

Unit 3 – The Ideal City

Walter Burley Griffin – research poster

Setting the scene

The location of Australia's National Capital had been decided. A world competition was held to find a design that would incorporate an ornamental lake, Parliament House and all its office buildings. An architect from Chicago called Walter Burley Griffin (and his wife and partner, Marion Mahony Griffin) won the competition with designs that incorporated the natural environment and scenic mountain views. Walter Burley Griffin moved to Canberra to oversee the construction process.

Of his design Griffin would write: 'I have planned a city not like any other city in the world. I planned it not in a way that I expected any government authorities in the world would accept. I have planned an ideal city – a city that meets my ideal of the city of the future.'

What to do

- investigate
- research
- decorate

Investigate the architect Walter Burley Griffin and present your research in the form of a large and colourful poster.

During your investigation you should answer the following questions:

- Why was the design of Walter and Marion Griffin chosen as the winner of the competition?
- Were the Griffins lovers of nature?
- How did Walter Burley Griffin present his winning design?
- What did Marion Mahony Griffin do to help in the design process?
- Give us your personal opinion. Do you like Walter Burley Griffin's design for the National Capital of Australia? Explain why.

Decorate your poster, using Griffin designs and symbols.

Want to know more?

The Griffins loved Australia so much that they stayed for over twenty years, designing many private houses, a university college, a cinema and office buildings. Many of their buildings still survive today.



Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin

Unit 3 – The Ideal City

Designer School

Setting the scene

Only a decade after achieving nationhood, an international competition to design Australia's capital city was held. In those days there were no faxes or the internet to assist in communications. All international travel was by sea. The competition attracted 137 entries, many from overseas, and in 1912 a young Chicago landscape architect, Walter Burley Griffin, won first prize. Griffin's design imaginatively embraced the superb natural features of the Canberra site, with the mountains and hills providing a scenic backdrop.

Use the Designer School map and design the best school in the world.

You have no limitations, so be creative.

What type of facilities should your school have?

- large classrooms
- spacious library

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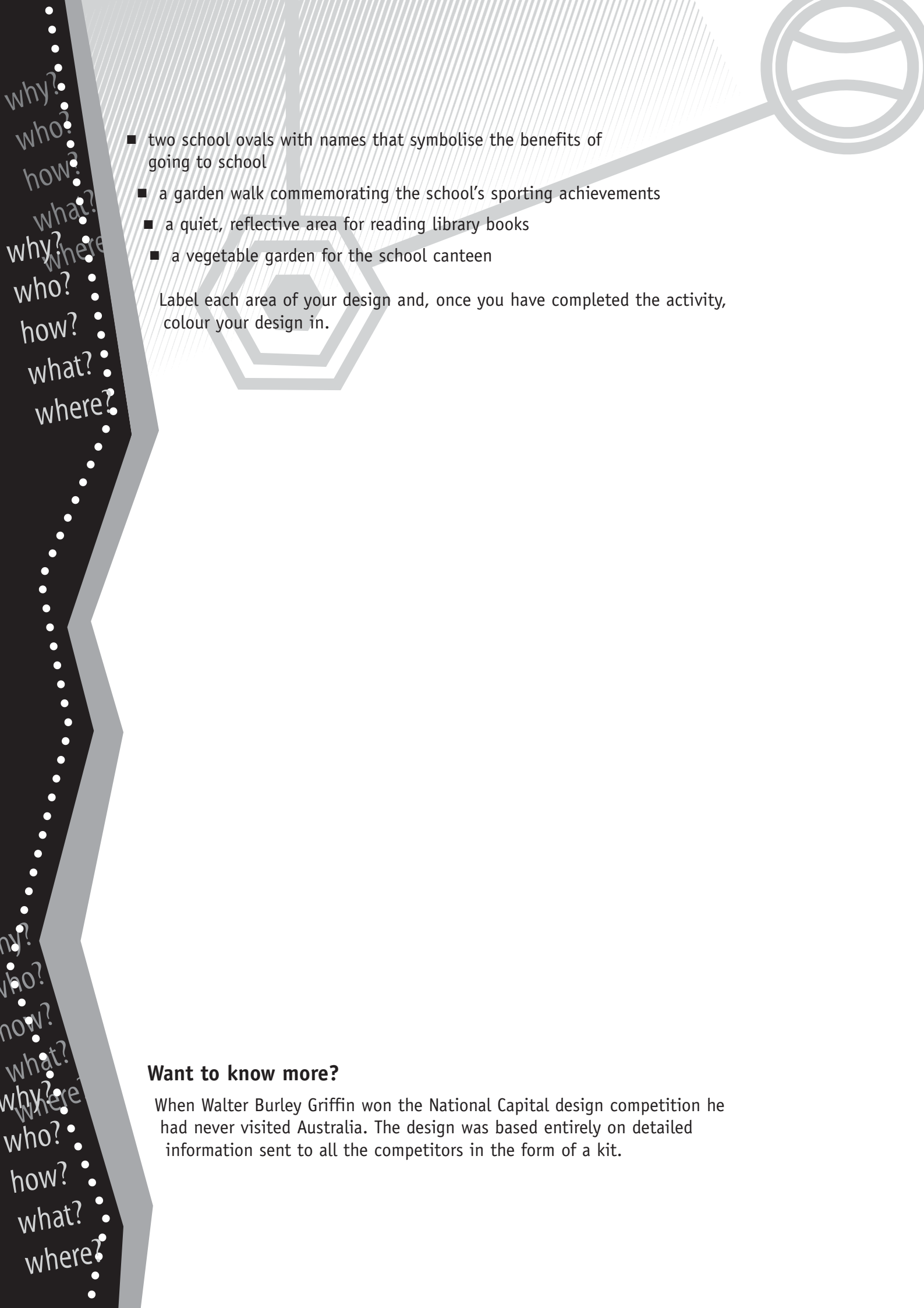
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Your school must also have the following

