

# Wildlife Gardening

The Ulster Wildlife Trust is running its **Make Space for Nature** campaign to encourage everyone to do one more thing for wildlife in their gardens. With our wildlife habitats increasingly under threat, every garden, however big or small, is a potential nature reserve.



Robin

By making simple changes in your garden you can make a huge difference for wildlife in your local area. From small simple changes such as putting up a nest box to bigger projects such as building a wildlife pond – any action you take will benefit local garden wildlife!

Gardening for wildlife will also give you hours of pleasure as you can sit and observe the many creatures that will visit your garden. Follow this guide and it will highlight some of the things to consider when making space for nature in your garden.

### Make a Plan – what you have & what you want!

Survey your garden before you begin and draw a plan. Consider some of the following -

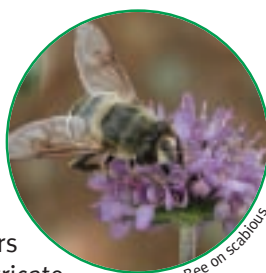
- Note characteristics e.g. sunny and shaded areas, soil type.
- Note features e.g. fences, walls, hedgerow boundaries, paths.
- Do you have any wildlife already in the garden?
- What species do you hope to attract into your garden?
- What level of 'wildness' are you happy with?
- Consider the character of your street, village, or locality.
- What gardens have you seen that inspire you?
- What resources do you have to undertake the work i.e. time, budget?
- How environmentally friendly or sustainable are your plans?



Peacock butterfly on buddleia

### Planting Native

It's not necessary to only use native plants to attract wildlife into your garden. Many of the top-nectar producing plants for butterflies are not native, such as buddleia and lavender.



Bee on Scabious

However, it has taken our flora and fauna thousands of years to develop the intricate, dependent relationships they now possess, and that is why it is best to plant native trees, shrubs and flowers.

Plants flower and fruit just when bees, butterflies and birds seem to need it but this timing is not just a happy coincidence! Flowers provide nectar for insects, which pollinate plants which can then produce seed, birds eat and disperse seeds, which then grow to become trees, trees provide dead wood,

home for a myriad of invertebrates which the birds feed on, and on it goes. Therefore planting native species helps to protect the character of our landscape and they are more suited to our native wildlife that feeds and depends upon them.

### Going Organic

A key element to gardening for wildlife is operating a 'no chemical zone'. The use of chemicals, sprays, artificial fertilisers etc is a major contributing factor to the decline of the range of species in our countryside and gardens. By gardening organically, gardeners are not introducing harmful chemicals into the food chain which can have negative impacts on wildlife.

### Sustainability and Sourcing

As much as the planting and gardening techniques are important, so too are where and what you source. Incorporating sustainable practices into your garden work should go hand-in-



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hand with efforts to attract garden birds, insects and mammals. The garden is a great place for you to minimise your impact on natural resources and to play a part in conserving and enhancing the environment - plan a garden that you can live with for a long time. Timber, bricks or garden features – these all derive from natural resources that were exploited perhaps to the detriment of wildlife. Think reduce, reuse, recycle... for example - choose peat-free compost or make your own, use reclaimed/recycled materials in the garden, install a water butt, and look for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label on timber products.

## Observing and Recording

Once you have developed your garden for wildlife don't forget to sit back and enjoy it! You might want to record the wildlife that visits your garden or use wildlife identification books to improve your wildlife knowledge.

There are also organisations which ask people to undertake surveying in their gardens such as the BBC's Springwatch, the Wildlife Trusts' 'Wild About Gardens' Survey or RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch.

## Just do it

Volunteering, attending UWT events & courses, and reading are all great ways of learning about wildlife gardening- do try out what you've learned though. We would encourage you to become involved in whatever manner and level you can. Working in your own garden allows you to make mistakes as well as enjoy the results!



Ladybird

Gardening for wildlife is not a complicated or expensive business but rather a simple and rewarding one. The additional benefit of a healthier body and mind is thrown in for free!



Frog

## Happy Wildlife Gardening!

### Do

- Install bird feeders/table and protect from cats
- Be consistent with feeding
- Provide water
- Create a wildflower meadow
- Plant native trees/hedgerow
- Learn more about the wildlife that visits your garden
- Attend an event/course on birds, plants or composting...
- Use your spending power to buy products which are not harmful to the environment
- Support a local nature conservation organisation - become a member of the Ulster Wildlife Trust!

### Don't

- Use chemicals in the garden
- Mow and 'tidy' all the garden
- Concentrate on just one mini-habitat type
- Over-rely on exotic or imported species
- Forget to leave some room for yourself to relax and observe!

The Ulster Wildlife Trust has several Make Space for Nature information guides to help you get started with wildlife gardening. These include - Feeding the Birds, Homes for Wildlife, Gardening for Butterflies & Bumblebees, Composting & Peat-free Gardening, Hedges for Wildlife, No Garden, No Problem, Wildlife Ponds, Mini-woodland & Shade Plants, Mini-Wildflower Meadows, Controlling Problem Wildlife. You can download them from our website – [www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org](http://www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org). If you want more information please contact us on 028 4483 0282 or email [info@ulsterwildlifetrust.org](mailto:info@ulsterwildlifetrust.org).



Make Space for Nature with the Ulster Wildlife Trust  
Your Local Nature Conservation Charity

This guide has been funded by The Body Shop Foundation and supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

