



CULTIVATING CURIOSITY IN THE GARDEN

(or park, or front yard, or nature strip, or courtyard...)

ideas for
outdoor
inquiry
moments



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IN YOUR GARDEN YOU CAN BE...

An artist, a scientist, a geologist, a geographer, a photographer, a mathematician, an historian, a palaeontologist, a biologist, a writer, a designer, an adventurer, a horticulturalist, a zoologist, a musician... and so much more.

AND YOU CAN...

Imagine, explore, observe, notice, create, listen, experiment, theorize, plan, build, research, visualize, daydream and wonder

**"Curiosity is the one thing
invincible in Nature"**

Freya Stark

A NOTE FOR TEACHERS/GUARDIANS

Many of these 'inquiry moments' require nothing more than a few minutes and the opportunity to step outside. **There are some ideas for recording observations and questions in this booklet, while many others can be simply experienced for their own sake.** Even if we can only have one precious walk outside each day, the benefits of being outside are enormous, and being in the outdoors is a natural way to provoke our curiosity.



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1

Map making

Before you go outside, draw a picture or map of your garden from memory. Take it outside with you – how accurate were you? What did you miss? Now draw the garden while you are in it.

MY MEMORY MAP

MY MAP DRAWN IN THE GARDEN

2



Close-up drawing

Take a pencil or a fine line black marker out into the yard. Zoom in on one thing - a flower a leaf, a spider web, a stick, a stone. Look at it REALLY closely. Then look again. Take time to draw it as carefully and with as much detail as you can. What did you notice?

3 Using your senses

Find a place to sit all by yourself and ask yourself these questions:

What are **5 things** you can **SEE** around you?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

What are **4 things** you can **HEAR**?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

What are **3 things** you can **FEEL**?

- 1
- 2
- 3

What are **2 things** you can **SMELL**?

- 1
- 2

What is **1 thing** you can **TASTE** in your mouth right now?

- 1



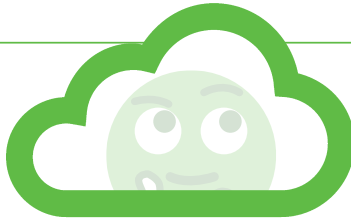
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4 **Leaf study**

Collect as many leaves as you can (collect them from the ground and carefully collect 3 more from plants around you). Can you put the leaves into groups? Can you order them from biggest to smallest? Can you make a pattern with the leaves? What do you notice is the SAME and different about the leaves? Choose your favourite one – why is it your favourite? If you have a magnifying glass, look carefully at the front and back of a leaf. What do you notice? One by one, throw your leaves into the air... which ones take the longest time to travel to the ground? How do they move?

5 **Cloud study**



Is there a place in your yard where you can lie down and look at the sky? Take some time to look at the clouds. Can you make pictures and shapes with the clouds? **What do clouds make you wonder about?**



6 **Bird count**

Take some time to notice the birds that visit your garden. How many can you count? Where do they like to go? Can you find out what kinds of birds they are? Listen to the sounds they make – what do you notice? You might like to download a bird identification app and find out more about who is in your garden.



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10

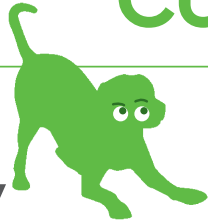
My special spot

Find a special spot in the garden and mark it out with a piece of string. Create a circle or square around the spot. **Look carefully at everything in the circle.** Write down or draw everything you see. Note the time and the date. Visit your special spot once a day to observe tiny changes that take place. You could even take a photo each day to help you spot the difference.





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11

Pet study

Do you have a pet that can go out into the garden? If so, **take them into the garden and watch what they do.** Where do they like to go? How do they behave? How do they use their senses?

12

Measuring



What is the **BIGGEST** plant in your garden. How big is it?
What is the **SMALLEST** plant? How small is it? How might you measure a plant? What makes a plant 'big?'

BIGGEST...

SMALLEST...

13

Natural art

Collect some natural items from the garden – stones, sticks, leaves, sand, seed cases...whatever you can find. **Use them to create an 'art work' IN the garden.** No glue, glitter or anything unnatural...just items from nature. Take a photo of your art work. Give it a title. Look up the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy for some inspiration.

14

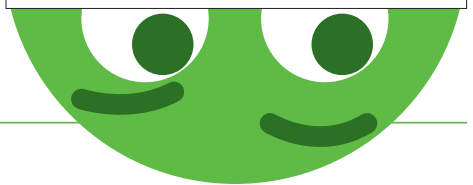
Stone ranking

Are there stones or pebbles in your garden? Can you order them from roughest to smoothest, darkest to lightest, cleanest to dirtiest, lightest to heaviest, softest to hardest, roundest to flattest, most interesting to least interesting. What else can you use to order your stones?

