

# GREENWILD

## THE WORLD BEHIND THE DOOR

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Illustrated by Elisa Paganelli

### BOTANIST CHALLENGES FOR UKS2 / AGES 9+

#### EXPLORE THEMES OF:

- Nature
- Plants
- Magic
- Fantasy Worlds

#### SUBJECT CHECKLIST:

- English
- Science
- Art and Design



This pack includes extracts from *Greenwild* by Pari Thomson along with reading questions, linked activities and 'Botanist Challenges' to help children explore the themes in the book.

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### BOTANY CHALLENGE: ENTER THE GREENWILD!

Objectives: Use descriptive language to write a fictional recount.

## THEME 2 – BOTANY SCHOOL

### BOTANY CHALLENGE: PAY ATTENTION TO NATURE!

Objectives: Explore the features of leaves and research their role.

## THEME 3 – HAL'S HIDDEN GARDEN

### BOTANY CHALLENGE: CREATE A HIDDEN GARDEN!

Objectives: Use natural materials to create a model or sculpture.

## THEME 4 – MAGICAL PLANTS

### BOTANY CHALLENGE: DISCOVER A NEW PLANT!

Objectives: Design a magical plant; compose a short information text.



# THEME 1 – THE GREENWILD

## Extract from the book:

Daisy frowned, thinking of Ma in Peru: searching for a story that had turned out to be just as dangerous as she had feared. She brushed her fingers along the top of a swathe of long, tufty purple grass, which sneezed. ‘Bless you,’ said Daisy absently. Then she jumped.

‘Snodgrass,’ said Indigo. He laughed, looking at her face. ‘I keep forgetting you don’t know this stuff. I’ve never met anyone who didn’t grow up in the Greenwild.’

‘How big is it?’ asked Daisy, rubbing her nose. ‘The Greenwild, I mean?’

‘As big as the Greyside,’ said Indigo carelessly. ‘The pockets are tucked in everywhere - hundreds of them, all over the world, hidden just like the one in Kew Gardens.’

‘Wait,’ said Daisy, suddenly thinking of something. ‘Do you have to come from a Botanist family to have green magic?’

Indigo shrugged. ‘Most do but some come from Greyside families. People who love nature so much it’s in their bones: they usually find their way here, one way or another.’ Then he grinned. ‘Come on, you haven’t seen anything yet! Race you to the trees!’ He took off running, and Daisy sprinted after him, shouting indignantly.

They both stopped at the edge of the woods, panting and laughing.

‘Beat you!’ said Indigo.

‘Not true! You had a head start.’ But Daisy was grinning.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:





1. Where did Daisy find the door to the Greenwild?
2. Would you like to visit the Greenwild? Why?
3. What do you think it means to love nature so much it’s ‘in your bones’?
4. Where is your favourite natural place? Can you describe it to a friend? What is special about this place? How do you feel when you are there?
5. You have met several inhabitants of the Greenwild so far including Indigo Podsnap, Ivy Helix, Artemis White and Marigold Brightly? What do their names have in common?



# BOTANIST CHALLENGE 1

## ENTER THE GREENWILD

1. Daisy found a door to the Greenwild in Kew Gardens – a wonderous place where plants from all over the world are grown. But Kew Gardens is not the only place with an entrance to the Greenwild! Imagine you have found a special, hidden door to the Greenwild. Where did you find it? What does it look like? How do you feel? Draw a picture or write a description of your discovery. (You can re-read the description on page 62 of the book and look at the picture on page 63 to give you ideas!)
2. Guess what? You have passed through the door and entered a pocket of the Greenwild! To allow you to stay in the Greenwild, you need to apply for a Grassport at the Bureau of Botanical Business. Fill out your details on the Grassport below (you might like to give yourself a plant-inspired name or nickname), then sign your Grassport. You are now free to explore the Greenwild and learn more about the magic of plants!

 <h3>GRASSPORT</h3> <p>Photograph:</p>  	<p>Name:</p> <p>Nickname:</p> <p>Interests:</p> <p>Favourite Plant:</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> 
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# THEME 2 – BOTANY SCHOOL

In this extract, Daisy is in a botany lesson with Gulliver Wildish, head of the Great Glasshouse.

