



EUROPEAN PHENOLOGY

Connecting through
beginnings all over
Europe

1. SET UP OF OUR SMALL SCALE INITIATIVE

- Project blueprint developed between the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, the University of Limerick, the University of Antwerp and the University of Potsdam
- Various entry points and idea collections
- Key approach: We want to track and connect with the various cycles of beginnings and go for nature observation: This activity has two objectives. On the one hand, it allows us to get closer to nature, to observe it, to connect with it, to feel ourselves part of it and to realize the presence of other living beings around us, reducing the anthropocentric vision.



SIDE EFFECTS OF THE INITIATIVE

- On the other hand, it raises awareness of seasonal changes, their incidence on animal and plant species and the impact of climate change by comparing our data with those kept in our phenological database.
- On top of this, we want to create an accessible way of informal international exchange – going local and realizing the global picture (of the seasons, of nature...)
- Using the ‘observation.org’-app contributes to (inter)national data collection that can be used by biologists and other (climate) researchers, this citizen science approach makes the project ‘justified’ for the people for whom the personal reconnection with nature is not ‘enough’



COLLECTING INFORMATION (EXAMPLES)

Event	Data
Arrival of the first snow (at local level, recorded from where the observer is).	
First frost – temperatures below zero- (at local level, recorded from where the observer is).	
Minimum and maximum temperatures recorded in each country on the days corresponding to the solstices and equinoxes. Autumn: 23 September.	



UL President's House in the frost



2. REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE AT OUR UNIVERSITIES

- UP: Already existing campus walks! Time to join forces...
 - Invitation opportunities "Coffee to Know" and "Uni findet Stadt"/ new intranet; collegial walks
- UAntwerp:
 - integrating this project in the toolkit of GreenImpact as one of the possible long-term actions for teams (GreenImpact project edition 4 starts mid november) – cross-over of the themes “biodiversity & nature management” and “mental health & wellbeing”
 - Simultaneous initiative of our climate team: observation.org challenge on campus, trying to avoid the competition between the two initiatives (it’s confusing)
- UAM:

This project stimulates curiosity and an approach to nature. Participants have started to identify species they did not know and to notice events they did not know about. We share the discoveries we have made on a monthly basis at UAM; this allows us to highlight the value of the nature that surrounds us.
- UL: Stimulating interest in other sustainability initiatives: We are The Ark / re-wilding, indoor plants



3. REFLECTIONS ON OUR WORKING PROCESS

- Not so easy to do this over summer and in the beginning of the academic year
- The working process has allowed us to share similar concerns about nature from different countries and perspectives.
- It has also allowed us to find common solutions to improve our knowledge and protection of nature.
- It has also allowed us to learn that collaboration between the university and other institutions (such as observatory.com) is possible and can be very fruitful. Feedback and the sum of synergies must be a key point as a way of working.



4. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Time flies! (we knew that, actually)
- Involve others early on
 - to test ideas and get feedback
 - To be informed of existing initiatives (there's more in our institutions going on in this realm than we think!)
- Fix the dates to work on it and to see each other and to discuss progress (I, CU, admit, guilty on that...)
- It has allowed us to learn that there is much more interest in nature issues than we had imagined. The problem is that many people did not know where to start making their contributions. Knowledge greatly enhances interest and the need to protect what we now understand better.
- Exhaustion-buffer!



5. REFLECTIONS THE ROAD AHEAD FOR YOUR INITIATIVE – AT YOUR UNIVERSITIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SPREADING THE IDEA TO OTHERS?

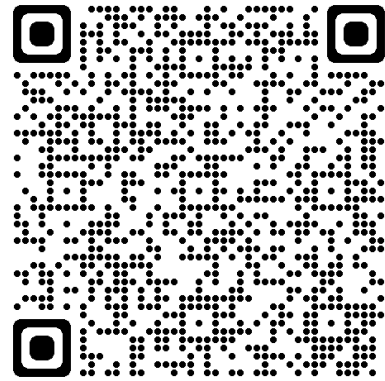
- Monitoring of existing similar initiatives (think about cross overs: it could be in a complete other setting e.g. health & safety department, or HR, or sports,...)
- Don't start from scratch > if another initiative is already booming, try to jump on that enthusiasm as an additional action that is related to it
- One possibility for the future is for each of our universities to contact other institutions and local NGOs that work in the registration of these data in order to establish a permanent collaboration, involving students
- To wrap - up the project we thought of preparing a surprise postcard with the most relevant results as a way of making the work done visible and inspiring our university communities



REMEMEBER.... WHAT TO OBSERVE FROM NOW ON?

Autumm and Winter

Change of leaf colour
Falling leaves
First snow
First frosts
Maximum and minimum temperatures on
December 22nd



<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1osG0GNz1aW1ObygjBTwOf5PCjK0OIbDVIT3BFjP3sI0/edit?usp=sharing>

Spring and Summer

Minimum and maximum temperatures recorded on 20 March.
Minimum and maximum temperatures recorded on 21 June.
Appearance of the first leaves of a maple tree (budding).
Arrival of the first swallows, swifts and cuckoos.
First butterflies
First bees
First croaking of frogs
First blooming of poppies, daisies and daffodils

