



GARDEN BIOBLITZ!

25th/26th July 2020



What is it? A BioBlitz! is a chance to try and find as many wild plants and animals as possible, in a single place, often within a 24 hour period.

What's good about it? It's fun, especially searching for things! You have a chance to learn much more about the natural world around you and you can share information with others.

What will be different about this one? Because of the coronavirus, we are not yet ready to do a proper BioBlitz! involving lots of people. But you and your family can do a mini-BioBlitz! in your own garden, or somewhere nearby*.

Who can take part? Anyone, especially those of school age.

Where can I do it? The best place is in your garden. But if you don't have a garden or yard, you could look in a nearby park, or piece of public land.

When? Over weekend of 24-26th July, choose a 24-hour period sometime between 4pm on Friday and 4pm on Sunday. For example, you could start on Saturday afternoon, get some sleep, and then start again early on Sunday morning. But you can dip in and out of the BioBlitz!, giving yourself a rest whenever you need one.

Did you know? The best animal sightings are often in the evening and early morning!

What do I have to do?

At the time:

1. If you can**, you (or your parent/carer) will need to download the free iNaturalist app on the App Store or Google Play, create an account and search for the Rusland Horizons Garden BioBlitz project (or at

www.inaturalist.org/projects/rusland-horizons-garden-bioblitz). Let us know you're BioBlitzing via the Rusland Horizons Facebook page too- say hi!

2. Some paper and a pen or pencil will be really useful too, and if you have any wildlife guide books (bird books, flower books etc), then keep these nearby. The best thing of all is to have a camera, maybe on your phone or tablet- you'll use that to take photos to upload to the iNaturalist app. A lot of things cannot be identified at the time, but can be looked at later with a photograph.
3. Choose a start time which will allow you to record things over your chosen 24 hour period.
4. Wander about your garden, carefully and slowly looking for wild plants (weeds!) and birds and other mini-beasts and other animals. See the 'Tips' section below to increase your chances of seeing things.
5. When you find something new (there will be lots to start with) take a photo and upload it to the iNaturalist app, adding it to the Garden BioBlitz project. The app is very clever as it can help you identify things by using image searching. You can make a 'best guess' if you're not sure. Others can then help confirm what you found- we've got some really knowledgeable people who'll be taking part and will be ready to help you if you're stuck!
6. If you find something you think is really interesting or unusual, or something you're stuck with, you could also upload a photo to the Garden BioBlitz event on the Rusland Horizons Facebook page. We can then all get to have a look and share the excitement!

After the BioBlitz weekend:

- Use the iNaturalist app, your guidebooks, and the internet to finish identifying everything you have seen.
- We will put together everybody's lists and summarise the important results- we'll share our group findings on the Rusland Horizons Facebook page.

Is it safe? There are not likely to be many nasty things in your garden but you do need to be careful not to touch some things that bite, sting or give you a nasty rash (like nettles). If you are not sure, try using a stick or wear gloves, to explore the area. Also- be gentle with the wildlife you find! You are visiting their home so take care not to damage it! 😊

Top Tips!

- Search as many different types of places as you can, within your garden or space. These habitats are likely to have their own plants and animals. Don't forget to look under things that have been lying around, like bricks, or lumps of wood. Be careful when you turn them over.
- Use all of your senses at the same time: sight, obviously, but also hearing (birds chattering, or bees buzzing), smell (some plants and their flowers smell quite strongly), and touch (some plants are hairy, others smooth).
- Take your time, be as quiet as you can and be patient. If you stand and stare at a flowering plant for a few minutes, it's amazing how many things come and go.
- Finally, you are not expected to search continuously for 24 hours! Instead, pay visits to your garden/place at different times of day. Even late in the evening, you may see bats, or moths, or hear owls hooting.

*If you need to use a public space, send a quick email or ring the landowner to check you've got permission to BioBlitz on their land.

**If you can't download the app or join the Facebook group, you can still join in, using your guidebooks and write on paper. You can then email your findings and any photos you take to hello@ruslandhorizonstrust.org.

Remember, have fun! 😊