Green Our School: Imagine, Plan, Grow

Badge overview:

Students and teachers explore how a school with little or no green space can create opportunities for plants and wildlife, using the My school doesn’t have a green area resource to develop a realistic idea for their own school.

Badge goals:

By the end of this activity, students will

1. Recognise that schools without conventional green areas can still create opportunities for nature.
2. Identify suitable places where plants could be introduced into their school.
3. Explore different ways of greening a small or highly built-up school.
4. Use information from a practical resource to make decisions about their own surroundings.
5. Develop a realistic plan for introducing more plants and wildlife opportunities.
6. Consider the care and maintenance that their idea would require.
7. Communicate their idea and the reasons behind their choices.

When & Where to use this badge:

Teacher Tip

This activity can link with

- **Environmental Studies** (plants, habitats and biodiversity)
- **Science** (plant growth and life cycles)
- **Mathematics** (measuring and planning spaces)
- **Art / Design** (drawing and visualising a proposed space)
- **Languages** (presenting and explaining ideas)
- **ICT / Media** (photography, video and digital presentations)

Flexibility

- The activity can be completed as a planning exercise or developed into an actual school greening project.
- Students can work on one small space rather than trying to green the whole school.
- Different groups can investigate different possible locations and propose different solutions.
- Schools can begin with a small intervention and develop it over time.
- The *My school doesn’t have a green area* resource can remain available throughout the activity so students can return to it when making decisions.

Steps to complete:

Step 1 Explore

Teacher Instructions

- Give students the **My school doesn’t have a green area** resource and ask them to read through it in small groups.
- Ask students to identify the different ways the resource suggests bringing more nature into a school with little or no green space.
- Encourage them to look particularly at the photographs and diagrams as well as the text.

- Discuss what might work in their own school and what might not.

Students identify ideas such as:

- Large planters
- Allowing plants to grow naturally from seeds already in the soil
- Planting suitable flowering plants
- Growing plants from cuttings or seeds
- Creating a green wall
- Adding features such as bug hotels, bird tables or nest boxes

The resource explains, for example, how a group of large rectangular planters can be arranged in a small area while leaving enough space for people to access and care for them.

Step 2 Investigate

Students explore their own school to find places where nature could be introduced.

They look for:

- Unused corners
- Sunny areas
- Suitable walls
- Areas where planters could fit
- Places close to a water source
- Spaces away from busy play areas
- Areas where plants could be observed and cared for

Students record or photograph possible locations and consider:

1. How much space is available?
2. How much sunlight does it receive?
3. Is water easily accessible?
4. Is it safe and accessible?
5. Who would look after it?
6. What might grow successfully there?

The resource specifically recommends a quiet, child-safe area with several hours of sunlight and convenient access to water for planters.

Step 3 Plan

Students use what they discovered in the resource and their own school survey to develop a **greening plan**.

They decide:

- **Where** will we create our green space?
- **What** will we put there?
- **Why** have we chosen it?
- **How** will it provide opportunities for nature?
- **How** will we look after it?

Students can create a simple plan, drawing or annotated photograph of the proposed space. They should use the resource to help make their choices. For example, the resource explains that large trees and shrubs are generally unsuitable for planters because they need more root space, while a range of smaller flowering plants can grow successfully in them.

Step 4 Green & Share

Where possible, students put their idea into practice.

They might:

- Set up planters
- Sow seeds
- Plant suitable plants

- Grow plants from cuttings
- Create a small green wall
- Add another wildlife-friendly feature

If the project cannot be implemented immediately, students can instead present their proposal to the school.

They could create:

- A **“Greening Our School”** display
- An annotated school plan
- A before-and-after design
- A short presentation for school management
- A video explaining their proposal
- An infographic showing how their idea could benefit nature
- An awareness message encouraging others to get involved

The resource also encourages students to keep records of planting and growth, including dates, photographs and observations.