

## Meldy Plants Some Seeds

Meldy left her biology lesson in a very concerned state. Her teacher, Ms Frogmore - Frinton, had told them all about bees and had spoken at length about their role in pollinating flowers, bushes and trees. She had finished the lesson by saying, "Remember, without bees we would have far fewer apples, pears and many other fruits that we take for granted!"

Later, Meldy was having lunch with some friends. "We have to do something, but what?" she asked.

"I saw some seeds in a packet once," said Tamzin, "and the packet said 'bee friendly' and I thought 'I am friendly already!' but now I see what it really meant. We should plant some 'bee friendly' seeds."

"I know where I can get some at a good price!" said Becca.

"Yes, we could each plant some in our gardens. Clemency, you could plant some in pots on your balcony!"

Later that day the Wagley house was quiet. The twins were relaxing, Mr Wagley had not returned as yet and Mrs Wagley was concentrating hard on another report.

"Mummy, I want to have a bee-friendly garden!"

"Yes, dear," said her mother as she carried on typing. Why were her deadlines always so tight?

"I can, can I?"

"Yes, dear!" By now Mrs Wagley was analysing some numbers that didn't seem to make sense.

"I'll start now then."

Normally after Meldy said this, her mother would pay more attention but somehow she didn't realise just how serious 'now' could be.

Meldy skipped out to the garden shed. There were lots of tools in there. What did she need? Ah! There it was, a spade!

She dragged the spade to the middle of the lawn and started to dig. She tried to, anyway, but the spade was a bit big. She dropped it in frustration and ran back to the shed.

There was a big fork! That would do! Its shiny prongs glinted in the light as it was dragged across the lawn to the future 'bee-friendly' zone.

Meldy paused, wiped her brow, then set to work. The fork was also large but she found that she could make more of an impact with it. Pretty soon the neat patch of grass had been turned into a bit of a war zone but she still found it difficult to penetrate very deeply into the ground.

So, she went back to the shed while the fork lay slumbering on the grass with its shed mate, the spade.

Mr Wagley's meeting had gone well. He was pleased with himself as he walked up his drive. There was a football game this evening and he had visions of relaxing with freshly brewed coffee.

"Meldy! What are you doing!" he cried as he saw what seemed like half his tools spread over the lawn. Meldy was just carrying his new electric drill from the shed. She hadn't tried it yet.

When he got closer he stopped in dismay. "Meldy, what have you done!"

Meldy quickly realised she might be in trouble. "But Mummy said I could!"

"Could what?"

"Have a bee-friendly garden!"

They went into the garden house to find Mrs Wagley relaxing with a cup of tea.

"How did the meeting go?" she asked. "You look a bit tired."

"We have a situation! Meldy has been digging up the lawn for a bee-friendly garden and she thinks that you gave her permission!"

At this the twins, who had been lounging with their phones, realised something was up and the whole family trooped out to the lawn. Some birds flew away, at least they were enjoying the holes.

"What have you done to our badminton pitch?" cried the twins.

"Meldy! I didn't say you could dig up the lawn!" cried Mrs Wagley.

"Meldy! You could have ruined my best drill!" cried Mr Wagley.

Meldy had now started to cry. “But, Mummy, you said I could have a bee-friendly garden! And I wanted to save the bees and bees are more important than badminton and ....” At this point she ran off to her room.

After a short interval, Mrs Wagley knocked on her door. “Meldy, there has been a misunderstanding. Yes, I agree that we should do more to save the bees and I think, on reflection, that I was distracted when you came to see me. I should have listened more carefully, I’m sorry.”

Meldy hugged her mother. She had forgotten about the badminton games on the lawn.

“Why don’t you ask Mrs Berrington next door? She knows a lot about gardening.”

“Of course! Her garden is full of flowers!”

Mrs Wagley was a bit embarrassed as the neighbours had put their garden to shame.

The very next day Meldy skipped round to the neighbours’ house. She knocked on the door and Mrs Berrington answered. “Hello, Meldy! How are you?”

“Mrs Berrington! I want to have a bee-friendly garden and you know so much about gardening so I wanted to know ...”

“Of course! I’ll call Eustace, he can help you.”

Eustace was playing the piano at the back of their house so his mother had to shout a bit. “Eustace!!! Can you come here and help Meldy with her bee-friendly garden?”

Eustace groaned. He thought he could spend some time on his music but that would have to wait. Oh well, at least he would get to see the twins again.

Eustace stood outside the Wagley house with Meldy. “What you need is some pots. Put the seeds in the pots, water them and when the flowers grow you can put them in the ground.”

The twins appeared. “Hello, Yew!” they chorussed. “What’s she up to now? She destroyed our badminton court so we can’t play for awhile!”

Eustace could have given Meldy a hug as this gave him his chance. “Oh, you can always come and play on our lawn if you like.” He tried to appear as disinterested as possible but he eagerly awaited their reply.

“If it’s no trouble,” they said.

“That’s sorted then,” he replied as he thought how little trouble it would be.

A few days later a very distressed Meldy went to see Eustace. “My pots have been upset and the compost has been thrown around!”

“Ah, that could be birds or squirrels,” he explained.

The twins were happily playing badminton on his lawn so Eustace was reluctant to leave but he went to have a look at the damage.

“We could set up a camera to see what’s happening. Once we know that, we can do something.”

So, one of the pots was replanted, a camera was trained on it and off they went. It did not take long to see the problem. It was squirrels helped by some birds.

Meldy was visibly upset. “But they know they shouldn’t do that as I told them what we had done and I thought they understood and they need the bees as much as we do!”

Eustace was quiet for a bit. “Well, we will need to stop them in a squirrel-and-bird-friendly manner. We should put them under some glass.”

“The squirrels?”

“No, the plants! Perhaps you should put out some food for them?”

“The plants?”

“No, the squirrels and birds.”

“Daddy says they get too much anyway! I do spend a lot of my money feeding them. Becca gets me some good deals on bird food and the squirrels eat it as well!”

“Becca?”

“My friend at school. She’s amazing! She’s really good and has lots of ways to make some money!”

The pots were put under glass and the camera showed some confused squirrels looking for an entry point. The birds couldn’t get to the pots either so went over to Eustace’s garden instead.

Meldy came up with a plan. “We need to apologise to the squirrels. We need to tell them that we like them but they should go back to the nut-and-seed feeders.”

“Apologise to the squirrels?”

“Yes, of course! I don’t want to upset them. They might think I don’t like them anymore!”

Eustace thought for a bit. He didn’t want to upset Meldy. “What should we say?” he asked.

Whatever Meldy said, the squirrels obviously forgave her. They, and the birds, returned to their feeders. The plants thrived and flowered. The bees came to their bee-friendly garden and Meldy was happy.