- a monument, raised on a hill, for retired principals
- artificial wetlands for a local endangered swamp hen
- the use of native trees and bushes, but make sure you don't obscure scenic views
- a site for a weather station to be dedicated to the school's science teacher

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- two school ovals with names that symbolise the benefits of going to school
 - a garden walk commemorating the school's sporting achievements
 - a quiet, reflective area for reading library books
 - a vegetable garden for the school canteen

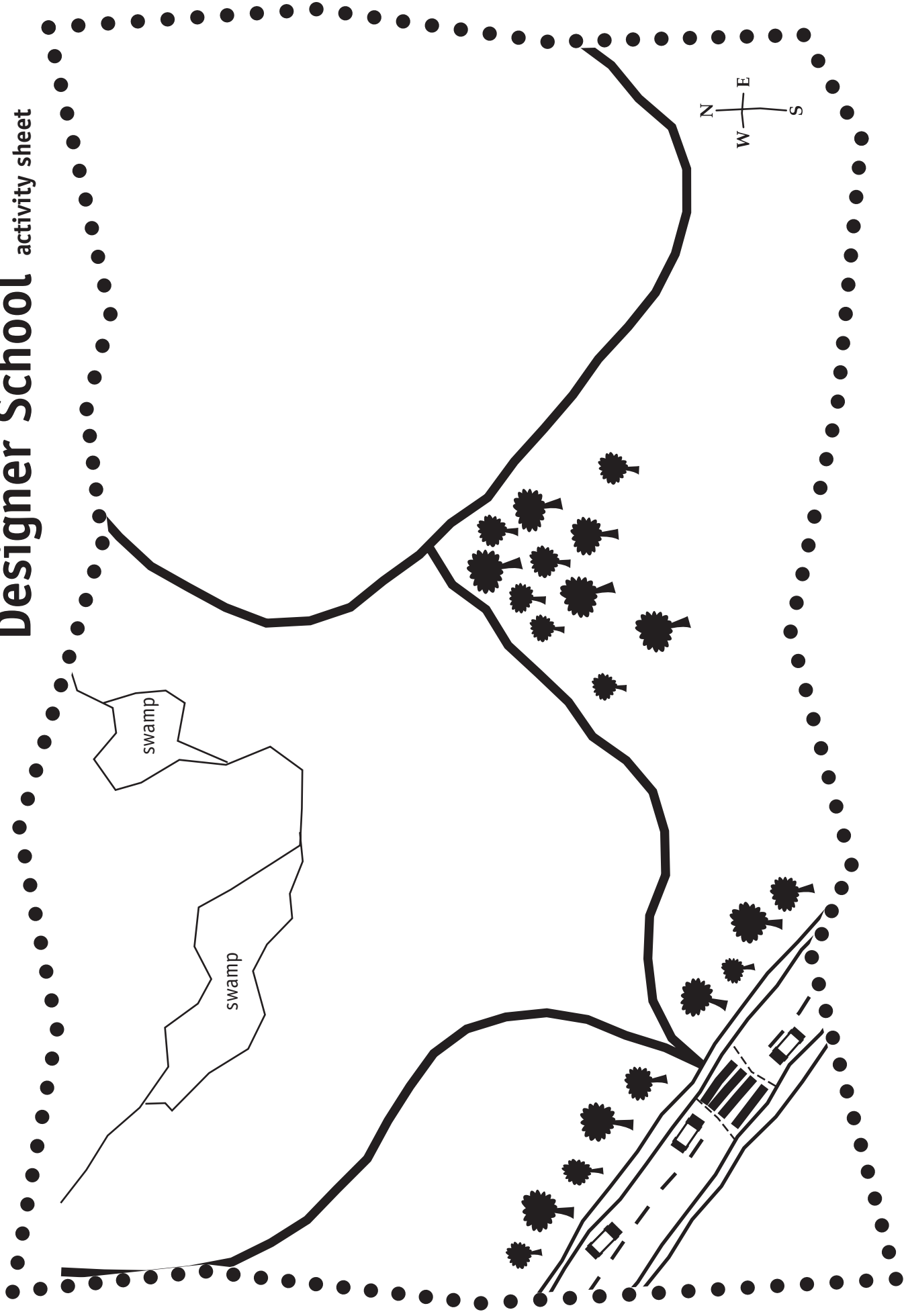
Label each area of your design and, once you have completed the activity, colour your design in.

Want to know more?

