

# RI DVÁN



## RIDVÁN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Teachers and leaders can adapt the following to suit their own needs.
- The methodology that worked best on the pilots was 'circle time'. For more information about methodologies that build a positive learning environment please see the chapter on group work and facilitation in Lynagh N and M Potter, *Joined Up* (Belfast: NICIE, Corrymeela) 2005, pp 43 - 86. There is a hyperlink to this resource in the 'Getting Started' page in the Introduction.
- Teachers/leaders need to explore and be comfortable with their own identity before discussing identity with the class/group. It is important for us to accept others both for the ways in which we are different and also for the ways in which we are similar and to express our identity in ways that do not harden boundaries with others. You can find out more about sectarianism and approaches to difference in the trunk and branches sections of the downloadable 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism'(young adults) at:  
[www.tcd.ie/ise/projects/seed.php#mbspacks](http://www.tcd.ie/ise/projects/seed.php#mbspacks)
- It is important that parents are aware of the issues in this unit. Write a letter to let them know what you will be covering and why. You could also involve parents/extended family by sending a 'knitted puppet' pattern home and ask if any of them could make some for you

<p><b>STEPPING OUT LEARNING ACTIVITY</b>          RIDVÁN - A programme for 4 sessions of 30 - 40 minutes</p> <p><b>LEARNING INTENTION:</b>          In sharing our stories of the celebrations of events throughout the year and focusing on Ridván, we recognise the similarities and differences amongst us as citizens of different ethnic/cultural background in the local and wider community</p>	<p><b>SUGGESTED SUCCESS CRITERIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to build trust and learn more about one another</li> <li>• We will encourage active listening, empathy and interactive storytelling</li> <li>• We will hear the story of Ridván and how it is celebrated</li> <li>• We will learn more about unity and diversity from the story</li> <li>• We will learn more about diversity and inclusion using dolls/puppets from different parts of the world</li> <li>• We will learn more about diversity and inclusion using pictures of roses - a variety of type and colour within the one family</li> <li>• We will learn more about difference and similarity in families</li> <li>• We will share our knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences amongst people of different ethnic/cultural background in the wider community</li> <li>• We will evaluate what we have learnt from a baseline</li> </ul>
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<p><b>RIDVÁN</b> This column gives suggestions for a lesson outline</p> <p><b>SESSION 1</b> <b>Opening activity</b> <b>Events Calendar</b> - Use this group activity as an opportunity to construct a baseline. Invite members of the class/group to share information on events. It might be useful to have a <b>map of the world</b> or a <b>religious calendar</b> handy. Focus on Ridván. Have any of the children heard of this festival? Do they know what the word means? Talk about 'Paradise' and what it means and about gardens in general - can any of the children name any of the gardens mentioned in the Bible - Eden; Gethsemane. Talk about Bahá'ís (from the 'Background notes'). Introduce the themes of 'unity' and diversity'. What do the children understand about these? <b>Story of Ridván</b> <b>Ridván Song</b>; play the song and tune from this site (mp3) and sing along with your group using some actions if appropriate. <b>Closure - All Change</b> - Try using specific statements about customs &amp; traditions around celebration e.g. whether they ever:- visited Iran; sent cards to people for celebrations other than their own; went to church on Christmas day; fasted during Lent or Ramadan; celebrated Ridván; like gardens/roses; etc</p>	<p><b>DETAIL OF WHAT TO DO</b> This column lists resources needed and gives sources for background information for each lesson</p> <p><b>SESSION 1</b> <b>Opening and Closing activities</b> - Choose appropriate activities for opening and closing each session from 'Games' in the Resources section <b>Events Calendar</b> - Print out your own copy from the 'Resources' section. Have a <b>globe/world map</b> handy <b>Religious Calendars</b> <a href="http://www.support4learning.org.uk">www.support4learning.org.uk</a> for religious Calendars - see also <a href="http://www.shap.org">www.shap.org</a> <b>Story of Ridván and picture</b> - print out of the story and the accompanying picture from this section For some excellent background information get a copy of <b>James Nelson and Norman Richardson's, Local People, Global Faiths book 2: Muslims, Buddhists and Baha'is in Northern Ireland, 2006</b> available from Colourpoint Educational, price £7.99 (028) 9182 0505 See also <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/schools/11_16/citizenship">www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/schools/11_16/citizenship</a> <b>Flashcards</b> - You will need these to help everyone remember the new words Ridván (pronounced Rizvan) Bahá'ís; Paradise etc <b>Map of the world</b> - Invest in an inflatable globe to pass around the circle as an opening or closing activity, inviting people to find the country - where they live now; have lived before; have visited or know someone Print out the Ridván story and picture <b>All Change Game</b> - read the instructions for playing this game in 'Games' in the Resources section. Think about how you will use it.</p>
<p><b>SESSION 2</b> <b>Opening activity - Gate game</b> <b>Discussion</b> - Talk about the word 'minority' and what it means to be in the smaller 'minority' group re gender; eye colour; whether or not you wear glasses/a brace etc. Express preferences for a particular group over the other - e.g. boys are stronger than girls; people who wear glasses are more intelligent etc. Talk about 'discrimination' against people according to gender; eye/hair colour; age; skin colour; or religion and introduce the terms racism; sectarianism if appropriate. <b>Circle Activity</b> - Talk about the story we heard last week and what we remember about it <b>Dolls/Puppets</b> - Invite the children to choose dolls/puppets representing different parts of the world from a box. Talk about them. Where are they from? What reasons might bring them to this country? How might they feel living here? Using an <b>inflatable globe</b>, talk about the different countries in the world from which they might come and how our world whilst having so much variety is made up of one planet-Earth.</p>	<p><b>SESSION 2</b> <b>Gate Game</b> - read the instructions for playing this game in 'Games' in the Resources section. Think about how you will use it. This game, which 'sorts' people into categories according to gender; appearance; clothes worn etc. helps us experience what it's like to be 'grouped' together. Save the Children have produced a booklet, '<b>Think of me, Think of you</b>' and another with Barnardo's entitled, '<b>Fair Play</b>' either of which you will find very useful for this session. <b>Flashcards</b> - for the new terms - minority; majority; discrimination etc. <b>Dolls</b> from different parts of the world or the <b>small knitted puppets</b> (with different colours of skin and clothing/badges) - see instructions for making the 'knitted puppet' under resources in the introduction - maybe send them home with the children and invite parents/extended family members to help. <b>An inflatable globe</b> to help us understand that the different countries from which the dolls came or the puppets might be from, are all part of one planet</p>

