

The Well Garden

A concept for a new garden space at
Winchcombe Eco School

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The new garden concept consists of 3 spaces (plus raised bed/s) designed to encourage students and staff outside, to support physical and mental wellbeing, and enable them to take a breather from the rigour of lessons, in turn supporting their cognitive function through a nature connection.

Area 1: The Cherry garden

Area 2: The Reflection garden

Area 3: The orchard

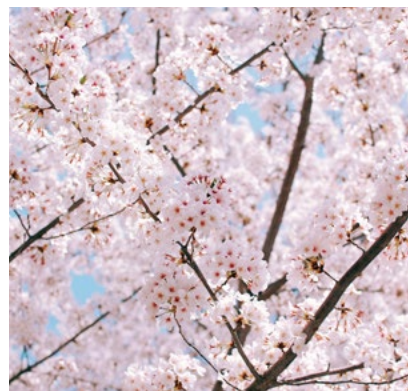
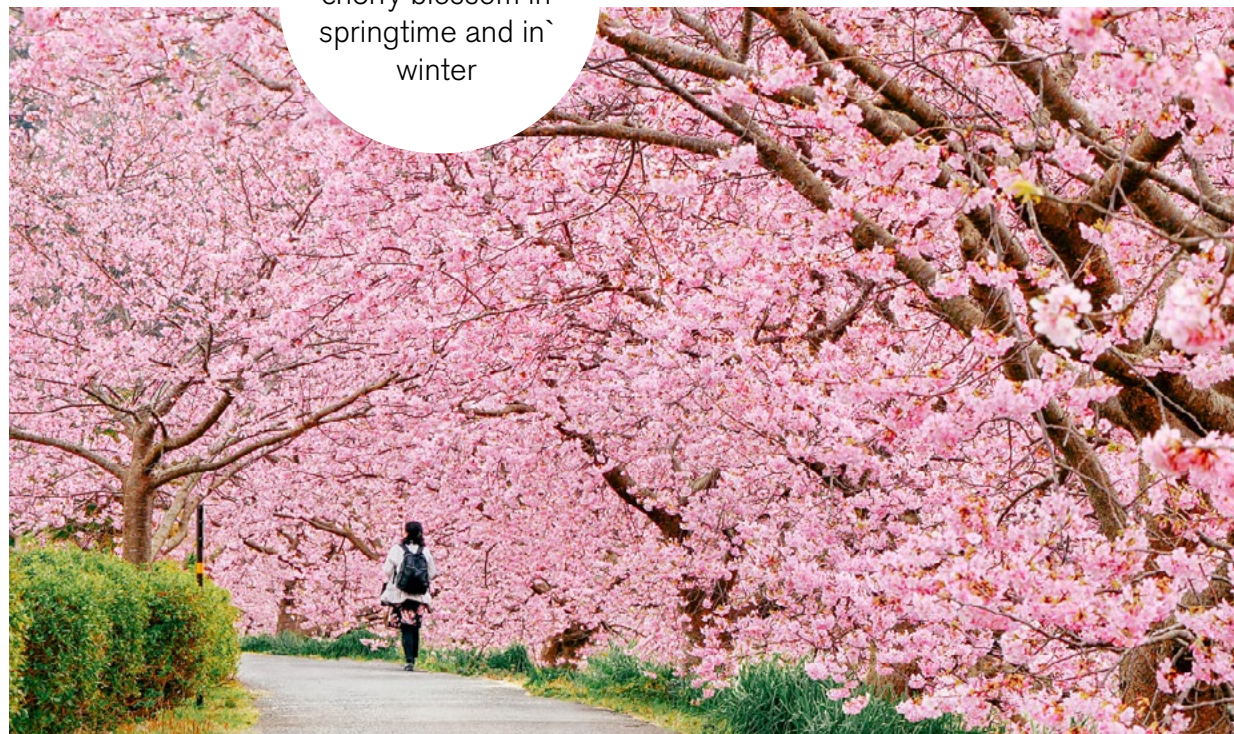
Area 4: Raised beds

We propose to add ornamental cherry trees to the garden space, set among some existing trees. A breathtaking spring display of blossom encourages staff and pupils outside with the arrival of the fresh spring air. The effect of being in this protected space, surrounded by trees in blossom fosters a feeling of personal comfort and connection to the seasons, as well as reinvigoration for an afternoon of lessons. In the hot summer, the trees will provide shade and in the autumn, a stunning fire display before the leaves drop for the winter. Included are 2 winter flowering cherries, to provide blossom between November and March.

The second main area is the reflection garden. A gravelled area is created with half moon seat, and a low water bowl reflecting the sky. This area encourages students to commune with one another and reflect on their day. Surrounding the seating are varied aromatic perennials; with aroma to active memory supporting cognitive function and fostering emotional wellbeing.



AREA 1
Experiencing
cherry blossom in
springtime and in
winter



AREA 2
The Reflection
garden with
scented shrubs
& water



Area 3 is a new orchard space, divided from the main space by hedge of redcurrants, thornless blackberries and raspberries. All fruits from this area will be used in the school canteen. Included will be at least one crab apple, to feed birds throughout the winter. Bees, hoverflies and other pollinating insects and birds are encouraged for the benefit of this garden, so spring bulbs chosen specifically to provide nectar for early foraging bees such as anemone, will be carefully planted in areas under trees which are not walked on in early springtime.

Area 4 is one or two raised beds for growing seasonal vegetables for the school canteen built on the raised concrete plinth and on the existing concrete parking space to the north of the site. The elevation of the raised beds will deter pests, and be easy to maintain with close access to a water butt and tap, and raised so that weed grasses will not have the opportunity to overwhelm and ultimately destroy the growing space.

Not only will these beds provide food and education of growing through the seasons and the importance of biodiversity, the proven benefits of gardening are significant and will benefit all students that get involved in the care of these raised beds (including harvesting of the fruit trees and berry hedge).

Known health benefits of gardening include the absorbtion of vitamin D from the sun and beneficial soil microbes, increased levels of seratonin (the happy hormone), exercise, as well as spending time emersed in and looking at colour (specifically the colour green). Gardening itself is a mindful exercise which can help focus the mind on the present task, be that weeding, planting or gathering, and this takes the mind away from stress or negative thoughts.



AREA 3
The orchard
with fruiting berry
bush hedge



AREA 4
The growing space
providing fresh
seasonal veg for
the canteen



Site photos
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