



Tips for connecting with nature in the city

City life is usually filled with noise and distractions, so it is wonderful to know that even in the suburbs, the world of wild nature is often literally on our doorsteps offering us a chance to disengage from our stresses and to integrate for a short while, within the ebb and flow of the wider living world.

I would like to share a few ideas that will help you to connect with nature regularly as you go about your everyday life in our beautiful city.



Who are your wild neighbours

Learning a little more about the creatures great and small that live alongside us in the city is a great way to start engaging with nature. For example, knowing that the little Cape grey mongoose forages for food along the greenbelt, or that Cape porcupines visit at night looking for bulbs, increases the possibility of seeing them as they go about their lives.

A checklist of local birds

Whilst on the school run or perhaps heading out to the mall, a quick and easy way to engage with life beyond the confines of one's car is to keep a mental checklist of all the different bird species that you see. From the visiting barn swallows that wheel in the sky, to the little robins, wagtails and thrushes that can be seen foraging for food in the flower beds and on the road verges....and remember that different habitats support different species, so the possibility of seeing a wide variety of birds is often very good.

Keeping a nature journal

One of the most rewarding ways to become more aware of your wild neighbours is through keeping a regular journal of your daily sightings. Experiences, the different species, fleeting special moments, quirky behaviours, noticeable routines or habits, interesting sounds and pungent smells, can all be recorded in a dedicated wildlife journal.

Planting for wildlife

A window box filled with colourful flowers or a rockery overflowing with indigenous shrubs and assorted plants will provide food for a variety of garden wildlife, from bees and butterflies, to birds and small mammals who will visit in search of berries, fruit or nectar.

Explore your backyard

Becoming aware of life in your backyard helps to nurture an appreciation for wildlife and their needs, especially during seasonal change when a handful of seeds or a bowl of water will make a difference to their lives.

Evening walks

When dinner has been eaten and the dishes are done, another world awakens outside one's garden. An evening walk is a wonderful opportunity to listen to the different night sounds, from frogs in garden ponds to the nocturnal birds like owls, dikkops and nightjars that often inhabit open plots of land in the suburbs.

A cacophony of sound

The natural world is always abuzz with sounds, from the different calls, trills, chirrups and songs to the gurgling of a stream or rustle of leaves stirring in the wind. Standing still for a moment, close your eyes and listen. How many sounds can you identify, can you tell who is making the sound, and what they evoke in you?

Getting involved

As custodians of our city's natural environment, what better way to spend some free time than to volunteer your services to help ensure that our rivers and beaches, mountains and greenbelts are kept free of pollution or invasive aliens that could affect the integrity of these areas and the creatures that live there.

We hope that you will be grateful for having been born into such a magical world. Gerald Durrell