<p><b>Ridván song</b> <b>Closure</b></p>	
<p><b>SESSION 3</b> <b>Opening Activity</b> - Share what we have learnt so far. Talk about what we did last week Introduce different '<b>rose</b>' pictures and invite the children to choose one for their nature books. Talk about the differences amongst 3 - 4,000 species belonging to one family. Plant a <b>mini garden</b> or a few flowers from the rose family. <b>Closure</b> - Ridván poem/song</p>	<p><b>SESSION 3</b> <b>Rose Pictures</b> - of different flowers from different parts of the world, all members of the '<b>rose</b>' family - These can be printed, as required, from the internet site <a href="http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Rosaceae">www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Rosaceae</a> <b>Nature books; glue</b> - think of making small nature books from scrap or recycled paper. <b>Plants</b> - plant a <b>mini garden</b> from the Nature trail suggestions in this section or a few flowers from the rose family. More suggestions at either of these websites <a href="http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk">www.wildlifewatch.org.uk</a> I ran a WATCH club in school; they were also members of YOC see <a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/index.asp">www.rspb.org.uk/youth/index.asp</a> <b>Eco-School?</b> Why not think about becoming an eco-school - more details at <a href="http://www.eco-schools.org.uk">www.eco-schools.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>SESSION 4</b> <b>Opening Activity</b> <b>Share and discuss</b> what we have learnt so far. Talk about Ridván and how it is celebrated. If possible invite someone from the Bahá'í community or find out if there is a Bahá'í amongst the students or staff in the school/group who would be happy to talk to the class/group. Otherwise use the information in the background notes. <b>Closure</b> - <b>Wool web</b> to give the group a chance to share what they have learned. Pass the ball of wool around the group until everyone has received it and passed it on once. Web pattern connects everyone up. Talk about connections with one another; similarities and differences in how we celebrate events; what we have learnt from Ridván. <b>Ridván poem/song</b></p>	<p><b>SESSION 4</b> <b>Contacts</b> for the Bahá'í community are available in contacts in the Resources section <b>Wool Web</b> - You will also need a <b>Ball of wool</b> - read the instructions for playing <b>Wool Web</b> in 'Games' in the Resources section. An affirmation exercise as well as a closure, we have an opportunity to talk about what we have learnt, the importance of connections and interdependence. This will give the leaders an opportunity to do some evaluation of what the group has learnt from the baseline.</p>

