN-  
DULA**



**VERBENA  
BONAR-  
IENSIS**



**CHOISYA  
TERNATA**



**GERANIUM  
ROZANNE**



**BUDDLEJA**



OR

Clayey soil.  
Slow to drain which can  
be problematic for your  
plants. It really is good  
for growing:

**RIBES  
SAN-  
GUINEUM.**



**MALUS  
(Crab Ap-  
ple)**



**BERGENIA  
CORDIFOLIA**



**VIBURUM  
TINUS**



**PULMO-  
NARIA**



## ► Pick your instrument!

A rake, a spade and a shear are the basic tools to get started. Make sure to get a pair of gloves too. Good gloves should be strong, durable, and not bulky. First and foremost, they should be safe. So is it a good idea to buy them online? Whenever discounts and bargains are available, of course. But we don't forget the importance of supporting small local retailers, since you'll discover which tools are most comfortable for you just by holding them!



# STEP 2 From Pot to Community Garden

Now that you have finally designed and planned your garden, you can start planting all the flowers and plants you purchased at your local garden centre. Let's see how!



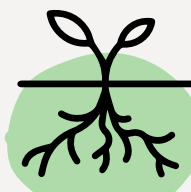
Prepare the soil and check compatibility



Find out what temperature range/sunlight/soil/water conditions your plant prefers. Add some compost or garden soil to the flower bed if you don't already have one.



Dig a hole



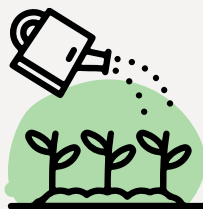
You want to make sure the hole is deep enough and wide enough to hold the plant's root system.



Carefully remove the plant from the pot.



Loosen the root ball's edge



If the hole is too deep, add a few handfuls of dirt to provide a base, rather than burying the plant itself. Once completed, thoroughly water the plant to help it recover and establish itself in its new environment.



The next step is to encourage the roots to grow outward into the soil. Using your fingers, a pencil, or a toothpick, gently loosen the roots.



Put one hand around the base of the plant, on top of the soil. Tip the pot over with the other hand so that the plant and soil fall out together. Usually, tapping the pot will loosen the soil from the edges. Plants from large pots should not be pulled out as they may rip out their roots.

# Social Media

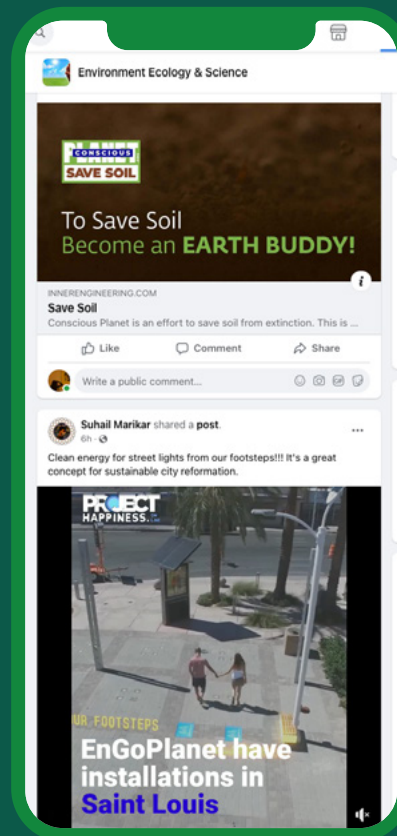
## Choose the right platforms



Instagram  
is great for  
image-driven content



TikTok  
works better for  
videos.



Facebook  
is great for creating  
groups to share projects/  
photos, posts and videos  
to interest locals to help.



## Create a calendar

Content calendars also help you create goals and strategies for meetings, allowing you to track progress. Use a regular calendar for each social channel and plan posts in advance to promote the great work you're doing in your local community. Hashtags can also help get the word out.



## Encourage engagement

Post content that people will want to read and make it engaging - share processes and updates on your project. Reach out to guest experts for specialist needs and feature their



## Build a Community

When you build a community around your local green space, people can then see updates, projects, events that are happening and it encourages this team culture to help improve your space.



# Funding

## HOW TO Get Funding

There are ways for you to raise funds yourself. Fundraisers are a good way to gain public support and raise awareness about your project. Some examples of fundraisers are:

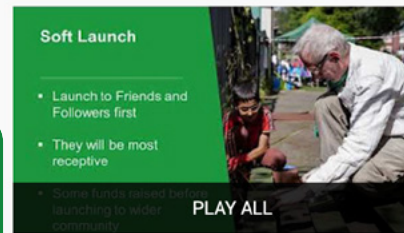
**Bake Sales** - Have everyone bake some sweets and set up a stall somewhere

**Silent Auctions** - Collect donations and promote your event

**Raffles** - Collect donations from local businesses and start selling raffle tickets

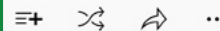
Another option is to contact your local Community and Voluntary Services (CVS). They would know of any local or national grants that your project may be eligible for. These grants could be from the Council or from a private company like The Co-Op. CVS will help you through the process of applying to grants.

