

The Great Plant Hunt Treasure Chest

Primary Schools up and down the country have received a treasure chest full of exciting scientific goodies – all linked to discovering more about the life and work of Charles Darwin – one of the world's most distinguished scientists.

It is 200 years since Darwin's birth and as a celebration of his life, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, commissioned and funded by the Wellcome Trust have produced The Great Plant Hunt Treasure Chest for Primary Schools to encourage children to explore the natural world around them and join in with other schools for the biggest ever school science project.

There are activities for each year group from year 1 to 6 linked to different aspects of what made Darwin a super scientist. – From Darwin's Lookouts (age 5/6), Darwin's Discoverers (age 6/7) Darwin's Thinkers (age 7/8) Darwin Collectors (age 8/9), Darwin's Investigators (age 9/10) to Darwin's detectives (age 10/11). All the activities are linked to the science national curriculum and there are opportunities for cross curricular learning with literacy, numeracy, history, geography, healthy eating, art and DT, RE and citizen ship.

Darwin's Investigators have a special mission to contribute to real scientific work by observing daisies, spotting when they fruit, then to photograph and record the location and date on the Great Plant Hunt website. The children can collect seeds of daisies which scientists at Kew's Millennium Seed Bank will use for research.

A recurring theme to all the activities is Darwin's Thinking Walk. Developing critical thinking skills is key to understanding science. Darwin carried out most of his scientific work at home in his garden and used to walk each day around the grounds along a circular sand covered path. Walking is supposed to stimulate thought!

You can set up your own thinking walk in your school grounds. Each of the year group activities involves a thinking walk with discoveries along the way. Children are encouraged to plan, discover, observe, record and collect along the walk. A Darwin doodle book can be made and used to record information.

All the different activities can be brought together in assemblies through a special 'Following in Darwin's Footsteps' story book and poster, where the results of the projects can be plotted for all to see.

For more information go to: www.greatplanthunt.org