

Learning in the Mangala



Client Profile

Since 2000, the Douglas Tidy Towns group, with the support of Douglas Community Association, has been working as a voluntary group to enhance Douglas village

Their aim is to keep Douglas clean and litter free, enhance the visual attractiveness of public areas and to promote recycling among Douglas residents.

Ballybrack Woods, known locally as 'The Mangala', is situated in a beautiful riverine wooded valley in Douglas Co. Cork. The Mangala is an important recreational amenity for local people and a place with an interesting array of habitats, plants and animals. In 2016, Douglas Tidy Towns and Wild Work began working together on how to best manage the Mangala for nature and people. This led to the development of a [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) for the woods and a series of education sessions to engage and inform the local community



The Mangala

Local schools were taken on a walk in the Mangala with walks also offered to the general community for Heritage Week. During the walks we explored the concept of a habitat and explained how each one supports a variety of different plant and animal species. Habitat mapping workshops were also run with the schools focusing in more detail on habitat mapping as a practical exercise.

About Wild Work

Wild Work is a unique initiative with biodiversity at its heart.

We support everyone committed to helping nature and our particular focus is to connect business, biodiversity and local communities. We also support the work of both local and national organisations involved in the conservation and protection of our natural environment.

With our practical expertise, we create and care for meadows, woodlands, beaches, rivers and other natural habitats, both in urban and rural settings.

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Schools were given a presentation on habitat mapping and an in-depth look at the types of habitats in Ireland and how they are classified. The students then had the opportunity to go out and habitat map their own school grounds. By identifying and classifying habitats these students also had the opportunity to think about how they could make their school grounds more nature friendly.

The next phase of plans for the Mangala will see students from colleges like University College Cork undertake research projects such as habitat management techniques and freshwater invertebrate surveys.

Wild Work is also exploring ways to manage the habitats in the Mangala in more nature-friendly ways. For instance [scything](#) is quiet, produces no fumes and allows time for animals to move out of the way. By managing parts of the Mangala in this way Wild Work can demonstrate to passers-by an alternative way to care for grassy habitats. And anyone can stop and have a chat with the Wild Workers to find out a more!