## Extract from the book:

‘We’ll continue where we left off at the end of last term,’ he said. ‘Weaving practice: the Botanist’s bread and butter.’ The others lined up, and Daisy saw that there was a thin green vine laid out in front of each of them. One by one, they lifted their hands and the vines began to rise into the air. The Prof’s shot upwards and soared into a neat loop, like a snake swallowing its tail, while Indigo’s did a sort of wriggle before collapsing back onto the ground.

Daisy gazed at them in astonishment. ‘Er,’ she said, looking at Wildish. ‘How-’  
‘Lesson number one for you,’ he said, ignoring her. ‘Pay attention.’

‘I am,’ replied Daisy.

‘No, that’s the lesson. Pay attention to the world around you. Nature is wilder and stranger than you know, more miraculous than you can imagine.’ His eyebrows bristled. ‘The best Botanists know that there’s magic everywhere, in every molecule of the natural world. Even in the Greyside,’ he said, pausing. ‘Perhaps especially there, where it has to fight so hard to live.’ He looked very fierce for a moment, like a figure on the prow of a sailing ship. Then he waved his right hand and sighed. ‘But you’ll have to learn that for yourself.’

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you know any ‘wild or strange’ facts about nature?
2. What role do plants play in your life? What would life be like without plants?
3. Why does Wildish think that the natural world is ‘especially’ magical in the Greyside?
4. Can you name three plants that grow in your local area?
5. Have you ever noticed any plants that look like they are ‘fighting hard to live’? Perhaps you have spotted a plant that has grown through the cracks in paving stones, burst through concrete or taken root halfway up a wall? From now on, keep your eyes open for plants growing in unusual or precarious places and share any findings with your class. Who can spot the most determined looking plant?!



# BOTANIST CHALLENGE 2

## PAY ATTENTION TO PLANTS!

Congratulations! You have been accepted into botany school in the Greenwild where you will acquire the knowledge and experience you need to become an even more skilled botanist. In your first lesson at botany school, you will be learning how to pay attention to the plants around you. Good luck!

### GETTING TO KNOW A LEAF!

You will need to work with a partner for this task.

1. Go outside and collect a selection of 8 different leaves. Try to collect leaves that are roughly the same size.
2. Choose one of the leaves and show it to your partner.
3. Now, take your time paying attention to this leaf and getting to know it. What shape is it? What does it feel like? Does it have a smell? How big is it? How many veins or lobes does it have?
4. Close your eyes or put a blindfold on. Ask your partner to spread all the leaves out in front of you.
5. Using your senses of touch and smell, can you find your chosen leaf?
6. Swap places with your partner and challenge them to choose a leaf and then identify it without looking!

### EXTRA CHALLENGE

1. Look carefully at the leaves you have collected. What do they all have in common and how are they different? Why do you think plants have leaves? Discuss your ideas with your partner.
2. Now, carry out some research to find out more about the role of leaves and how they help plants survive and grow.
3. What have you discovered about the real-life magic of leaves? Do you agree with Gulliver Wildish that nature is 'miraculous'?

# THEME 3 – HAL’S HIDDEN GARDEN

## Extract from the book:

She slept for two hours and woke at midnight to find the moon shining in through the window. Rubbing her face with tiredness, she staggered out to the hidden garden. Hal was already there, yanking up weeds, and for a few minutes they worked in a comfortable silence. Then Daisy lost her grip on a nettlespur and went flying, landing unceremoniously on her back.

‘Nice,’ said Hal, dissolving into wheezing laughter. ‘One-nil to the weeds.’

‘All right, all right, O mighty one. I’d like to see you do better.’ She tossed a clod of mud at his head and he ducked, still laughing.

‘I think we’ve done a pretty good job, actually.’ Hal was sitting back on his heels and surveying the area in the centre of the garden. Their rescued sapling was spindly but upright, and, in the space they’d cleared, there were masses of violets unfurling like tiny flags across the grass.

‘Mm,’ said Daisy, glancing around. ‘This garden must have been beautiful once. I wonder why it was abandoned.’

‘There are all sorts of forgotten corners at Mallowmarsh, said Hal with a shrug. I expect someone long ago lost the key, or went away exploring and never came back.’ He looked wistful for a moment, then shook himself. ‘It feels sort of like we have a responsibility, though. Like maybe we should try to bring it back to life.’

