



EXPLORER TRAIL

Welcome Explorers! Check out Algae Meadow, Home Away from Hive and Windflower, three clever inventions that use science, technology, art and architecture to create amazing pop-up hubs for wildflowers and pollinators along Exhibition Road. Get ready to explore life in the city in a new way...



Algae Meadow

by Seyi Adekun & Wayward - with the V&A

Come on in and take a look around. This house-like structure cleverly combines vertically stacked plant trays, hidden water tanks, transparent algae tubes and hydroponic pumps to help grow over 35 different types of native plants.

LOOK UP

Spot the green tubes criss-crossing above you - these glow in the sunshine! They are full of algae (plant-like living things) that are making food from the sunlight to feed the plants in the trays.

LOOK AROUND

How many plant trays can you spot?
Which trays are growing best?
Can you spot wild strawberries or toadflax?

LOOK OUT

Peek through the gaps to the busy street outside. Can you spot a flag, a telephone box, some arches, bicycles, people's feet, a dome... what else can you spy with your little eye from your secret spot?



Home Away from Hive

by Mitzi Studios - with the Science Museum

This huge timber (wood) structure is inspired by the shapes and forms of wild bees' nests. So, imagine you are the size of a bee, and make your way through the nest, or hive, to get a bee's-eye view of the world!

In the dappled daylight, spot the different shapes and patterns created by the hive's structure and its shadows...

CAN YOU SEE...?

- curved ribs
- honeycomb-like lattice
- arches
- rectangles
- stripes
- circles

WHAT OTHER SHAPES, LINES AND PATTERNS CAN YOU SPOT?

Step outside and look up at the hanging baskets and planters at the top of the nest. Plants like lavender, fennel and coneflower have been planted to attract bees.

Make your hands into binoculars and spend a minute looking through them, counting all the bees busily buzzing amongst the flowers. Listen carefully, can you hear them?



Windflower

by Urban Radicals - with the Goethe-Institut

Get up close to these large and unusual structures. They have been transformed into giant planters from something that had a very different use!

Can you guess what they once were?

Clue: WIND POWER.

Answer: These planters were once part of a wind turbine blade. Wind turbines are used to generate energy for our cities. Did you guess correctly?

Wind turbine blades are MEGA-STRUCTURES

One blade alone is 50m long - that's about 11 cars parked front to back.

When the blade needed to be replaced (after about 20 years) it was cut and adapted, then filled with native wildflowers to give the wind turbine blade a new lease of life - as a giant planter!



BE A BEE!

Weave your way around the planters pausing, like a bee, at different plants or flowers. Be sure to sniff each plant, enjoying their scent, before you fly off to the next one.

Try singing this song to help you be a busy bee. (It's to the tune of *In and Out the Dusty Bluebells* - but you can make up your own song or say it as a rhyme if you don't know it.)

*In and out the giant planters,
in and out the giant planters,
in and out the giant planters,
You shall be my flower.*

*Busy, buzzy, busy, buzzy
Bumble Bee.
Busy, buzzy, busy, buzzy
Bumble Bee.
Busy, buzzy, busy, buzzy
Bumble Bee,
You shall be my flower.*

TAKE A SEAT

Get a feel of the scale of the mega-structure of a wind-turbine blade by sitting on one of the specially designed spots in the planters.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND TALK ABOUT ...

- Which invention is your favourite? *The Algae Meadow, Hive Away from Home* or *Windflower*?
- Which would you like to have at your school?
- At home, what unwanted or finished-with objects could you reuse and adapt to make your own planters?



THINGS TO MAKE AND DO AT HOME

Butterfly painting

Fold a piece of paper in half, then unfold it again. Use the fold line as a mirror-line and generously use colourful poster paint to create just half a beautiful butterfly, stopping at the fold line. Fold the paper in half, enclosing the paint inside and gently rub your fingers over the back of the paper, transferring the paint to the other half. Unfold the paper to reveal a whole butterfly - with colourful, marbled wings and a perfect line of symmetry, just like a real butterfly.

Bee's-eye view planter design

Draw some simple shapes or bubble letters on a piece of paper, then transform them, using colour pencils or pens, into flower-filled planters as if you were a bee flying above, looking down at them.

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