

Garden Habitats

Large or small, all outdoor spaces have potential to become wildlife havens. This leaflet offers tips on attracting wildlife to the smaller spaces as well as advice for those of you lucky enough to have larger gardens.



Why not try some of these easy and quick ways to entice nature into your garden:

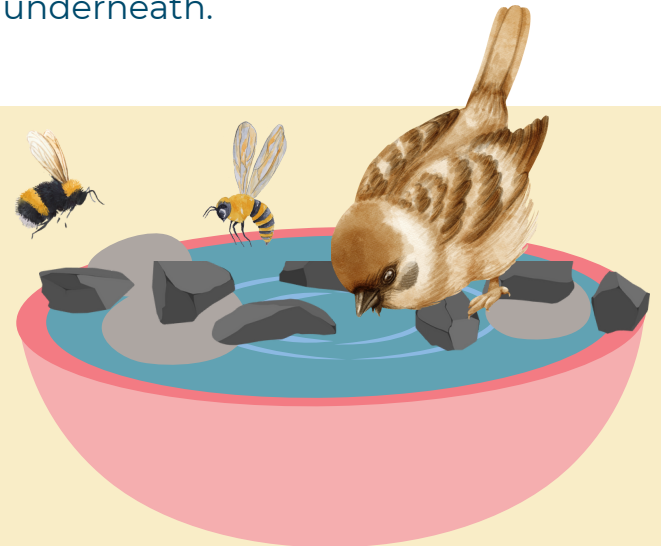


Dead Wood

Building a log pile is a great way to provide habitat for insects and other minibeasts. Simply pile up some logs of different sizes. Partially bury some if you can - buried deadwood is a particular favourite of stag beetle larvae. The longer your log pile exists, the more biodiverse it becomes. Fungi will start to decompose the wood, beetles will move in to feed, and ants may nest underneath.

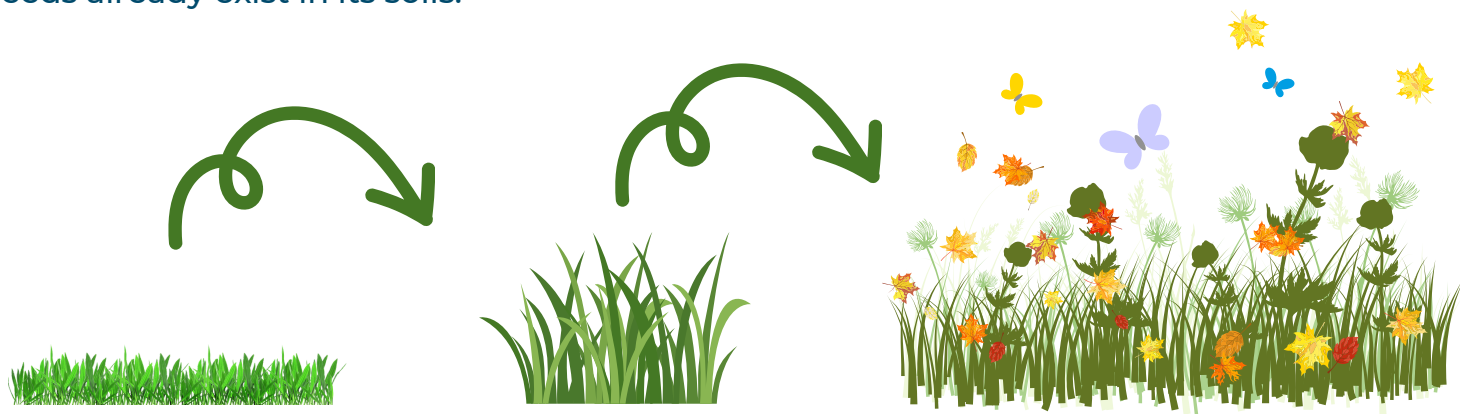
Container Ponds

All animals need water. Try keeping a shallow bowl of water with some pebbles placed in it to provide a much-needed drink for birds and bees. You could dig this bowl into the ground and add some water plants such as hornwort. This will attract even more wildlife, like frogs or water beetles.



