Stonnington schools are invited to join the City Nature Challenge and explore our urban environment thriving with life!

What is the City Nature Challenge?

The City Nature Challenge (Friday 30 April – Monday 3 May) is all about stepping outside into your schoolyard, garden, street or local park and looking closely to learn about the plants, animals, insects and fungi living all around you!

In this four-day, global citizen science challenge, Stonnington will join seven east Melbourne councils (Boroondara, Whitehorse, Knox, Manningham, Monash, Maroondah and Greater Dandenong) to collaborate with around 250 cities from 40 countries around the world to record as many photographic observations of wild plants and animals as possible using the iNaturalist app.

Why participate in Stonnington's City Nature Challenge?

By participating in the challenge, you can learn more about local nature, while also making your city a better place – for you and other species. Community observations recorded through the iNaturalist app will contribute to real species databases and help scientists and land managers understand our urban biodiversity so that we can work to protect it.

All Stonnington schools participating in the challenge will receive a **$50 Indigenous plant voucher** to put toward native plants that can be planted on school grounds to support biodiversity and food and shelter for wildlife.

How can schools get involved?

1. Create a school team account on iNaturalist. Use a generic user email and password that can be shared with students for example, **user:** StonnPrimary **password**: stonnprimary2021
   (please note: individual students can also create their own accounts, but your school will need its own account to qualify for the free plant voucher).

2. Watch this video on how-to record an observation using the app.

3. Share the account login details with your students.

4. Register your school to **join our free 'Birds, Bats and Bees: Discover Stonnington's Biodiversity!' webinar on Thursday 29 April (2.00 – 3.15pm**). Delivered by the Port Phillip EcoCentre, this webinar will explore the important native wildlife in Stonnington and what students can do to help protect it (registrations essential).

5. Plan a time on **Friday 30 April** or **Monday 3 May** during the City Nature Challenge to head out into the school yard and make observations!

Teacher resource- Lesson planning tips for joining the City Nature Challenge:

- Check out this excellent unit plan about running a biodiversity blitz from Cool Australia for classroom activity ideas to get your class involved in the challenge.
- Teachers and students are welcome to attend our **free iNaturalist training webinar on Tuesday evening 20 April** (6.30-7.45pm) to learn how to use the iNaturalist App. Register online here.

What types of species should I look for?

Any living thing including a plant, animal or fungus can be recorded on iNaturalist. You can observe all sorts of species - big and small, native and non-native, wild and cultivated. Here are some tips on finding a variety of species:

- Observe a variety of locations (e.g. schoolyard, sidewalks, in trees, near waterways, under rocks or logs, and in less likely locations such as footpaths and even indoors).
- Try to look for species at different times of day, as different species have different habits.
- Please don't record humans, pets or indoor houseplants.

Get your school community involved: join our free weekend nature walks events on Saturday 1 May and Sunday 2 May

Students and their families can also participate in the City Nature Challenge with others by joining one of our free community biodiversity walks! Learn about native plants and wildlife around Stonnington parks while contributing to the challenge.

For more information about getting your schools involved in the City Nature Challenge or any other Council sustainability programs, contact our Environmental Education Officer at environment@stonnington.vic.gov.au or 8290 1341, or visit our Stonnington Sustainable Schools webpage.