15 Garden ABC

Here are all the letters of the alphabet. Can you find an object in the garden that starts with each letter? You can write them here or even make your own alphabet book with drawings or photos of things in your garden for each letter.

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I
J	K	L
M	N	O
P	Q	R
S	T	U
V	W	X
Y	Z	



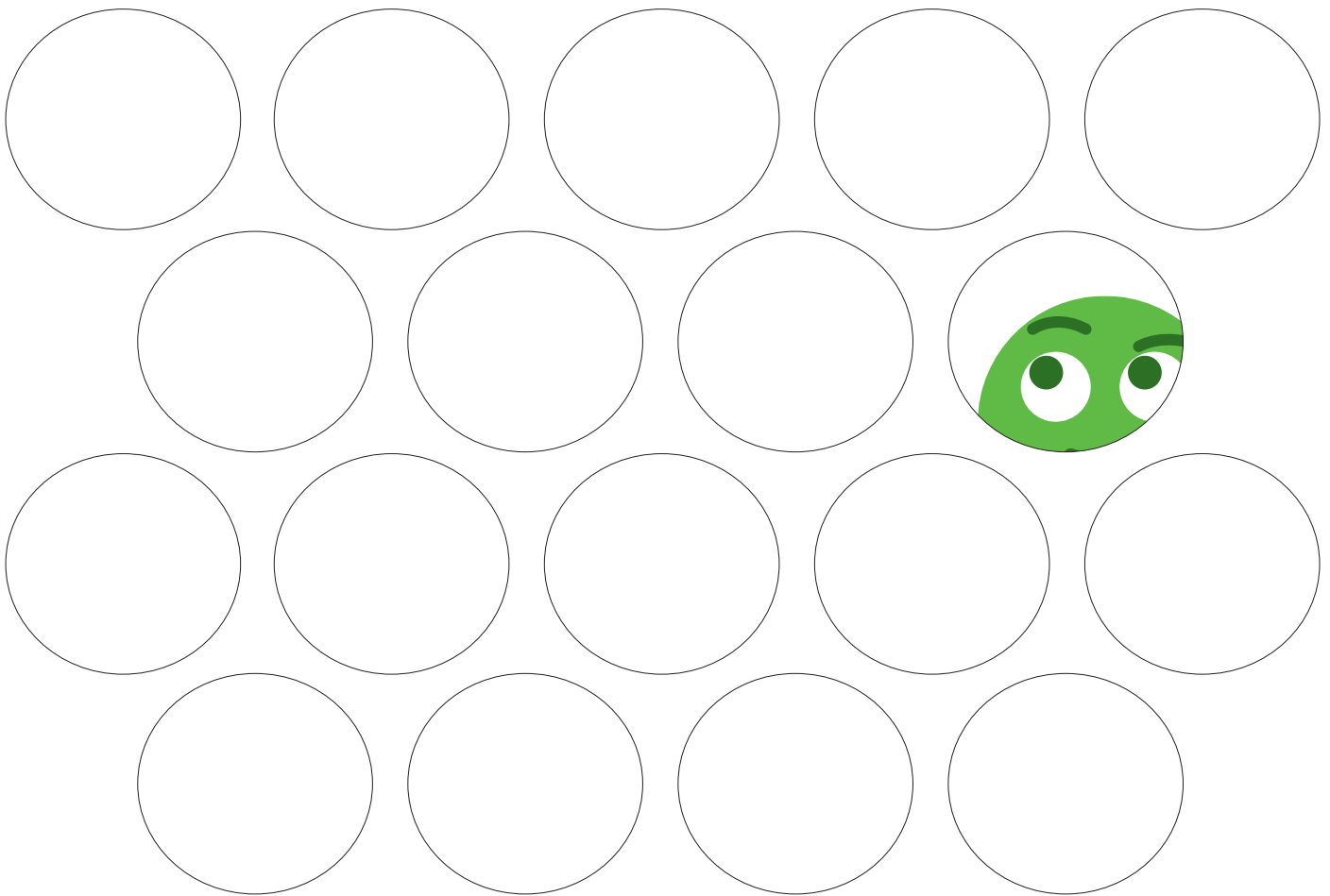
16 Treasure hunt

Find 10 things – one for each of the following characteristics. Draw or write what you find.

ROUGH	SMOOTH	SHARP	LONG	SHINY
TINY	DIRTY	OLD	SOFT	HARD

17 A world of colour

How many different colours can you see in your garden? Make a list of colours you can find or make colours with pencils or paints to match some of the colours you can find in nature.



18 Shape hunt

Hunt for these shapes in the garden – can you draw or photograph them when you find them? Triangle, oval, square, circle, semi-circle, rectangle, heart.