When Walter Burley Griffin won the National Capital design competition he had never visited Australia. The design was based entirely on detailed information sent to all the competitors in the form of a kit.

Designer School

activity sheet



Unit 3 – The Ideal City

Canberra Creation

Setting the scene

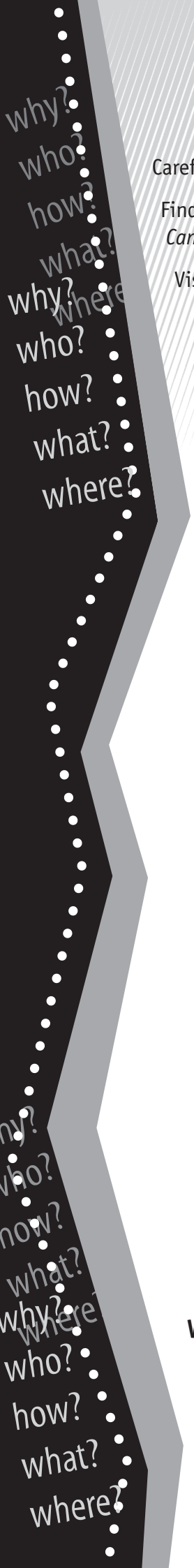
Canberra is a planned city and a creation of a new nation. It is also the home of the nation's most important cultural buildings, locations, celebrations and ceremonies – a place where shared values are celebrated and particular objects that Australians treasure are stored. They remind us of our shared history and who we are today. Visitors to the National Capital can experience the past and present homes of the Federal Parliament, the National Library, the Australian War Memorial, Anzac Parade and Reconciliation Place, just to name a few.