## LEADERS NOTES

The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest of the world's religions. It was founded in Persia (Iran) by Bahá'u'lláh in the 19th century. It is followed by approx six million people in the world from all countries and backgrounds. Bahá'ís believe in the essential unity of the great world religions and that God has been revealed to humanity through a series of divine manifestations including Abraham, Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Muhammad, Zoroaster, and Bahá'u'lláh. Its central teaching is the unity of the human race - that all people matter, and that the world should be run as one country for the benefit of everyone

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh include the following:

The oneness of the world's religions

The oneness of humanity, regardless of ethnic origin, racial, cultural or religious background

That science and religion are complementary

The equality of women and men

The responsibility of individuals to independently investigate truth

Bahá'ís have no clergy. They pray each day, observe 9 major holy days and fast for 19 days every year. They regard their work as a form of worship and are dedicated to the abolition of prejudice. There are approximately 300 Bahá'ís in Northern Ireland today with Spiritual Assemblies established in 8 towns. They are under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK but the Universal House of Justice based on Mount Carmel in Israel is the global governing body.

### RIDVÁN

Ridván pronounced 'rizvan,' the Arabic word for Paradise, is considered the holiest and most significant Bahá'í festival. It lasts for 12 days and celebrates Bahá'u'lláh's declaration in Ridván, the name given to the Nabíyyih garden in Baghdad. It was here that Bahá'u'lláh gathered with family and followers for twelve days from April 21 to May 2 1863 before being banished to Turkey by the authorities, and eventually to Akka in Israel. While he was in the garden, on the ninth day, Bahá'u'lláh told everyone that God had given Him the mission of uniting all the peoples of the world, from every religion, race and nation into one family, just as all the different flowers are gathered together in one garden, and that everyone in the world would learn to live in peace.

The festival involves devotional services and social gatherings, and the first day of Ridván is when every Bahá'í community around the world elects the nine members of its Local Spiritual Assembly, which guides and cares for the community.

The Ridván garden is still in Baghdad and most of the flowering plants have been brought to Iraq by pilgrims. They carry the plants, tend them on the way and come together from East and West, North and South, symbolic of the mission of Bahá'u'lláh. Just as different colours, roses, fruits and herbs are gathered together into one garden, so too the members of the human family from every nation of the World.

## THE STORY OF RIDVÁN

The people of Baghdad loved Bahá'u'lláh. He was very kind to them and also very wise. He could explain things that they didn't understand and helped them with problems and difficulties. There were also some people who didn't like this and wanted Bahá'u'lláh to leave the city. When Bahá'u'lláh's followers and friends heard this, they were very sad and came to say good-bye. As the house was very small, one of the friends who owned a large beautiful garden near the city, suggested that Bahá'u'lláh should go and stay there, where there would be plenty of room for all the friends to visit.

So Bahá'u'lláh went to this special garden. It was called the Garden of Ridván, which means paradise, a place that is very beautiful. It was right beside a wide river called the Tigris and to get to it you had to row across by boat. In the garden there were paths where people could walk and all along these paths there grew roses - hundreds and hundreds of roses. Very early each morning before the sun got too hot, the gardeners used to pick the roses and lay them on the ground near the tent where Bahá'u'lláh was staying. Sometimes the pile was so high that the visitors could not see over it. Then Bahá'u'lláh would give each follower a bunch of roses to give to their friends. Bahá'u'lláh stayed in this garden for twelve days from April 21<sup>st</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1863 and during this time a very special thing happened.

