



MIKE MACDONALD

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Visit the garden and complete the sentences below:

In the presence of the garden, I feel _____

It makes me wonder _____

What I find most interesting is _____

Can you identify any of the plants in this garden? If so, what are they called and where else did you encounter them? Refer to the ATTACHED GARDEN MAP to locate and identify any unknown plants you see.

LOOKING CLOSER

Choose one natural specimen from the garden to study and sketch a detail of it in the space provided.

What impact do you think this artwork may have on the community and the environment?

Do you think the location of this artwork is significant? Why or why not?



LOOKING INWARD

Mike MacDonald's garden is composed of indigenous medicine plants that also create a retreat for butterflies, bees, and other wildlife living in the city. Think about your neighbourhood. What plants and animals lived here before our communities were constructed? Are there places where wildlife can coexist with humans?

Imagine you could redesign your street to make more space for animals and nature. In the box below, draw your vision for how your street could be adapted to make more room for biodiversity.



GET CREATIVE

Mike MacDonald's garden is a retreat for bees and butterflies. These insects play an important role in the environment as pollinators that sustain healthy ecosystems. Build your own bee home to help create even more spaces for this species to thrive.



MATERIALS

- A pencil
- A marker
- A ruler
- Scissors
- Masking tape
- String (about 20" long)
- A waterproof container
- Parchment & computer paper
- A box cutter or puncturing tool
- A selection of twigs & natural materials
- The help of a trusted adult
- Paint, permanent markers, stickers for decoration (optional)

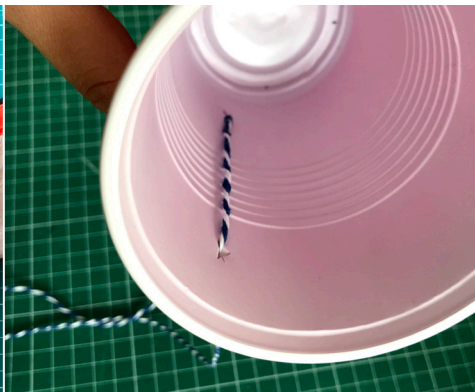
PREPARATION

- Explore the outdoors to find the perfect place for your bee home. It should be somewhere that it can hang approximately 4 to 6 feet from the ground.

PROCESS

1) Mark two spots in a line, one near the opening of the container and one near the back end.

2) Ask a trusted adult to help puncture two small holes in your clean, dry container. Thread the string through the holes and tie to complete a large loop for it to hang from. Use tape to seal the holes.



GET CREATIVE



3) Measure the length of your container. Use that length, minus half an inch to cut or tear long strips of parchment paper. We tore about 20 strips of parchment paper and about 10 pieces of regular computer paper.

4) Roll the strips tightly around a pencil and use masking tape to wrap fully around, adhering the tape to itself. Seal one end of the tube by pinching it and taping it shut. Repeat this process for all of your parchment and computer paper strips.

5) Collect a variety of natural materials from outside. Dried out sticks and twigs are great, especially if they have hollow insides! Different thicknesses will help to fill crevices. Cut or break them to roughly the same length as your rolled tubes.

6) Fill your container with paper tubes (sealed end at the back) and twigs. Make sure to pack them in tightly enough that they won't fall out.

7) Use stickers, paint, or markers to decorate your bee house. When finished, hang it outside to provide a home to bees throughout the summer.

SHARE

Share your creation with us on social media using
@kwartgallery and #KWAGInFocus

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Planting one Another features a twin re-planting of a Medicine and Butterfly garden by the late Mi'kmaq artist Mike MacDonald (1941-2006).

From the late 1980s into the early 1990s, MacDonald recorded testimony and created visual documents for the Gitksan and Wetsuwet'en during their land claim challenges. While on location for a video shoot near Kitwanga BC in an area threatened by clear-cut logging, MacDonald's encounters with butterflies inspired his understanding of their connection to medicine plants and healing. This was the seed of his numerous butterfly gardens created from 1995 to 2003 across the country, from the Presentation House, North Vancouver to Mount Saint Vincent Gallery in Halifax, Nova Scotia. These gardens made spaces for contemplation and invited slow looking and interaction with medicine plants.