Draw and colour in a symbol or logo that reflects the role of each building or place.

Do not draw the building, but rather something that you think represents the national attraction.

Each drawing should be no bigger than a 50 cent piece.

Building or place	What does it do?	Location
National Capital Exhibition	tells the story of Canberra	K7
Parliament House	where Australian Politicians meet	H1
National Library of Australia	the biggest library in Australia	I5
Australian War Memorial	remembers Australia's war history	H10
Reconciliation Place	remembers the history and achievements of Aboriginal people	H4
Commonwealth Place	a place for ceremonies, concerts and exhibitions to celebrate Australia	H5
International Flag Display	each flag represents an embassy or diplomatic mission located in Canberra	G5, I5
Questacon	a fun place to learn about science	I4
National Gallery	collects and displays works of art	F4
High Court of Australia	the highest court in the Australian judicial system	F5
Old Parliament House	the first home of the Australian Government	H3
Floriade	Australia's favourite flower festival	L8, L9
National Archives of Australia	stores historic Australian Government documents	F3
Blundells' Cottage	a small farmhouse built in the 1860s, now an interactive museum	G8
National Carillon	a musical instrument with 55 bells in a tower	F6
National Museum of Australia	displays our national and cultural heritage, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal	L4
ScreenSound Australia	a treasure house for Australia's film, TV and sound heritage	O5



Carefully cut around your symbols with a pair of scissors.

Find the location for each symbol and glue each one down on the *Canberra Creation* map.

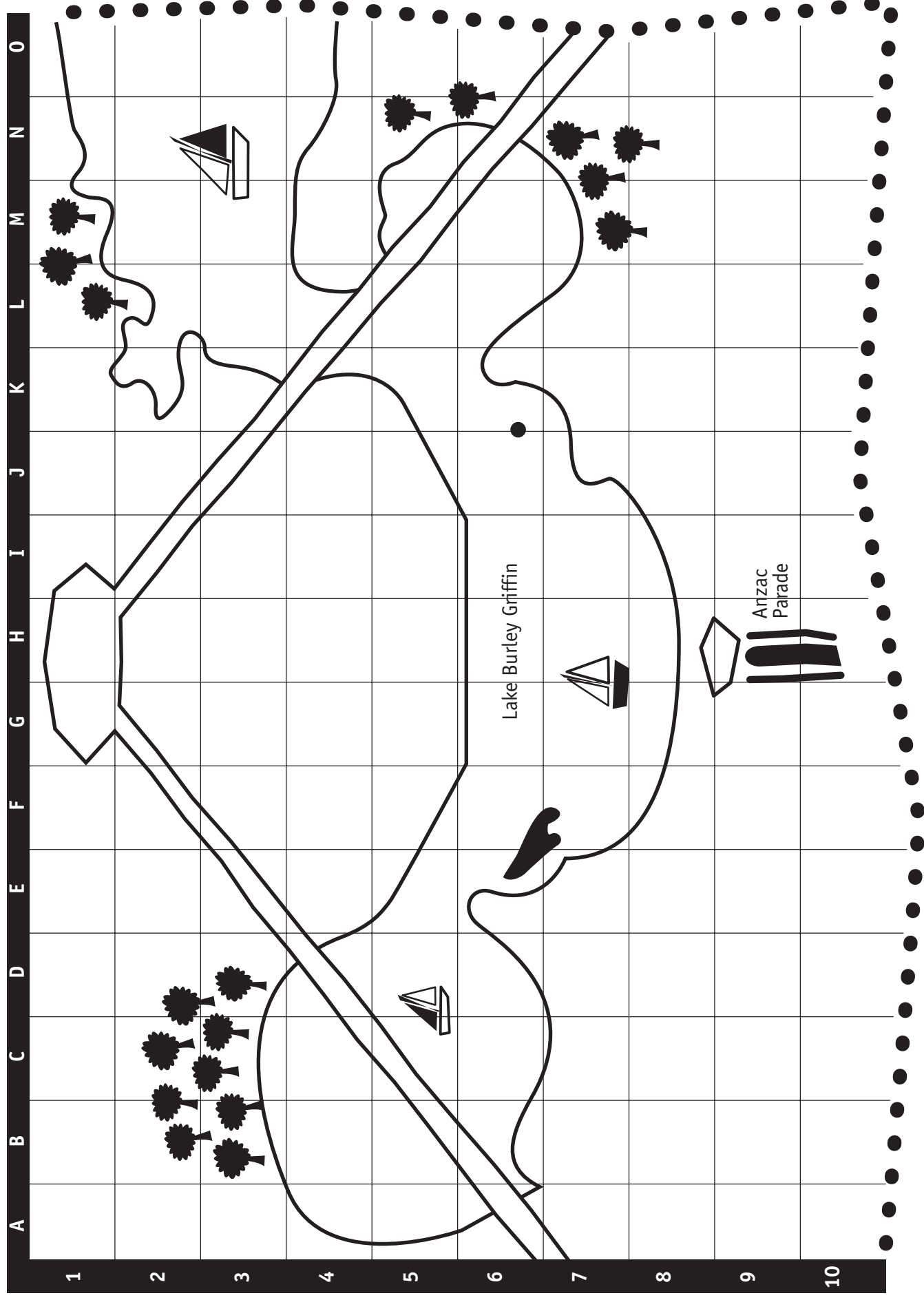
Visit these places when you next travel to Canberra.