Everyone was very happy, and many people came to visit. On the ninth day in the garden, Bahá'u'lláh told everyone that He was a special Messenger from God and that God had given him the mission of uniting all the peoples of the world, from every religion, race and nation into one family, just as all the different flowers are gathered together in one garden, and that everyone in the world would learn to live in peace. That is why Ridván is a very important festival.





In the Garden of RIDVĀN



## A SONG FOR RIDVÁN (Pronounced 'rizvan') meaning Paradise

Bahá'ís central teaching is the unity of the human race - that all people matter, and that the world could be run as one country for the benefit of everyone. They believe that all the peoples of the world are one family and that we can learn to live in peace like the different flowers gathered into one garden. Here is a song (an echo poem), which Bahá'í children all over the world sing/say. The composer (and singer on the CD) is unknown but the song originated in the Hawaii Bahá'í community.

We are drops (we are drops)  
Of one ocean (of one ocean)  
We are waves (we are waves)  
Of one sea (of one sea)

*Chorus: Come and join us (come and join us)  
In our quest for unity  
It's a way of life for you and me.*

We are flowers (we are flowers)  
Of one garden (of one garden)  
We are leaves (we are leaves)  
Of one tree (of one tree)

*Chorus*

All the earth is (all the earth is)  
But one country (but one country)  
We are one (We are one)  
Can't you see (can't you see)

*Chorus*

NB. This song (poem) can be recited in two groups, with one starting and the other being the echo, or the leader can say the line, and all the children can be the echo, with everyone joining together for the last three lines of the chorus. It is also fun to put actions to the words, with everyone holding hands on "come and join us", and then lifting them up on "It's a way of life"...

# Mini Nature Trail

The following design plan might give you a few ideas for making your own Nature Trail or a series of mini-habitats to attract wildlife that you can then observe around your school or centre.



