# American newcomer’s surprise at Britain’s green landscape highlights urgent biodiversity crisis



An American woman's observation about the verdant landscape of the UK has sparked discussions about nature's role in British life. Melissa Mendez, who moved from Florida to London, recently took to TikTok to express her surprise at just how green England is, contrasting it sharply with her experience in the United States. "Nobody warned me," she remarked, highlighting the lushness of the land that includes rolling hills and a multitude of gardens in bloom. While she had received a British education, this element of her new home was, according to her, glaringly absent from her curriculum.

Mendez's revelation comes at a time when nature and the environment are increasingly focal points in conversations about sustainability and biodiversity. The UK, while often celebrated for its picturesque countryside, faces significant challenges concerning its natural landscapes. A recent study revealed that Britain ranks last among 14 European nations in terms of nature connectedness. It scored poorly, with an average rating suggesting that many Britons may have become estranged from the natural world, largely due to urbanisation and modern lifestyles.

This perceived disconnect is profound when set against the backdrop of the UK's biodiversity crisis. Research indicates that nearly half of Britain's biodiversity has been lost since the Industrial Revolution. This decline is attributed to extensive agricultural practices and industrialisation, which have transformed vast areas of natural habitat into farmland or urban settings, leading to extensive habitat loss and species decline. Shockingly, the UK has lost more wildlife than any other G7 nation, exacerbating concerns about its environmental legacy.

However, Mendez's experience is not entirely at odds with these statistics. While she marveled at her newfound gardening prowess, it is essential to contextualise her admiration within the broader environmental narrative. Many pockets of the UK, particularly the Lake District and other rural areas, are indeed breathtakingly beautiful and synonymous with tranquility. These regions provide some respite from the loss felt in more populated areas, underscoring a disconnection between urban life and the countryside that many residents face.

Despite the challenges, the English climate offers its own unique advantages for gardening, which Mendez enthusiastically embraced. "It’s hot, but rainy and sometimes windy," she noted, illustrating how these conditions can foster flora that flourishes, contrasting her experiences in Florida, where native plants reign supreme. This environmental distinction not only shapes personal experiences but also influences wider community practices around gardening and outdoor activities.

Mendez's journey serves as a reminder of the complex relationship citizens have with their environment. While her experience highlights the lush beauty of the UK, it also calls attention to the urgent need for improved nature connectivity and biodiversity conservation. The British countryside's appeal is undeniable, but as Mendez's enthusiasm illustrates, it must also inspire a collective responsibility to protect and preserve these green spaces for future generations.

This interplay of personal revelation and environmental reality underscores the necessity for ongoing discussions about sustainable living. Citizens must be encouraged to embrace their surroundings, not just as a backdrop for their lives, but as rich, vibrant ecosystems that deserve care and attention. Mendez's experience, time spent in her garden, and the resulting "green thumb" reflect a personal investment in this vibrant yet fragile relationship with nature.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2059050/american-moved-to-uk-stunned-by-1-colour-everywhere-in-britain)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/23/britain-ranks-bottom-in-europe-for-nature-connectiveness)
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7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2059050/american-moved-to-uk-stunned-by-1-colour-everywhere-in-britain)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2059050/american-moved-to-uk-stunned-by-1-colour-everywhere-in-britain> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/23/britain-ranks-bottom-in-europe-for-nature-connectiveness> - A study reveals that Britain ranks last among 14 European nations in terms of nature connectedness, with an average score of 3.71 out of 7. Factors influencing this include higher average incomes and smartphone ownership, which are associated with a more distant relationship with nature. The study suggests that the UK's low ranking is linked to significant biodiversity loss, with the country having lost more wildlife than any other G7 nation and being among the most nature-depleted countries globally.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/10/nearly-half-of-britains-biodiversity-has-gone-since-industrial-revolution> - Research indicates that nearly half of Britain's biodiversity has been lost since the Industrial Revolution, placing the UK in the bottom 10% of nations for biodiversity intactness. The study attributes this decline to extensive agricultural and industrial activities that have transformed natural landscapes into agricultural lands and urban areas, leading to significant habitat loss and species decline.
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