

The Nairn Schools' Pallet Garden Challenge 2023

'Jack and the Beanstalk' provided the theme for the winning garden in the twelfth annual pallet garden competition run by Nairn and District Gardening Club. This was created by the P2 class at Rosebank Primary School who had grown a selection of plants from seed. Their entry was an impressive container garden filled to the brim with many edible plants including an artichoke, broad beans, carrots, strawberries, radishes and a courgette, all with luxuriant foliage spilling out of the pallet. The class had used their construction skills to make Jack's house which was positioned in the centre. Bean plants at the back of the pallet formed a very convincing beanstalk and headed upwards towards a drawing of the giant. This entry had clearly involved the whole class and it had provided an opportunity to develop their literacy and technology, in addition to their horticultural skills.

One delightful class member (hand-picked, we suspected) impressed the judging panel with her ability to identify the plants growing in the pallet.

The entry from Millbank Primary School was a very close second. Their theme was inspired by the Pokémon character, the Venusaur. The pallet garden had a selection of aromatic plants, including lavender, thyme, lemon balm and dianthus to create the fragrance which is said to be-calm those engaged in battle with the Venusaur. The large flower on its back was represented by a pink umbrella with some panels removed. A solar cell on the umbrella powered a ring of LEDs around the 'flower'. This was a most innovative design showing excellent teamwork from the school's active gardening club. Gardening is so popular at this school that there is only space for the pupils to attend on alternate weeks.

We were pleased to have another entry from 'Junior World' a childcare group which offers early years' day care and after school care. Their entry was 'A garden of celebration' as they had recently been awarded their 4th ECO schools Green Flag Award. In addition

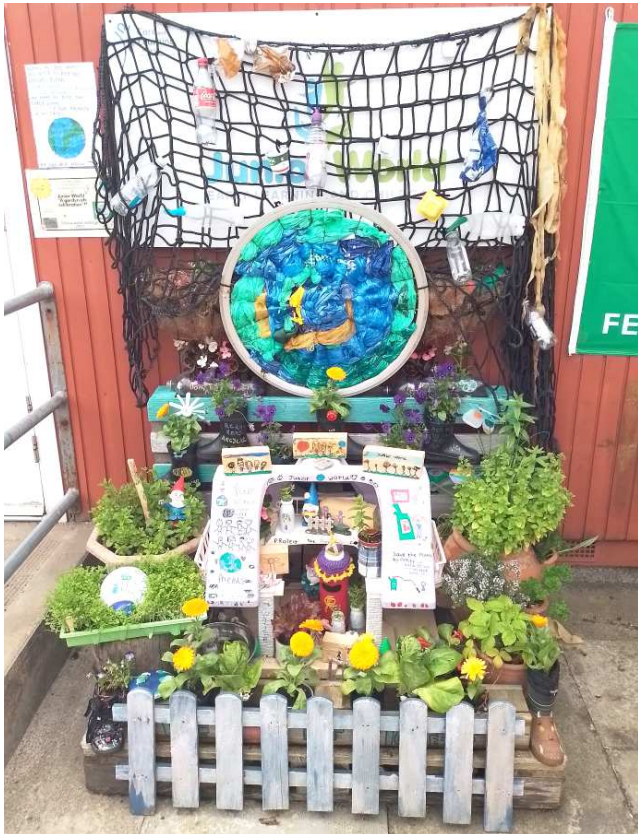


Jack and the Beanstalk at Rosebank



to celebrating this achievement they were also highlighting the importance of reducing, reusing, recycling and caring for our planet. Everything in the pallet had been saved from landfill and repurposed. Old wellington boots had been used as planters and an old bike wheel symbolised Earth suffering from plastic pollution. The plant life included various herbs for the children to sample. We awarded this pallet garden third place.

In addition, there were two other highly commendable entries from Croy and Auldearn Primary Schools. The garden at Auldearn had been created as a therapy garden to support a pupil struggling in the face of parental illness. Its centrepiece was a smile emoji formed from lemon-coloured petunias. Croy had assembled a cheerful selection of marigolds and begonias to create their 'Sunshine garden'.



The trophy and the prizes (garden vouchers for each participating school) will be presented at the Annual Show of Nairn and District Gardening Club on Saturday 12 August, 2023, at Nairn Community and Arts Centre. We hope that by offering these vouchers to the schools, this will provide their pupils with an opportunity to experience the joys of gardening. One member of the P2 class which produced the winning entry is reported to have said 'We wouldn't need the school holidays if we could do this all day'.

Anne Vincent



Pokémon Venusaurus at Millbank Primary School