

Blackbird

As our climate changes, gardens are becoming even more vital to wildlife and people. They can provide shade, absorb carbon, soak up flood water and help to cool buildings. A well managed network of gardens stretching across the Sussex would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change enabling us to create a living landscape

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Nest-site necessities

This species looks for a firm base that is often best provided against a wall, within a creeper or behind a shrub. Evergreen species such as Ivy offer early nesting sites. If Magpies are a problem, leave a shed door open – a nest-robbing Magpie is usually too shy to investigate, but a nest-site-seeking Blackbird isn't.

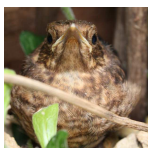


Building materials

The female Blackbird entwines a deep cup of roots and moss which she will bind with a layer of mud and lines it with fine grasses. Providing a wet, muddy area by your pond complete with fibrous-rooted weeds can offer good opportunities for nesting materials.

Chick care

In periods of dry weather, nests can fail because juicy food, such as worms, disappear down into the soil. Either water a part of the lawn, to encourage worms up, or dig part of the vegetable patch in the morning to expose food.



Images on this page by Richard Cobden

Special dietary requirements

Natural food sources for blackbirds include berries, fallen fruit and invertebrates such as earthworms. However kitchen scraps such as raisins or cheese are good for the parents during the breeding season. Regular feeding may lead to a real relationship, and you may find you have an annoyed Blackbird clucking outside the back door if you forget your feeding duties.



Blackbird with berry /
www.natureconservationimaging.com—Jeremy Early

Night shelter

The female will stay on the nest until the chicks are quite large. The male needs a sheltered site nearby. Fledged birds will use small communal roosts in shrubberies, often in municipal parks.

The ideal territory

Contains plenty of nesting sites, but also lots of open lawn for feeding and as an arena for display.

When it's all happening

Breeding starts in early March and can continue into August in years when the weather is wet – or if you have helped them by watering the lawn and providing mud.



Blackbirds / Alan Price, Gatehouse

Breeding Starts: March

Number of Clutches: 2-3

Number of Eggs: 3-5

Incubation Days: 10-19

Fledge Days: 10-19

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