



# Wild Ways Well and Dainty Daisies

Today's Wild Ways Well task is to go for a walk in your local greenspace and find some flowers, Paying particular attention to Daisies... Remember to follow the guidelines on Social Distancing, stay 2m apart from other people and only walk in your local area – and remember to wash your hands!

You'll **Be Active** by carefully walking outdoors (observing social distancing) keeping your mind busy and occupying your time looking for the amazing array of flowers and plants that are all over our greenspaces. You can find a lot of these in streets or gardens but a short walk will open up many more possibilities.

We can **Connect** with flowers by opening up our senses. Take in the colours, the smell, even the textures of the petals and leaves. Perhaps the plants you see are in an area where they have been deliberately planted or tended by people, either now or in the past.

We can **Keep Learning**, there are hundreds of web pages devoted to the plants and an equal number of books and television programmes. This pack will tell you a little about folklore and how plants live their lives. Why not look online and see what else you can learn?

Plants and flowers are all around us, and are vital to the ecosystem we all share but we rarely **Take Notice** and look very closely at them. It's amazing how much we miss out in nature when we just walk through without paying attention to what is around us.

We can **Give** by giving ourselves a break from the drama of the current events and focusing on the little things around us that give us pleasure and by sharing these with others, in person or online. We can give back by learning how to care for plants and how the plants we grow can help others.





# Wild Ways Well



**BE ACTIVE** – Take part in health walks and practical outdoor activities. Explore your local paths, woods and greenspaces.

Spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about their lives.

The Wild Ways Well project encourages people suffering from, or at risk of, poor mental health to get outside for some daily exercise and experience nature.

Remember to observe Social Distancing, stay 2m apart and only walk in your local area.

Whilst out amongst the trees, parks and reserves you have a chance to slow down, relax and take your attention away from current events.

This guide will help you to try out some environmental and conservation related activities designed to fit in with the internationally recognised Five Ways to Wellbeing mental health framework.

**CONNECT** – Meet new people. Connect with the people, the wildlife and the nature that's all around us.



**GIVE** – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

**TAKE NOTICE** – Note the changing cycles of life. Use your senses. Listen to birds, smell the flowers, live in the moment.



**LEARN** – Identify plants and wildlife, try new crafts, learn new skills. Discover things about nature and about yourself.







## The Humble Daisy

Everyone can recognize a Daisy! All the little white daisies you see carpeting grasslands in spring and summer are the same species, their scientific name is *Bellis perennis* – which means ‘Always Beautiful’. The name ‘Daisy’ comes from ‘Day’s Eye’ which references the fact that the flowers all close at night and open only during the day.

The daisy is a composite flower, one bloom made from many – all of the yellow ‘dots’ in the centre are individual flowers – called ‘disc florets’ and the white ‘petals’ are also individual flowers called ‘ray florets’.

They were an important flower to our ancestors, another old name for them is ‘Woundwort’ or ‘Bruisewort’ possibly because Roman doctors used them to treat battlefield injuries. If a plant has ‘wort’ in its name, this tends to mean it was once regarded as being good for healing.