‘Yes.’ Daisy nodded, swept up in that ‘we’.

‘Don’t laugh, but I want it to be a surprise for my mother,’ said Hal. ‘If I can make this garden good, maybe it will show her that Father is wrong: that I can do something worthwhile.’

Daisy was quiet for a moment. She felt as though she’d been handed a brightly coloured balloon, and that it was very important that she didn’t let it go.

‘Okay,’ she said. ‘What do we do next?’

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think a ‘sapling’ is?
2. How would you describe Daisy and Hal’s relationship?
3. How do you think Daisy feels about the idea of bringing the garden back to life?
4. Do you have any ideas about who might have planted this garden?
5. Have you ever done any gardening? If so, how did it feel?



# BOTANIST CHALLENGE 3

## CREATE A HIDDEN GARDEN

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1. You have stumbled upon a hidden garden in a forgotten corner of the Greenwild... what do you find inside? Make a miniature model of your secret garden to show to your friends!
2. You will need a shallow pot, dish or tray. Go outside and fill your dish with earth. Now, use anything you can find in the natural area around you to make your miniature garden. For example, you could use stones to make a path, petals to make flowers and twigs to make trees, bridges or fences.
3. You could also use other resources such as silver foil or bottle tops to make a pond, and paper or lolly sticks to make a house. When you have finished, give a friend a tour of your secret garden! What are the most interesting features of your garden?



# THEME 4 – MAGICAL PLANTS

## Extract from the book:

The next morning was chill and grey, with sleet needling past the windows of the Roost and stripping gossamer from the giant dandelions. The gramophone was playing in the warm kitchen and Miss Tufton was stirring porridge at the stove, but Daisy was worrying about Ma. Another day, and still no news.

She frowned and glanced sideways at Indigo, who was using a leather-bound book as a plate while buttering several thick slices of toast. Daisy recognized Artemis's copy of *The Compleat Botanist* and distracted herself by reading some of the entries as he scattered crumbs across the W section.

At the top of the page was an entry for a Whimbuckle gourd (calabash family), which could be ground into a tisane to promote truthful visions. (Warning: known to cause severe flatulence.) Then there was an entry for something called a Whipple (also known as the Vanishing Tree), a tropical evergreen that was only visible at dawn and dusk. Its seeds, said the book, were completely invisible and thus difficult to source: but they could induce temporary invisibility for up to three hours in a full-grown adult. (Warning: excessive consumption can induce exhaustion, paranoia and permanent vanishing.)

Daisy's eyes stopped at the last entry on the page:

Whishogg (also known as anar-e-arzu, from the Persian meaning 'wishing pomegranate'). Native to Iran, and famous for its rarity, the whishogg is the fruit of an unusual deciduous tree said to take root only where true friendship exists. Uses: each fruit contains one ruby seed that will grant a single wish. The other seeds are an exceptionally good source of vitamin C. Warning: be careful what you wish for.

'Oh!' Daisy thought of Ma's stories about a magical pomegranate and knew this was what she'd meant.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If you could have either a Whimbuckle gourd, a Whipple or a Whishogg, which would you choose and why?
2. Look up and define the words 'deciduous', 'evergreen' and 'tropical'.
3. Can you remember the magical qualities of the following plants from the story so far? (Check your answers by turning to the page numbers given below.)
  - Larder Tree (pg. 75)
  - Snodgrass (pg. 120)
  - Milk chocolate Tree (pg. 127)
  - Dafotrills (pg. 154-155)
  - Minim moss (pg. 163-164)
  - Lightning seeds (pg. 188)
4. Have you read any other novels or traditional stories that feature magical plants?
5. Do you know of any real-life plants that are said to have healing qualities?

# BOTANIST CHALLENGE 4

## DISCOVER A NEW PLANT!

With your newly acquired botany skills, you have discovered a brand-new magical plant that no one has ever seen before! What does it look like? What magical powers does it have? Where did you find it?

Artemis is very impressed with your discovery and asks you to produce a new page for *The Compleat Botanist*, all about your plant.

Draw a picture of your plant and write a description on the page below. What will you name your plant? Don't forget to include any warnings about side effects!

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