Visit the garden at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery located at 101 Queen Street N in Kitchener.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Current Events:

Consider how this artwork is linked to current events. Create a mind map to record your thoughts. Imagine you are a journalist: what type of news article would you pair with this work? Look in your local newspaper or online for articles that you think relate to Mike MacDonald's garden and record the headlines.

- Use your mind map and the articles you found as inspiration to write your own news article about the garden and its significance to current events.
- Choose one of the articles you found and with a small group or your classmates present and discuss your choices.

ART TERMS

COMPOSITION

The arrangement of objects or figures within a space; or the artist's decision to capture a specific spatial arrangement.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

A creative action often leading to a temporary artwork that brings focus to our relation with the natural world.

TEXTURE

An Element of Art that refers to the way a three-dimensional work of art may feel to touch, or the perceived feel of a two-dimensional work of art.

GROUP DISCUSSION

In your classroom or a small group, consider the question below to generate conversation. Encourage your students to think about the question and share their ideas with a partner to help them articulate their ideas before discussing the topic as a whole group.

- Mike MacDonald created a garden as an artistic expression of his experiences and ideas. How does his garden convey meaning differently than an artwork created with more conventional media such as paint or pencil?

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, Science/Ecosystems, Analysis and Critical Thinking

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. "Open Studio: Butterfly Garden". YouTube. September 22, 2017.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ssn2EMCOZKM

"Artist Profile; Mike MacDonald". VTape. www.vtape.org/artist?ai=50

"Mike MacDonald: Healing Garden". Interview by John Grande. L A N D. www.landviews.org/articles/mikemacdonald-jg.html

"How Wet'suwet'en butterflies offer lessons in resilience and resistance." The Conversation. 25 February 2020.

https://theconversation.com/how-wetsuweten-butterflies-offer-lessons-in-resilience-and-resistance-132418?fbclid=IwAR3zzeu_kujwwWiM0xYFVev3DbU_nGtDlknX5ZPj-_JU0dl2oBYxD6L0tlg

Ellis, J. (Ed.). (2019). Intertwined Histories: Plants in Their Social Contexts. "University of Calgary Press" book.

https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/110196/9781773850917_chapter06.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y

Medicine and Butterfly Garden

Mike MacDonald



Wild Strawberry, *fragaria vesca* - the root tea was used for stomach ailments, jaundice and profuse menses. Teas from the plant was also used as a wash to treat sunburn.

Blanketflower, *gaillardia aristata* - was used extensively by the Blackfoot people. Flowers were used as spoons to feed broth to the sick. An infusion of the flowers was also used to sooth sore feet.

Milkweed - root tea was used as a contraceptive and for coughs and colds. The

milky juice from the cut plant was used to soften and remove corns, warts and calluses. Milkweed is toxic and must be used carefully.

Joe Pye Weed (Boneset), *eupatorium* - Joe Pye was a New Englander who pretended to be a native shaman and successfully used medicines from his plant to treat broken bones and lung disorder. His preferred payment was pie, thus the names for the man and the plant. This plant is a nectar source for many species of butterfly.

Goldenrod, *solidago* - the nectar is a source for butterflies in the fall. Tea made from the plants was used for sore throats, constriction and nasal congestion. The root was also chewed for relief of these conditions.

Aster - roots were used to make tea to treat diarrhea. The flowers are a nectar source for Monarchs and other butterflies and bloom well into the fall.

Liatris - the root tea is a diuretic and tonic used to treat kidney and bladder ailments, colic, and painful and delayed periods. It was gargled for sore throat and the root was used in poultices for snakebites.

Echinacea (Purple Coneflower) - known as an immune system booster and was used for snake and spider bites, burns, cancer, toothache, difficult sores and wounds, flu and colds. Roots are harvested when four years old.

Black-eyed Susan (Yellow Coneflower) - related to Echinacea and many species of butterflies enjoy nectar from these flowers.

Sweetgrass, *hierochloa odorata* - burned like incense and used in cleansing ceremonies or prepared as tea to treat many ailments but should be used with care as it contains a coumarin, sometimes considered carcinogenic.

All of the plants we talked about so far are native to America. The vines growing up the poles are hops. An alien plant from Europe, hops gives beer that bitter taste. Several kinds of butterflies lay eggs on hops. The hops vines are invading the space and taking light from the medicine plants but they are all coexisting peacefully just as we do most of the time.