



GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE - QUICK TIPS



By making small changes to your gardening routine you will help wildlife and give yourself so much pleasure and happiness. You'll enjoy the beauty of the wildlife and many are the gardener's friend: fertilising garden crops and keeping pests at bay. Many of these activities will help keep youngsters occupied and interested as you have fun together. Food and water sources are essential but please remember wildlife needs habitats which are "friendly" all year round. Whilst you may not see much wildlife in the colder months, small mammals, bees, butterflies and beetles need safe places to over-winter.

Here are small things you can do which make a big difference. Please give some of the following a try:

- 1) Put sources of water in the garden for birds and small mammals and insects to drink. Keep them clean and topped up regularly.
- 2) Put out food regularly. You'll be amazed by the variety of creatures that will visit your garden if you give them a helping hand.



- 3) Dig a small hole TODAY under garden fences/gates to enable hedgehogs to roam over their territory.

- 4) Hang simple "bug" houses from a branch. All you need to do is tie a number of hollow stalks from perennials/bamboo together. Try to use different thicknesses.

<http://www.daviddomoney.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/David-Domoneys-Complete-Guide-to-Making-Your-Own-Insect-Hotels.pdf>

- 5) Make a small pond in a plastic or metal container. Something like a bucket or large washing-up bowl will do. You can dig a hole and sink your pond but it's not necessary. Here's how to make it wildlife-friendly: a) Include native pond plants to provide cover for wildlife and help oxygen levels in the water. b) Ideally use some sand and washed gravel to help the plants grow and provide somewhere for creatures to burrow. c) It's really important to add a few stones both inside and outside your pond. These act as a ladder to allow easy access in and out for small mammals/amphibians and insects.



d) Allow this to fill up with rain-water because tap water has chlorine which is harmful to frogs and insects or buy something to take chemicals which can harm wildlife out of tap water. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/createaminipond/>

6) Use plants that encourage pollinators eg allium, aster, basil, bee balm, buddleia, bergamot, borage, catmint, cosmos, delphinium, fennel, lavender, scabious, verberna, single dahlias but not pom-pom dahlias. Some flowers have almost no pollen or the pollen is very hard to reach eg pansies, double begonias. As far as roses are concerned a useful guide is that if you can see the yellow centre then it will be probably be good for pollinators. See: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators-garden-plants.pdf>



West Sussex County Council has recognised the vital role pollinators play in the welfare of our food supply. https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/12616/pollinator_action_plan.pdf

7) Leave piles of leaves and log piles in an area of the garden as these give safe places for wildlife. Always check leaf piles before removing so that creatures have a chance to get out.

8) Avoid using peat-based compost.

9) Try to source plants and seeds that don't have traces of neonicotinoid pesticides which are harmful for bees.

10) At the end of the season avoid deadheading plants – these are useful food sources for birds and small mammals. Plant late-flowering species to help with this.

We would like to thank Tom Simpson from Gatwick Greenspace who provided much of the information in this article at our first AGM. He also explained that it's really important to record wildlife sightings so that better plans can be made for how to help. iRecord provides a very easy way of doing this: <https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>