

Gardening For Nature



Our wildlife is under threat from climate change, habitat loss, harmful pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilisers. Bird, mammal and insect numbers have plummeted and continue to fall.

But there are things you can do to help in your outdoor space

Resist tidying up too early



Wait until temperatures are consistently above 10°C or 50°F. Many butterflies, bees and other pollinators overwinter in the dead leaves and hollowed out stems of last year's plants.

Don't cut back hedges



Or trees and other vegetation during bird nesting season, from March to August. Birds may be nesting in your trees, shrubs, ivy, hedges, nest boxes, under eaves and on the roof. Trim hedges once a year in winter, if needed. This also gives wildlife the chance to eat any berries.

Garden slow



Just by mowing your lawn less (particularly leaving it un-mowed for longer in Spring) and setting your mower at a higher setting, you provide more food for wildlife and make your lawn more resilient to drought.

Collect rainwater



Use water butts or other containers, and conserve tap water (and so CO2 emissions) by using a watering can instead of a hose to water the garden. Consider plants and planting methods that reduce the need to water.

Provide Water



Ponds are great, but even small water containers will help wildlife and amphibious species, including frogs and toads. Don't forget to leave a shallow end to your pond, so hedgehogs and other animals can escape easily.

Provide Shelter



Avoid leaf blowers - they blast all life in their path, potentially harming insects in the leaf litter and soil, and the noise and dust is disruptive to wildlife and neighbours alike.

Love your wildflowers



Including dandelions and daisies. Often dismissed as weeds, these are plants that are supposed to be there and can be the most useful for wildlife, especially in the Spring.

Chemical Free



If it kills weeds and "pests" then it's potentially hazardous to other wildlife too. Avoid synthetic fertilisers, which have a huge CO2 footprint and are major pollutants. Why not try mulches and homemade liquid fertiliser instead?

Food for Wildlife



Plant a variety of trees, shrubs and flowers that flower and fruit at different times of the year, providing food for insects, mammals and birds, all year round.



Avoid buying plants and compost in plastic



Fetes, car boot sales and charity plant sales are great for buying plants in re-used plastic pots. Talk to your local garden centre about reducing plastic in the plants they sell, and offering compost loose, refill-style, so you can refill your own old compost or dog food bags.

Love Hedgehogs



Do not use slug pellets. Consider plants less tasty to slugs or try non-toxic alternatives like eggshells, coffee grinds or gravel. Hedgehogs need easy water sources, food, and safe habitat and nesting areas.

Make it communal



Help provide corridors for nature. Try and encourage neighbours to make "gardening for nature" a community effort. It helps with well-being and loneliness, and brings people together.

Make your own compost



Using food waste, weeds, dried grass etc. If you must buy, look for the "Peat Free" label. Peatlands are our "tropical rainforests" – they absorb and store carbon, alleviate flooding, and support remarkable communities of plants and animals.

Food For Us



Grow your own fruit and veg to help cut down on food miles, tackle the Climate Emergency and reduce packaging waste.

Try to avoid buying plants or seeds sprayed with pesticides



Ask your garden centre to supply plants that aren't sprayed with pesticides, and in the meantime plant-swap with friends and family.