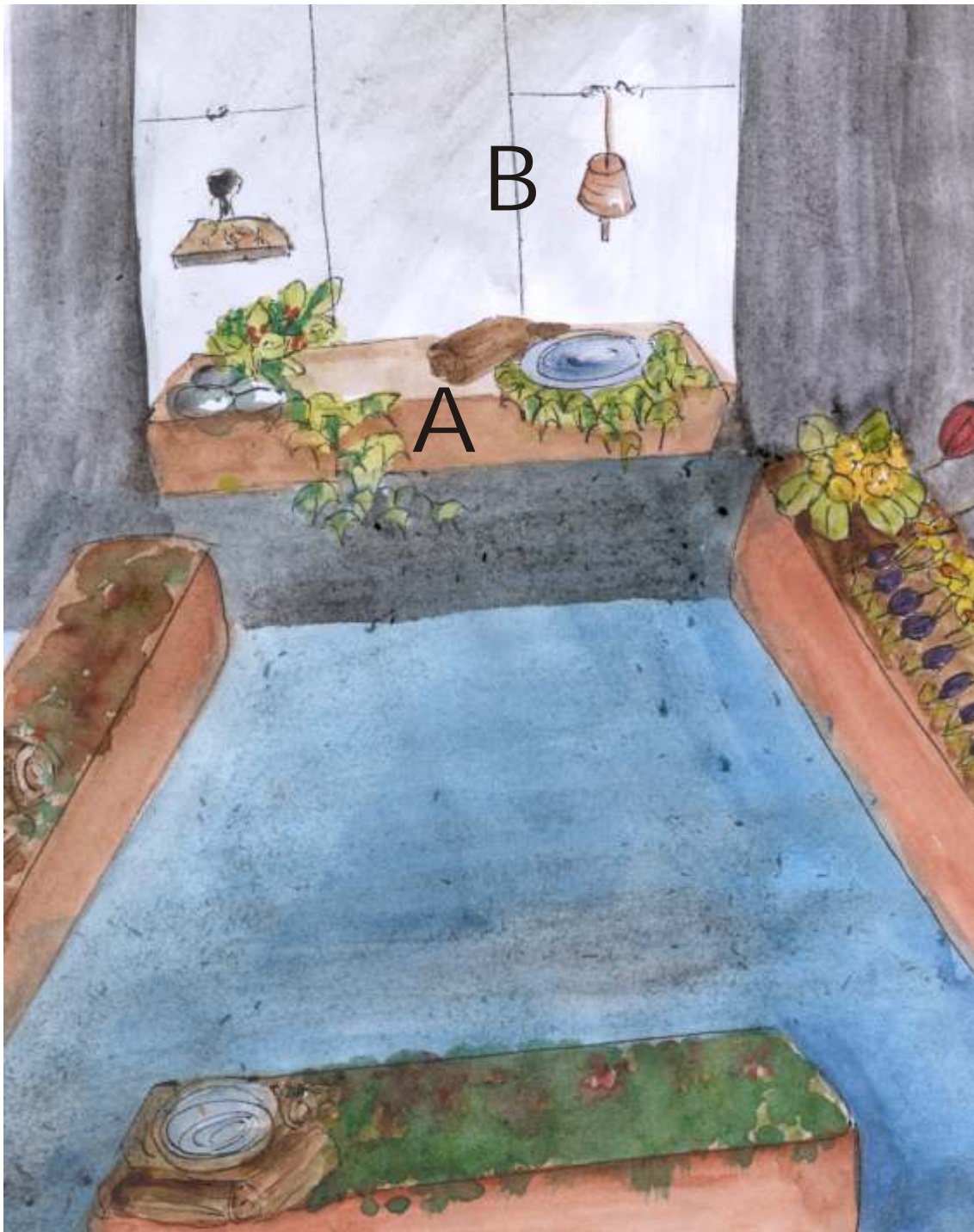
## Against a wall or fence

A - Erect a trellis for bird perches and spider homes

B - Plant thick climbers as cover for nesting birds and hibernating insects. Native flowers and berry-bearing varieties also provide food.

C - Nest sites - clean out the nest box in late summer after the babies have left.

D - Feeding sites - keep stocking a feeding station throughout the winter.



## Under a window

A - A window box with lots of seasonal planting  
B - A feeding station well stocked throughout the winter