A Wild Space

Why not designate a small part of your garden to let nature go wild? Grass will grow long, wildflowers will bloom, and scrubby bramble will tangle. You may have some wildflowers beneath your feet that you never knew existed. Although it might be a bit different to your usual way of gardening, watching your garden grow wild is great fun! To sit back and watch the natural processes unfold will reconnect you with nature in a truly unique way. You will understand your garden, learning about its history and what seeds already exist in its soils.

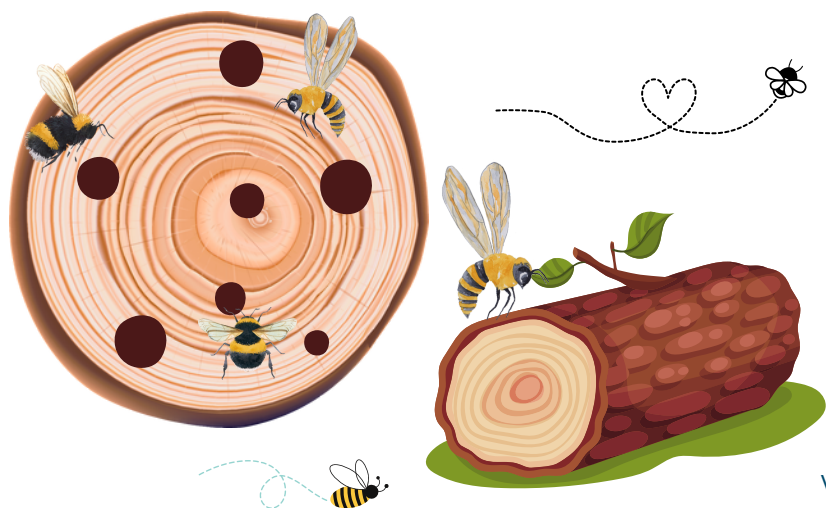


Hedgehog Highways

Hedgehogs need to roam around 1 – 2 km each night during the spring and summer, which means it's really important that they can move freely between gardens.

By creating a small hole in your wall or fence (13cm x 13cm) you can help hedgehogs roam to find food, water, and a mate!

Hedgehog numbers are now dangerously low - today it is estimated that there are fewer than a million in the UK, compared to over 30 million in the 1950s. By creating a hedgehog highway, you can help these amazing animals.



Bee Homes

Most species of bee in the UK are solitary. These bees often nest in holes in wood. An easy way to create habitat for solitary bees is to drill different sized holes into a piece of untreated wood or a log. Drill holes around 10cm deep and between 2mm and 10mm diameter. Different sized holes will attract different species of solitary bee.

Bird Boxes

Nesting sites for birds are becoming increasingly rare in our towns and cities. By putting up bird boxes in our gardens and parks, we can replicate natural nesting habitat. It's fantastic to watch the adults prepare their nests and care for their young. If you're lucky, you will even get to see the chicks fledge in summer!

Position your bird box out of direct sunlight with the entrance facing roughly north-east at a height of at least 2m.



Hoverfly Lagoon

Hoverflies are important pollinators. Did you know, there are 280 species of hoverfly in the UK? Some species of hoverfly have an aquatic larval stage and the habitat they need, such as water-filled holes in trees called rot holes, is rarely found in gardens. This is where you come in! Follow these steps to create your hoverfly lagoon.

- **Step 1:** Fill a small plastic tub (e.g. the bottom half of a 4 pint milk bottle) with grass cuttings.
- **Step 2:** Add water so that the grass is completely covered.
- **Step 3:** Puncture some holes in the tub just above the water line to allow water to escape and not overflow.
- **Step 4:** Add a handful of dead leaves and some sticks to the top. This is where adult hoverflies will land and lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch the larvae will crawl down the sticks into the artificial rot hole you have created below.
- **Step 5:** Place your hoverfly lagoon amongst more dead leaves to ensure the larvae have a suitable place to pupate before emerging as an adult hoverfly.



Compost

By composting our garden waste and fruit and veg peelings, we are not only producing nutrient-rich soil for our pots and gardens, but also reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

The compost bin in your garden will also act as an important habitat. Many insect and fungi species feed on decaying matter, whilst the heat produced from decomposition may attract slow worms and grass snakes.

For the best results, keep the compost pile moist and turn over occasionally with a garden fork.

