

Sense of wonder: Creating engaging exhibitions

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Next year is the 100th anniversary of the birth of environmentalist Rachel Carson and 50 years since the publication of her seminal essay *Sense of Wonder*. Although written half a century ago it is more relevant now than ever before. As we lose green spaces to development and children spend more time inside there are fewer opportunities for real discovery of nature. Experts now link poor physical health and behaviour problems, like ADHD, with a deficiency in contact with nature and outdoor play.

In this workshop we will investigate how childhood experiences with nature have often proved to be important in shaping our lives and those of others we know and admire. We will begin to collect recollections of times when participants were touched by the sense of wonder. This will be the start of a collection that we hope to develop into a worldwide exhibition celebrating and exploring the relationship between childhood nature experiences and environmental awareness in later life.

The workshop will also highlight ways in which parents, teachers and youth leaders can provide safe opportunities for children to have contact with nature and play outdoors.

Biography

Ian Edwards is Head of Interpretation at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh where he is also responsible for events and exhibitions. His interests include ecology and ethnobotany as well as ways of increasing environmental awareness through informal learning. He is a director of a small conservation charity Reforesting Scotland.