▶ Funding is a crucial part of getting your idea up and running. Chances are you will need some sort of funds to print out posters or flyers or to buy tools and supplies. Make sure you've outlined how much money you need to raise and what you'll be spending it on. Keep your list and receipts in a project folder. Depending on your project here are a couple suggestions:



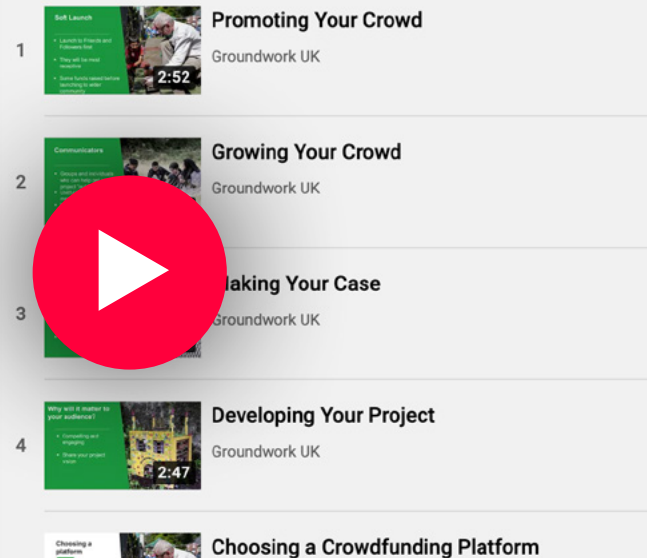
### Crowdfunding

6 videos • 18 views • Updated 6 days ago



Groundwork UK

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## Raising awareness of your project and getting community support

Some ideas might need more than one person on board to make them happen, but some great ideas to get people involved to help with a project you want to start in your local green space. There are some simple steps you can take;

# Good luck!



- ✓ **Set a time and place for your first meeting** (it can even be online on Google Meets or Zoom).
- ✓ Reach out to your community through **posters and flyers in key places**.
- ✓ **Speak with** schools, town halls, coffee shops, gyms, and community centres.
- ✓ You can also try reaching out to groups with a similar mission to yours for a **partnership**.
- ✓ Don't forget to reach out online in **Facebook groups**, on **Olio** or **Nextdoor** to make sure everyone who might be interested in your group can find out about it.
- ✓ Once you've created a meeting and promoted it then **prepare for your meeting**.
- ✓ There are a lot of resources about facilitating a meeting online, but a good place to start is **Seeds of Change's Guide**.
- ✓ **Make sure everyone has an opportunity** to explain their interests and what their skills are.
- ✓ **Take notes**.
- ✓ Don't forget to **grab everyone's details** to stay in touch and to announce the following meeting.



# Seasonal plants



Here are some great seasonal plants you may want to consider for making change in your green space.

## Spring

March, April, May



### Primroses

Bloom early spring.  
Sow seeds late winter.



### Tulips

Bloom in spring.  
Sow seeds in November.



### Daffodils

Bloom early spring.  
Sow seeds November.



### Geraniums

Bloom in spring.  
Sow seeds early spring.

## Summer

June, July, August



### Sweet Peas

Bloom June/July.  
Sow seeds between  
October - April.



### Lavender

Blooms June/July.  
Sow seeds Feb



### Poppies

May/June  
Sow seeds Spring.



### Sunflowers

## Autumn

September, October, November



### Aster

Bloom late Autumn/  
Winter.  
Sow seeds March-April



### Miscanthus

Bloom late Autumn  
but change to biscuit  
brown in Winter.  
Sow seeds Spring.



### Dahlias

Bloom Autumn | sow  
seeds early Spring



### Smoke bush

Bloom Autumn.  
Sow seeds late Spring.



### Snowdrops

Bloom January.  
Sow seeds spring April.



### Miscanthus

Bloom late Autumn but  
change to biscuit brown in  
Winter.  
Sow seeds Spring



### Winter jasmine

bloom in January.  
Sow seeds summer.



### Cyclamen

Bloom September  
December.  
Sow seeds in July.



### Winter heather

Blooms January.  
Sow seeds Spring.

## Winter

December, January, February



# Additional Support



Groundwork is a national charity working to support community action on poverty and the environment.

We hope that this pack gives you all the information you need to help you start work in your local green space and start to make a difference in your community

However, should you need any additional support in getting started in your local community, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing [groundwork\\_youth@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:groundwork_youth@groundwork.org.uk).

Other sources of local support to help with projects include local Schools, Town/Village Councils, local businesses/DIY centres (who often have offcut bins or can donate tools to groups) and community grant schemes.





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