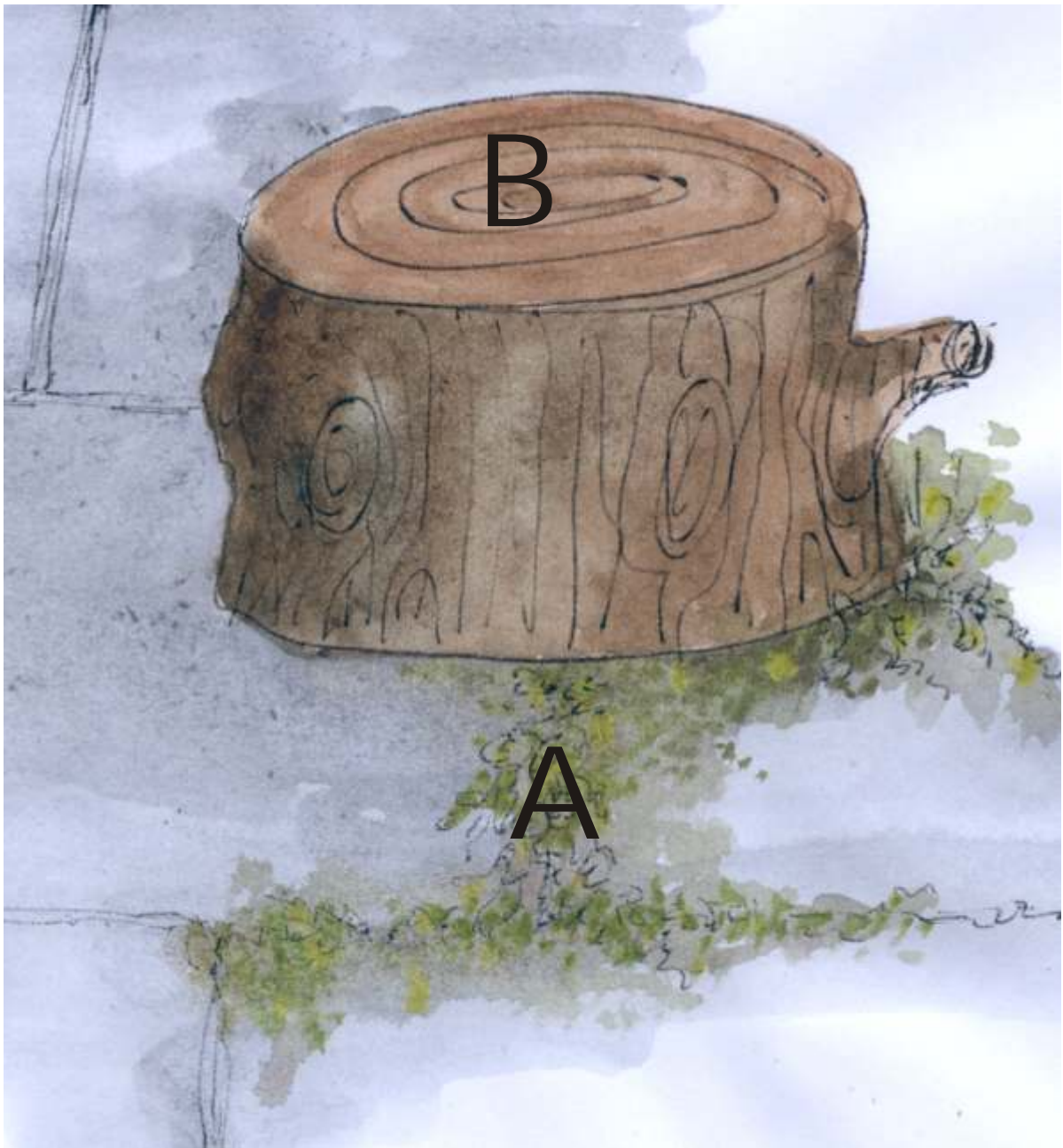
## Within and around the edge of a patio or playground area

- A - A wheel herb garden
- B - A raised season's garden or nursery bed
- C - A bird bath
- D - A raised mini-pond

The pieces of your 'Nature trail can be as small as a log or as big as a wood.