19

Water wonders



Take a jug of water out into the garden. **What happens when you gently pour the water on different surfaces...**on a rock, on the bark of a tree, on a flower? Find a patch of dirt... can you make some MUD?

20

... Be!

Be still and quiet in the garden. Try to be completely THERE – not thinking about anything else. Close your eyes and notice how you are feeling. What words would help you explain your feelings to others?

21

Shadows

On a sunny day go out into the garden to look for shadows. Do you cast a shadow anywhere? Do plants cast their shadows? Can you measure the way shadows change across the day? Where is the sun in the sky? How does this change over the course of the day?

22

A moment with the moon

Have you ever been out into your garden at night? Ask permission to go outside and notice what is different to your day-time garden. What can you hear? What can you smell? Look up – Can you see the stars and the moon? Maybe you could keep a moon chart and notice the phases over a month. Your night garden can be a beautiful place to be still and quiet and to remember you are on this beautiful, blue planet spinning in a huge, extraordinary universe. What does that make you wonder?





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23 Plant and grow

If you have any seeds, bulbs or seedlings, find a place in the garden or a pot to plant them in. Maybe you could plant some vegetables to eat when they are ready? Check on your plants regularly and notice what happens as they grow.



24 Look underneath

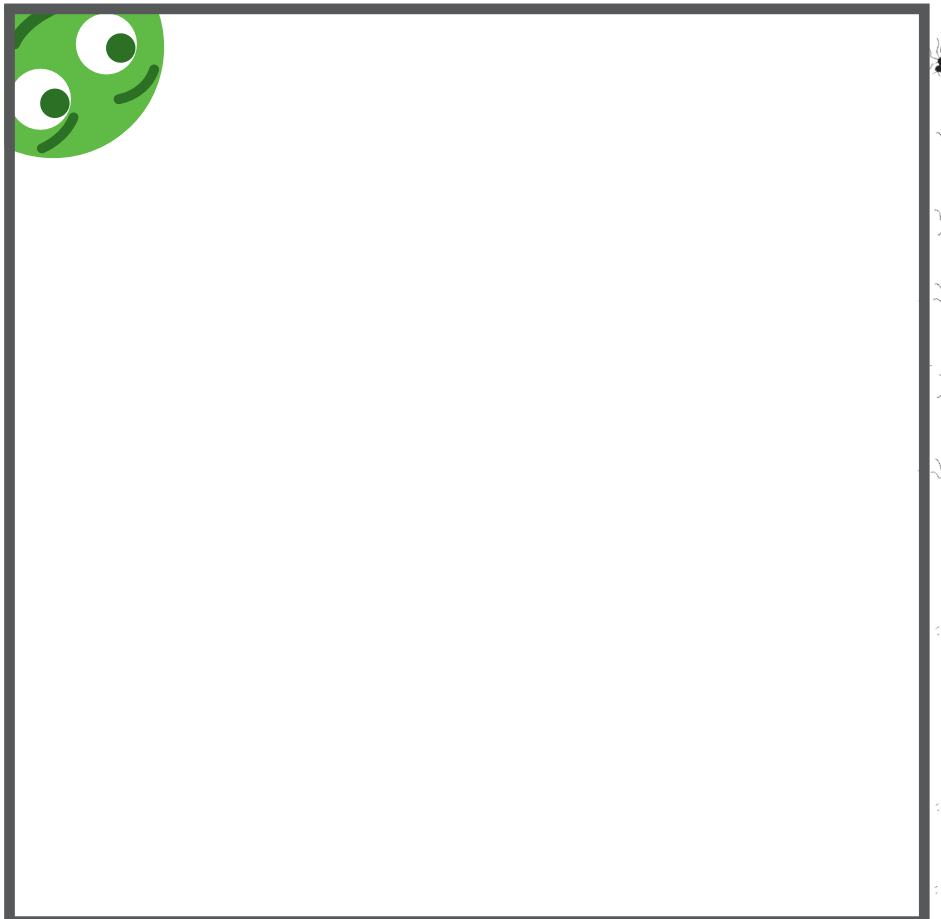


You might have some stones or small logs or even some leaf litter in your garden. Small creatures can often be found underneath... you can use a stick to lift them up or gently sift through some leaves. Can you see any tiny creatures? Have you ever watched one ant go about its business? Take some time to notice the tiny living things that share your garden. Do you have a compost bin? Maybe a worm farm? They are often FULL of amazing, hard working small creatures that can be fascinating to watch. Always be careful NOT to touch them... use gloves or watch from a sensible distance.



25 View from inside

Back inside – find a window that looks out to the outdoors. Draw everything you can see through the window – just inside the frame. What might change tomorrow? What might be the same?





What are you wondering?

Use this page to write your wonderings ... any questions that "bubble up" for you as you explore your garden.