Want to know more?

Over 120,000 school students visit Canberra and its national attractions every year.

Canberra Creation activity sheet



Unit 3 – The Ideal City

Green Thumb

Setting the scene

When the National Capital was founded, the Limestone Plains were almost treeless. In 1913, Charles Weston was appointed Chief Horticulturalist to supervise the planting of the urban landscape to reflect Walter Burley Griffin's award-winning design. A horticulturalist is someone who grows plants for a living so Weston set up a nursery and a botanic gardens. This allowed him to see which trees and shrubs would be suitable for planting in Canberra.

By 1920, up to 780,000 plants had been grown and planted in the Canberra area by Weston. Many of these plants are now large street trees and can be seen in the suburbs of Canberra today.

Use the seed collection guide and gather seeds from locally available plant species.

Next you can grow plants from the seed you collect.

Materials you will need:

- plastic container with small holes in the bottom or seed tray
- spray bottle
- seedling soil mix

Choose several seeds to plant in your seed container.

Make a waterproof label to stick on your seed tray so that you remember the seed you used.

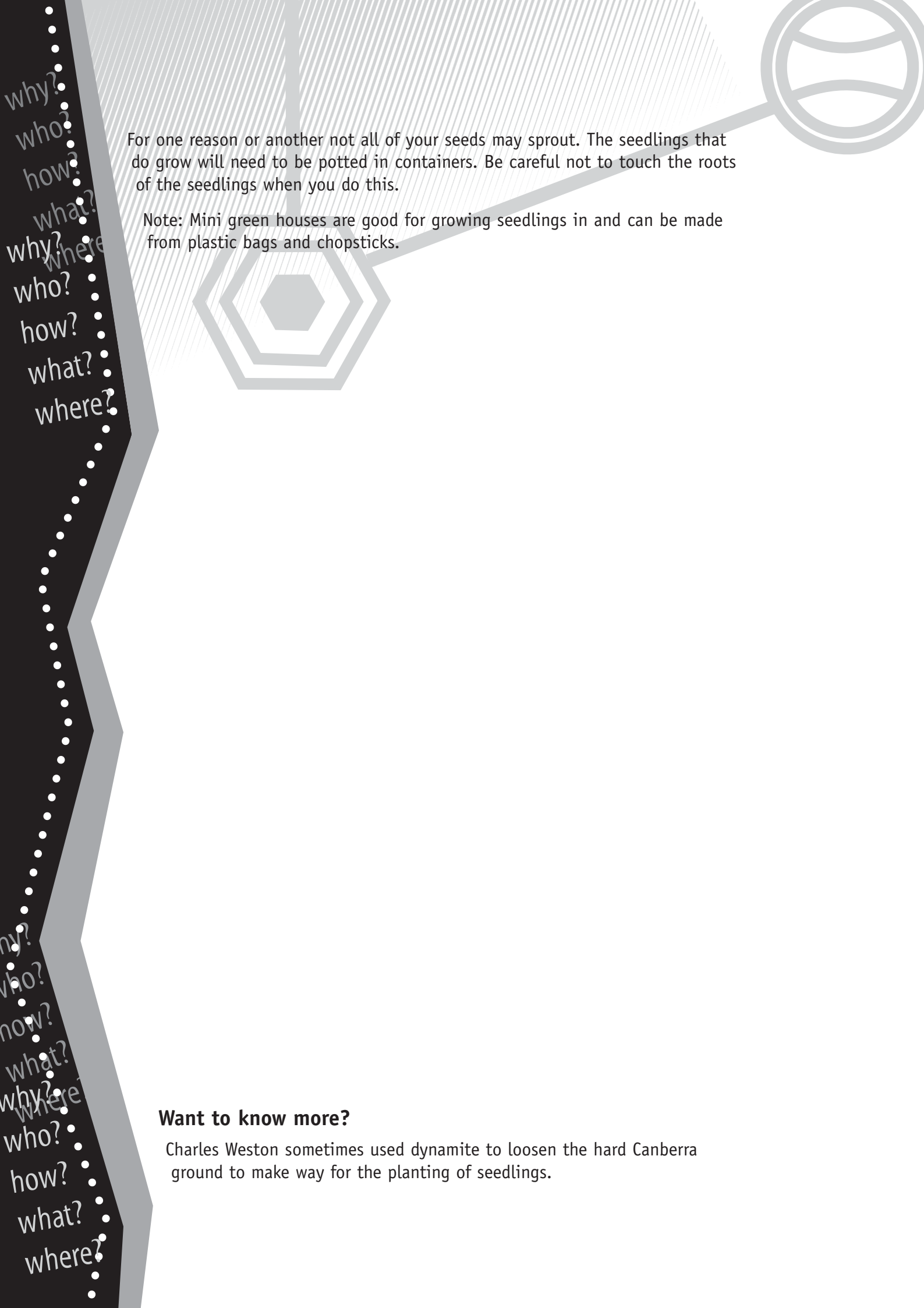
Fill the container with seedling mix almost to the top.

Place your seeds on top of the soil and then use the flat of your hand to press them in.

Water your seeds. Make sure the soil is moist but not soaking wet. Don't drown your seeds.

The soil must not dry out.

Put your seed container in a sunny place indoors. A window sill is a good spot. If the room is dark, then set up a reading lamp nearby to keep the seed trays warm.



For one reason or another not all of your seeds may sprout. The seedlings that do grow will need to be potted in containers. Be careful not to touch the roots of the seedlings when you do this.

Note: Mini green houses are good for growing seedlings in and can be made from plastic bags and chopsticks.

Want to know more?

Charles Weston sometimes used dynamite to loosen the hard Canberra ground to make way for the planting of seedlings.

Unit 3 – The Ideal City

Green Thumb - Seed collection guide

Growing plants from seed is fun. It takes a bit of time but the results are worth it.

Ask an adult to help you identify the best plants from which to collect seed. Collect healthy looking seed that is free from disease and dirt.

Collecting seeds from native plants

Wattles – Collect pods from a wattle and split them open to access the seeds. The seeds look shiny and black. Put the seeds in a heat-proof bowl and ask an adult to pour boiling water over the seeds. Allow the seeds to soak in the water for twelve hours. Throw away any seeds that float to the surface, but make sure the water has cooled first.