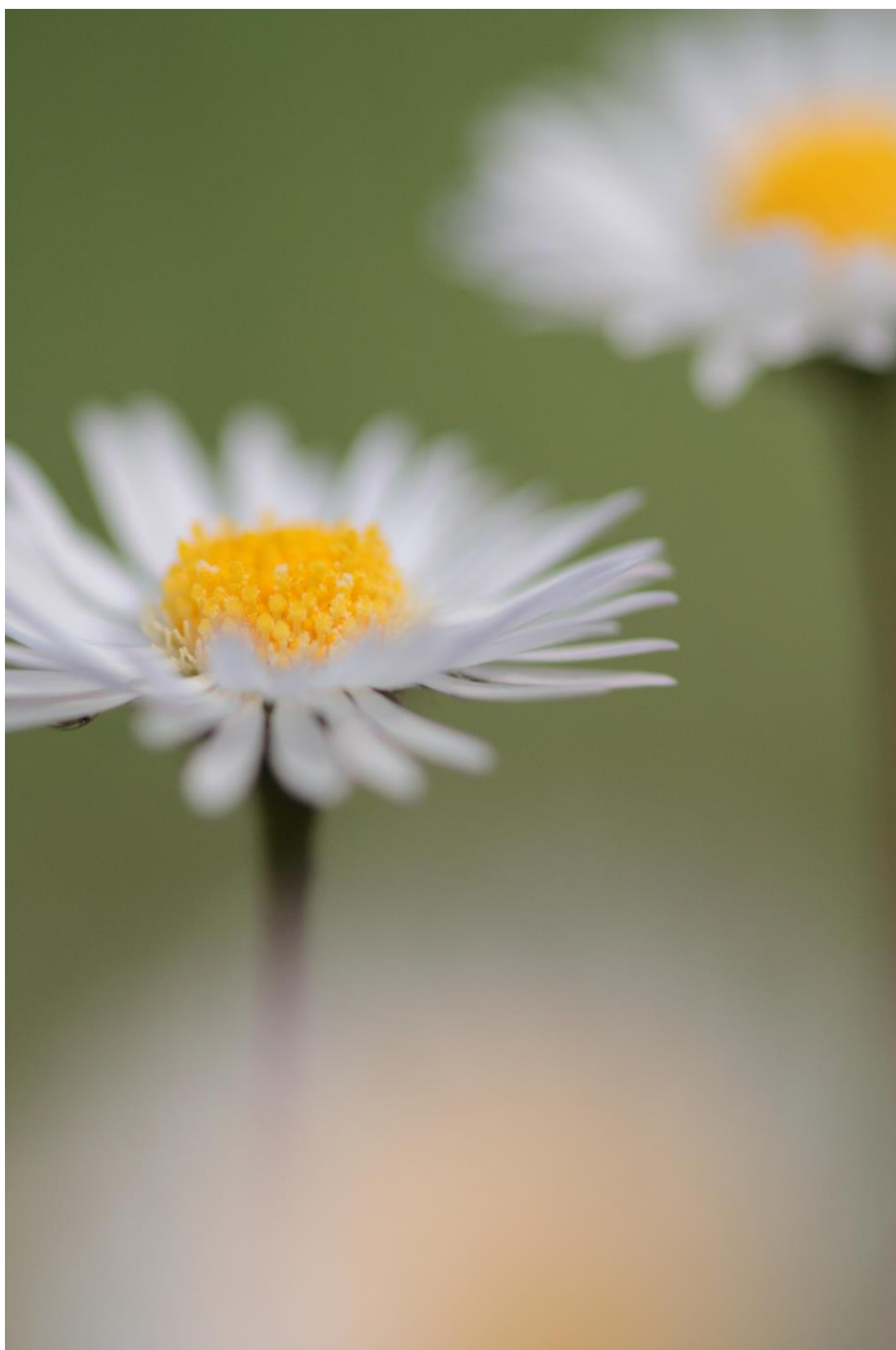
Usually known as ‘Gowans’ in Scotland, another Scottish name for daisies was ‘Bairnswort’ which comes from the idea that a crying or upset children could be distracted and amused by making daisy chains or pulling off petals and reciting rhymes ... “He loves me, he loves me not”...

Daisies were Queen Victoria’s favourite flower and right up until the 1950’s schools used to close on her birthday, when people would pin daisies to their clothes.

When you really think about it daisies surround us all the time – have you ever woken up ‘fresh as a daisy’? Seen a cricketer hit a ‘daisycutter’? Shouted ‘ups a daisy’ to a fallen child?

What other daisy sayings or traditions can you think of?





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## Daisies and Wildflowers

Daisies are a type of wildflower – but what is a wildflower? Many wildflowers are what some would call ‘weeds’ but these plants are really just hardy survivors able to adapt and survive wherever they can find space and nutrients to grow. Wildflowers are vital to the ecosystem, without them many of the insects – and therefore birds and mammals – that we take for granted around us couldn’t exist.

But wildflowers are in trouble. Since the end of WW2 the UK has lost over 97% of its wildflower habitat – wildflower meadows. This is often due to changed farming practices but they are also under threat from climate change and urban development.

A true wildflower meadow contains a mixture of native grasses and flowers and they can be as beautiful to the eye as they are valuable to nature. Wildflowers are not there to be pretty, they serve a vital function, but it's not a bad byproduct! Wildflower meadows which are left to grow store carbon much better than grassland and parks which are cut monthly from spring to summer. Wildflowers also help to reduce flooding with their roots expanding out in the soil under our feet. Our gardens are full of plants that we have changed genetically over time to be pretty, or have bigger flowers. These modified plants are designed to only last a season, having to buy again and again, wildflowers will usually come again and again, needing only a little time and space.

One of the best things we could do to help wildflowers is to leave a little space for them in our gardens, mow our lawns a little less often, let the grass grow a little higher when we do. We could also campaign to have our parks and road verges cut less often – perhaps you could ask your local council to leave some longer grassland in your local area. Cumbernauld Living Landscape and our volunteers are trying to help by planting wildflowers and advocating for change to prioritise a ‘nectar network’ of wildflowers round the town.







