

## **Irish Girl Guides & Earthology press release**

2 June 2019

### **Girl Guides' #PledgeAgainstPlastic garden a BLOOMing success!**

**- Irish Girl Guides and Earthology encourage the public to cut down on waste –**

A #PledgeAgainstPlastic garden designed and created by members of Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is proving a huge success at the Bloom festival in the Phoenix Park.

The 'postcard garden', which was created almost entirely out of recycled materials, was Highly Commended by the Bloom judges and attracted much attention and praise. An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar spent some time admiring it on Thursday evening and even tried out the sofa, which was made entirely out of eco-bricks (two litre plastic bottles filled with soft plastics).

Peter Donegan, a Royal Horticultural Society Silver Medal awardee, said the girls' hard work and creativity had made him "smile very much" and climate campaigner and author, Lorna Gold, said it was her favourite garden because "It has the most heart in it".

The garden was the brainchild of Sarah Blake, who has recently founded a sustainability consultancy called Earthology and who is Leader of Rathgar Zion Brownies (Brownies is the branch of IGG for 7-10 year old girls). Once she came up with the design, she reached out to Zion Guides (10-14 year old girls) to help out too and she soon put out word to IGG's 12,000 members around the country to help collect plastic bottle tops and make eco-bricks.

In the end 1,500 plastic bottle tops were used in the creation of the garden – hundreds of blue tops were used to represent the ocean on a giant globe while other coloured bottle tops were used to decorate planters. The planters themselves were reused plastic tubs and bunting was made with crisp packets. A bug hotel was made by the girls by filling plastic containers with twigs and leaves and beautiful badges and crocheted ladybirds were made with leftover wool and scraps of material.

Sarah said the aim of the garden was to encourage people to focus on the ways in which they could reduce their use of plastic and focus on the 5 Rs – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot. "You can Refuse by growing your own vegetables and fruits, thereby avoiding the need for buying them in plastic," she said. "You can Reduce by using bees wrap instead of clingfilm to wrap your lunch (it can be bought in health food shops), you can Reuse by using plastic containers as planters and Recycle by sending, for example, soft plastics, like crisp packets, to Terracycle. And you can Rot by using a compost bin or brown bin for your food waste."

The back of the garden features a wall on which Rathgar Brownies and Guides signed their pledges to reduce their use of plastic and visitors to the garden were encouraged to make their own #PledgeAgainstPlastic.

ENDS

**Notes for editors:**

**Irish Girl Guides** - Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator, Engineering, Aviation, STEM, Climate Action and Global Traveller.

[www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie)