Garden community

In this resource a garden refers to any land associated with your home. It may be a grassed back or front yard, there may be plants (in pots or in the ground), there may be flowers or veges planted. If you are in an apartment, you may only have some potted plants/herbs/flowers on a deck or, alternatively, look for a piece of grassed land nearby that you can reach & use easily.

* A retired friend of mine is getting a lot of entertainment from feeding birds. “Yesterday put out sugar water (shallow bottom of a big soft-drink bottle) which attracted tui. This a.m. a new visitor; a green finch: very bossy! Sparrows main customers and very entertaining but black birds and mynahs come for cat bikkies.” Some great potential for observation and inference, animal behaviour, getting to know garden birds etc. <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/feeding-native-birds-garden>
* Could challenge students to make a bird feeder to hang (in a tree, off a balcony) outside.
* Investigate to find out what food attracts what birds. For older students could ask them to collect data. Share findings with class on Zoom.
* Photographs of the birds in my garden – presented digitally
* Garden Bird Survey resources are useful for all age groups – colouring-in template, masks, bird identification posters and quizzes, DoC activity on garden birds. <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/birds/garden-bird-surveys/activities-for-schools>
* What food sources do birds find in my garden?
	+ What plants are in flower? Photograph and identify from
		- <https://www.otago.ac.nz/botany/outreach/florafinder/index.html>
		- <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/resources/identification/plants>
		- <http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/page.aspx?flora_plant_id>
		- What evidence can you find of which birds each which plant parts?
	+ What small animals can are found in my garden? Most will be invertebrates – bugs, insects, spiders, snails, worms. Look in grass, near edges, under bark mulch, on plants (e.g. shrubs, trees) on fences, under things lying on grass. Again, ask students to photograph and identify
		- <https://inaturalist.nz/pages/links_nz>
		- What evidence can you find of which birds each which animals?
* National Geographic had a Together At Home activity using a reading on skinks and geckos. <https://www.nzgeo.com/together-at-home/?source=homepage> (get 3 free per month or $1 pe rdg). From this reading NZ Geographic suggested activities to do at home:
	+ **FOR YOUNGER READERS:**If you're finding the story tricky, just look at the pictures and figure out what story the photographer is trying to tell.
	+ **Try** **discussing** these ideas with your family at home or over video conferencing.
		- What do you notice about the interesting body parts on the geckos in the story?  (Such as toes, eyes, mouths and ears.)
		- Why do you think these geckos are coloured the way they are?  How would it help them?
		- What do you notice about the people looking for lizards in the pictures.  Does it look like a job you would like to do? Why or why not?
		- What are some of the ways we can help lizards?
	+ Go outside and **look around your garden** to see how lizard-friendly it is. Can lizards hide in your garden?  Are there invertebrates and fruit for it to eat?  Use [this DOC website](https://admin.nzgeo.com/sendy/l/FGOaOAN6laNu763BzE8920zwPg/r6U892RbTlm30jezGi6TYvBw/iaAa2KzxvNdqbKoezktFbw) to help you learn about what lizards need.  Did you know you can build a lizard habitat yourself! Loosely arrange bricks, wood and anything like broken pieces of concrete into a pile. Cover with corrugated iron or a piece of wood if you have any. Build it in a safe, quiet corner—on a fence-line works well.
	+ If you have more time, do your own **drawing of two geckos**. Send the picture to us & we'll share the best one in the next email... you'll be world-famous in New Zealand! education@nzgeographic.co.nz
* What picture are we getting of our garden ecosystem?
	+ Can we now name some producers, herbivores, carnivores in our garden?
	+ Older students may wish to try constructing food chains and food webs.
* If we want to attract more birds or skinks & geckos or insects what do we need to do in our garden? Which flowers might attract more birds?
* Other DoC resources on your own green space – enhancing biodiversity, experiencing birds, invertebrates, native trees – and exploring your own environment. These will give you additional ideas. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/conservation-education/resources/>