## Wildflower Writing

Poets, writers and artists have always found inspiration in wildflowers – the very same wildflowers that you can see all around you now! There's an artist inside everyone but sometimes it takes a lot of courage to let it out. Every artist started as an amateur, you don't need to be the next Robert Burns or Liz Lochhead to have a go.

Taking part in creative activities can be very good for our mental health. Expressing yourself can be relaxing and inspiring and can allow you to express emotions and process complex feelings. Studies show that taking part in artistic activities can be very valuable in treating issues like depression and anxiety.

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,  
Thou's met me in an evil hour;  
For I maun crush amang the stoure  
Thy slender stem:  
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,  
Thou bonnie gem.

**Robert Burns (to a daisy)**

The daisy is a happy flower, And comes  
at early spring, And brings with it the  
sunny hour When bees are on the  
wing.

**John Clare**

I hope you are blessed with a heart like  
a wildflower  
Strong enough to rise again after being  
trampled upon,  
Tough enough to weather the worst of  
the summer storms,  
And able to grow and flourish even  
broken in places.

**Nikita Gill**

blowing in the breeze  
wildflowers dance to nature  
music for the eyes

**Erika Foley**





## Make a Daisy Mask



1. What you need



2. Draw out your shape



3. Cut out the shape and eyes



4. Colour in your own style

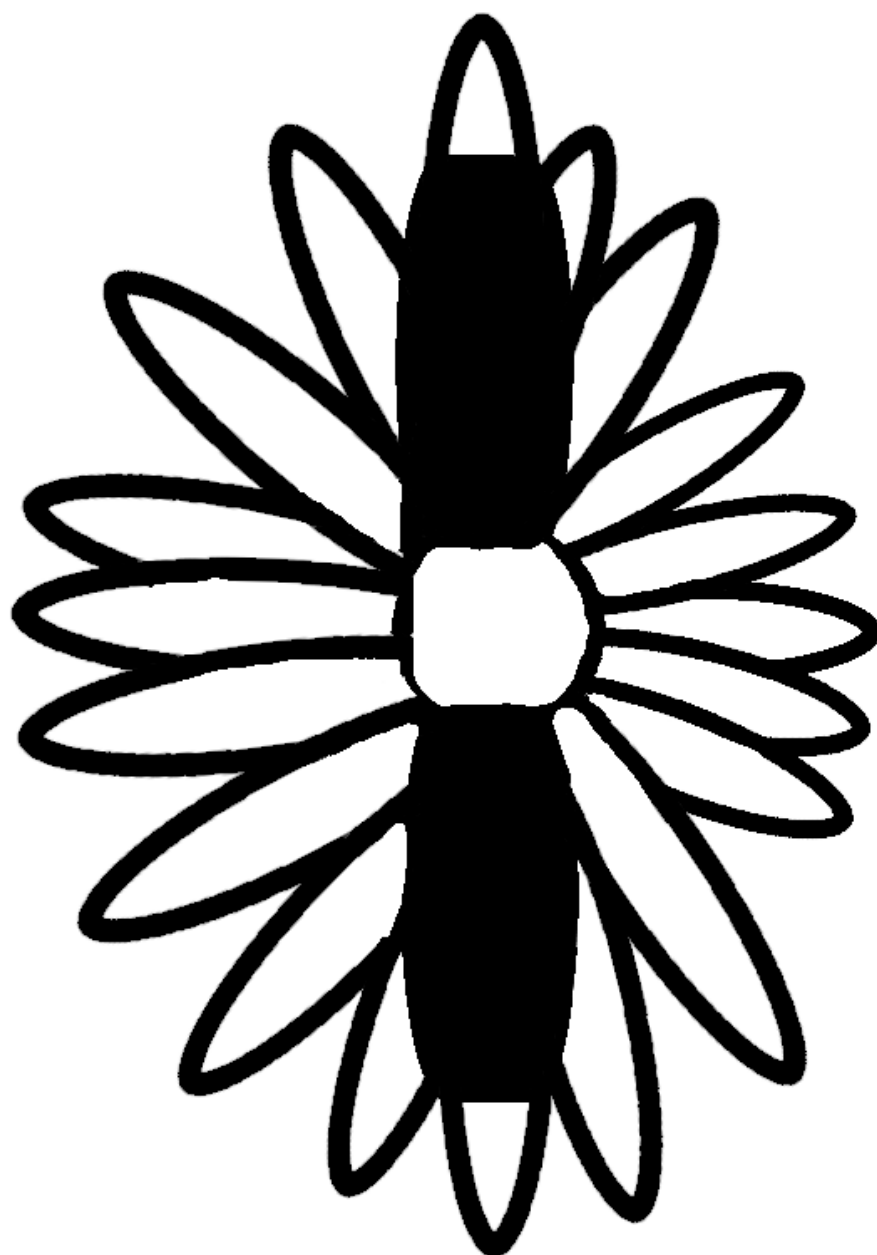


5. Small holes for string and adjust to head



6. What a pretty flower!





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## Make a Daisy Chain

We might think of this as a children's game – but in fact making a good daisy chain is a tricky business! Once you've got the hang of it though it can be really mindful too, and a great way to spend a lazy few minutes.