Banksias – Collect the woody cone from a banksia. Make sure the large bumps on the cone are shut tight. The seeds are usually released from these large bumps after a bush fire. To trick the cone into releasing its seed, place it on a baking tray in an oven at 100°C for 20 minutes. Switch the oven off and leave the cones in it overnight. The cones should open up. You will then be able to pick the seed out with a pair of tweezers. The seed looks black with a papery wing.

Bottlebrushes – Collect the woody looking fruits from the branches of the bottlebrush. Make sure the capsules are still tightly closed. Place the bottlebrush in a paper bag and put the bag in a dry sunny position. The bottlebrush will slowly release hundreds of seeds which look like tiny brown specks.

Gum trees – Collect gum nuts that look brown and woody from the tree. Place the gum nuts in a paper bag and put the bag in a dry sunny position. The gum nuts will slowly release their tiny little black seeds.

Paper daisies – Collect the old flower heads when the centre of the flower looks fluffy. Each seed is very light and has a little furry parachute to help it disperse. Gently separate the seeds and place them in a paper bag so they don't fly away in the wind.

Prepare and store your seeds

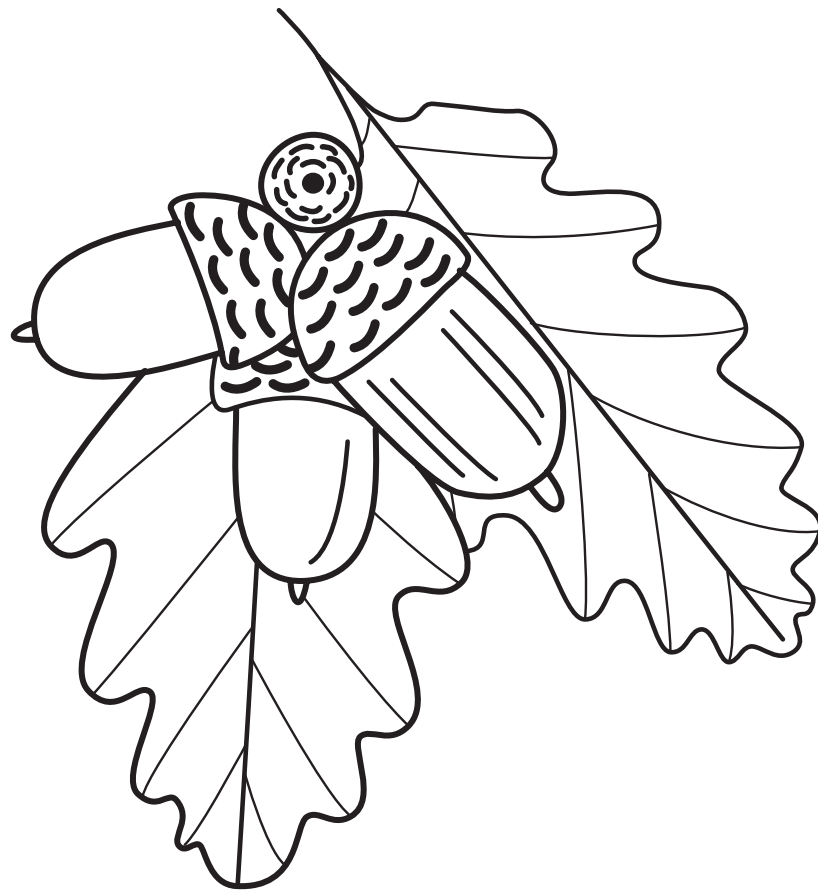
Dry your native seeds in an envelope or pillow case for a couple of days before storing them in a zip-lock bag. Place the plastic bag in a clean glass jar. Before you seal the lid, write down important information such as the date, the name and location of the plant. Put the information in the jar.

Collecting seeds from English oak trees

The best time to collect acorns is in autumn when the fresh fat acorns fall from the tree. Make sure you only collect acorns that don't appear cracked or split. Your acorns should be ready to plant straight away. Carefully remove their caps just before you are ready to plant them.

This information has been sourced from the website of the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Your local botanic gardens can also advise you on collecting seed from plants in your area or backyard.





Charles Weston and the greening of Canberra