

Bring the magic of woodland wildlife to your garden! By planting a mini-woodland or just a few trees and woodland plants you can attract a whole host of wildlife into your garden, including birds, mammals, and insects.

What will a mini-woodland do for you?

Native trees are amongst the very best plants for wildlife, providing nectar-rich flowers, buds, berries, fruits, seeds and nuts, as well as places to breed, shelter and hibernate.



Weeping Willow

From a practical point of view, trees can also provide shelter, act as screens, frame views and provide privacy. If chosen carefully, a tree can be accommodated in the smallest of gardens, some can even be grown in pots.

The Importance of Native Trees

Native trees generally support many, often hundreds, more species than exotic varieties, so by choosing a native tree for your garden you will be making a greater contribution to wildlife.

Choosing a tree that has grown from seed collected locally is even better because these are better adapted to local conditions and the timing of events such as budburst and flowering are more likely to complement our local wildlife.



Robin



Top tips for planting trees

Remember to think about the wildlife you already have when choosing a place for your trees, you don't want to evict any wildlife from your garden!

1. You should plant trees in winter while they are dormant - November to March.
2. Think about the maximum height, the shade it will cast and the proximity to buildings (at least a mature tree length away from the buildings). In addition some species need different soil condition such as damp / acidic / alkaline (see the UWT guide to 'Creation of a New Native Woodland').
3. Ensure the roots are covered at all times when exposed, and stand it in a bucket of water for 2 hours before planting.
4. Dig a hole twice as large as your root ball.
5. Add some peat-free compost into the bottom of the hole. Mix the soil from the hole together with the compost.

6. If your tree is more than 2m tall, drive a stake into the ground on the windward side.
7. Remove the tree from its container and place in the hole.
8. Backfill the hole with your compost mix.
9. When the hole is filled up, firm the soil around the trunk with your heels and water well. Add mulch if you like and if using a stake, secure it to the tree but not too tightly.

How do I look after my trees?

Water your tree well in the first year. Remove all vegetation around the base of the tree for the first 5 years. If you have used a stake and tie, remember to loosen it every year to allow for growth and remove the stake and tie after 3 years. You can protect your young trees from becoming wildlife food too soon by placing them in tree guards, but remember to remove them when your tree is 5 years old.

Woodland Trees & Plants

Size of Garden Versus Size of Tree

Large native trees require large gardens -

- Sessile Oak
- Alder
- Ash
- Willow



Medium native trees ideal for medium sized gardens -

- Wild Cherry
- Downy Birch
- Holly



Small native trees for compact gardens -

- Hazel
- Rowan
- Crab apple
- Hawthorn
- Blackthorn
- Guelder Rose



Shade-loving plants to compliment your trees

Trees cast some degree of shade and a number of native woodland and hedgerow plants are especially adapted to cope with the shady and partially shady conditions. By planting these along with your trees you will get a real woodland feel and increase the number of creatures that will take up residence in your garden! It is also a good idea to have a log pile - these would occur naturally in woodland, where trees fall and begin to rot on the ground, and make an excellent habitat for many small animals and insects.



Some shade loving plants for your garden -

- Bugle
- Wild Garlic
- Lords & ladies
- Foxglove
- Bluebell
- Herb Robert
- Wood Sorrel
- Wood Anemone
- Lesser Celandine
- Snow Drop
- Honeysuckle
- Common Dog Violet
- Primrose



Trees provide perches and nesting sites for birds and bats, support numerous species of insects, provide shady conditions for woodland flowers, and give you a colourful display throughout the seasons.

By planting even one small native tree you can make a real difference for your garden wildlife.

For more detailed information on tree planting please get in touch with UWT and ask for a copy of our 'Creation of New Native Woodlands' habitat guide.

You can download more Make Space for Nature information guides from our website www.ulsterwildlifetrust.org or contact us on 028 44830282 or email info@ulsterwildlifetrust.org.