First gather some daisies, you need ones with good strong stems to make a proper chain. Remember the flower pickers code, pick only where they are plentiful and leave lots behind for nature.



There are two main approaches to making daisy chains – the slit method or the braid method.

For the slit method you need to really carefully make a slit in the stem of each daisy, usually where the stalk is thickest. Now carefully feed the stem of the next daisy through – making sure not to split the stem completely – and then repeat. How long a chain can you make?



For the braid method you need daisies with good long stems. Gather three daisies and lay them next to each other. Pinch all three daisies together, just below the flower heads and then carefully bring the right hand stem over the middle one. Hold them in place with a finger and bring the left hand stem over the stem you've just crossed, and under the original middle stem. Pull it all tight together and it should hold... Now continue this process until you have a good strong chain.





## Other Wildflowers to Spot this Week



**Red Campion (*Silene dioica*)** Blooming straight after the bluebell, Red Campion is a medium height perennial with pinky red, deeply notched five petalled flowers which fuse at their base to form a bulbous calyx, all held on a downy stalk. Male and female flowers grow on different plants. Grows in ancient woodlands and hedgerows, it is regarded as a friend to the fairies and the bees – and its common name of ‘Adder Flower’ hints at its traditional use to treat snake bites.



**White Clover (*Trifolium repens*)** Common in any grassy area, low growing globular clusters of white flowers with the famous ‘cloverleaf’ shaped leaves. Usually three leaves but four – and even five leaved variants exist and are considered lucky – but only if found by accident. Common names include ‘Milky Blobs’ and ‘Sheepy Baas’ but the name ‘Bee Bread’ is a great description of its value to bumblebees, for whom it contains the perfect mix of nutrients



**Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)** Growing in damp areas – or even in shallow water – A large yellow ‘buttercup’ type flower with dark green waxy leaves. Known as ‘Kingscup’ as it looks regal enough for even a king to drink from – though it is poisonous like all buttercups. It may be one of our oldest plants – existing in Britain even before the Ice Age. Water Gown and Soldiers Buttons are other common names. It had a traditional role in May celebrations, pinned above doorways to ward off evil.





# Look Out For Daisies

Spotting wildflowers is a great activity that anyone can try – and its almost as easy from your window or doorstep as it is on a walk! See how many of these things you can spot this week.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| • A Daisy                                   | 1pt   |
| • A Red Campion                             | 5pts  |
| • A Marsh Marigold                          | 10pts |
| • A White Clover                            | 1pt   |
| • A Hawthorn bush                           | 5pts  |
| • A Bumblebee carrying pollen               | 5pts  |
| • A Wildflower being visited by a butterfly | 10pts |
| • A Tree that is in flower                  | 1pts  |
| • A Patch of daisies bigger than you        | 2pts  |
| • A Caterpillar on a wildflower             | 5pts  |
| • A Bumblebee on White Clover               | 2pts  |
| • A flower being picked by a bird           | 10pts |

Total \_\_\_\_\_





## Links

Go further with your Wild Ways Well activity by trying these links once you come home

**Cumbernauld Living Landscape** [www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk](http://www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk)

**Wild Ways Well** [www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/wild-ways-well](http://www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/wild-ways-well)

**Activities** [www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/get-involved/activities/](http://www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/get-involved/activities/)

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/CumbernauldLivingLandscape](http://www.facebook.com/CumbernauldLivingLandscape)

**Twitter** [www.twitter.com/wildcumbernauld](http://www.twitter.com/wildcumbernauld)

**The Conservation Volunteers** [www.tcv.org.uk/scotland](http://www.tcv.org.uk/scotland)

**The Scottish Wildlife Trust** [www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

**SamH** [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

**NHS Five Ways Well** [www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing](http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing)

**MIND coronavirus and your wellbeing** [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing)

**Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership** [www.elament.org.uk/media/2229/19-ways-to-stay-connected-2.pdf](http://www.elament.org.uk/media/2229/19-ways-to-stay-connected-2.pdf)

**Plantlife** [www.plantlife.org.uk/uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk)

**Woodland Trust Wildflowers** [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/plants/wild-flowers](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/plants/wild-flowers)

**Wildlife Trusts Wildflowers** [www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/wildflowers](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/wildflowers)



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