The possibilities are endless



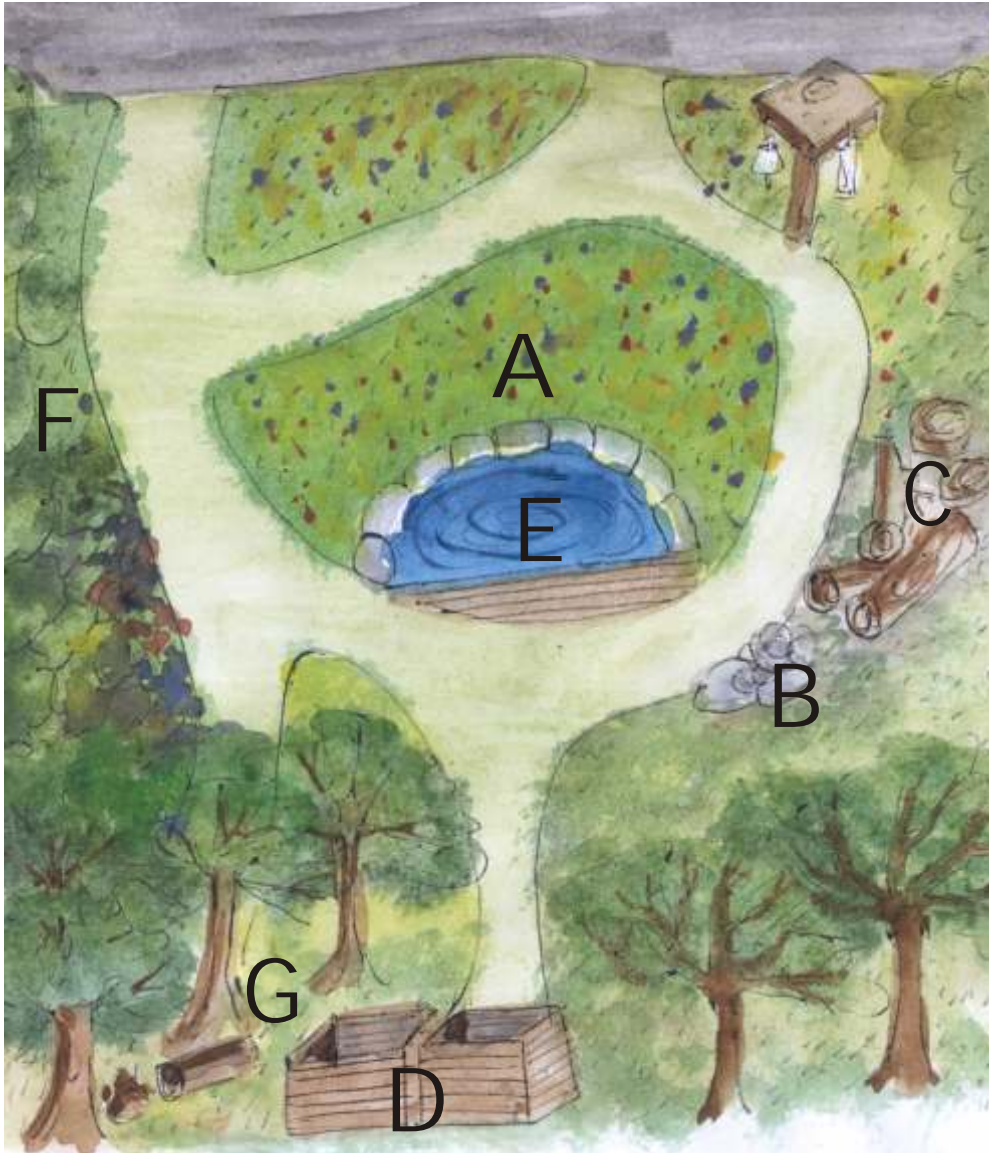


## Along a path

A - Paving joints and cracks are great habitats for small plants and insects

B - A log is handy to lift to observe mini-beasts





## Within and around the edge of a lawn

A - A Mini-flowering meadow with paths cut through it - great for insects

B - A rock pile as a home for insects and basking site for butterflies

C - A log pile for hedgehogs, insect and fungi

D - A compost heap = great for insects

E - A mini-pond essential for wildlife of all varieties

F - A butterfly border

G - A mini-woodland containing native flowering and berry-bearing trees and shrubs providing food and shelter for all

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES FOR RIDVÁN

Afnan, Abbas, *An Anthology for Bahá'í Children* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust), 1979.

*This is an anthology of stories for children about famous religious leaders of the Bahá'í faith.*

Abbas, Christine, *Bahá'u'lláh* (Leicester: Matador), 2004.

*This is a story about the life of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith, for children at Key Stage 1 (5-7 year olds).*

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, *Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í Publishing Trust), 2001.

*This is the first of a series of volumes of stories and prayers from the early days of Bahá'u'lláh and other central figures of the Bahá'í faith.*

Wendi Momen, *Call Me Ridván*, (Oxford: George Ronald), 1982.

*This is a story about Ridván, a Bahá'í boy aged 9 who finds out how to cope with the problem of bullying because he is different. He learns something about himself and his religion at the same time.*

## Websites

[www.bahai.org](http://www.bahai.org).

[www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai)

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Rosaceae](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Rosaceae)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE ETC.

Barrow, Jean, *Get to Know Nature* (Sutton: Printforce).

Daitz, Myrna and Shirley Williams, *Crafty Ideas from Nature* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press), 1989.

McBride, Doreen, *What they did with Plants* (Belfast: Adare Press), 1991.

Gibbons, Bob and Liz, *Creating a Wildlife Garden* (London: Hamlyn), 1988.

The National Trust, *Nature Activity Book* (London: Kingfisher Books), 1988.