

# Gardening for Bats

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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## Wildlife Friendly

In the UK there are 17 species of bat all of which enjoy feasting on insects. Your garden can help ensure bats get a good supply of food from spring through until autumn when they go into hibernation. By growing a diverse range of flowers our gardens can become great feeding stations for a whole host of wildlife.

## Climate Friendly

By providing a garden with food, water and shelter in a neighbourhood it creates essential corridors for wildlife including bats to move and adapt to climate change.

## Bat food

Bats have huge appetites due to the amount of energy they burn. They eat a range of insects but most species heavily rely on a good supply of flies to keep them going. Some species including the long eared bat really like to snack on moths, while species such as midges and crane flies are often the most favoured snacks.

## Beneficial Habitats

### Flowers

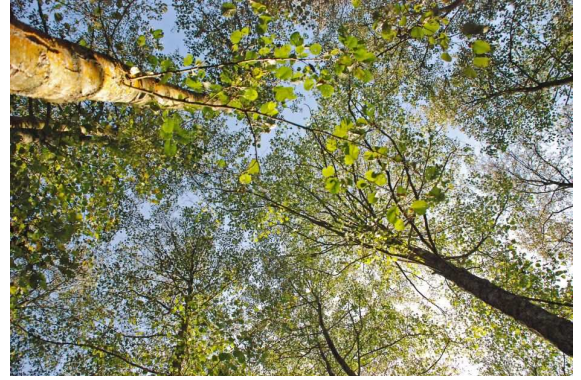
- ◆ When planting flowers in your garden try for flowers that have long narrow petal tubes such as evening primrose and honeysuckle, they offer great feeding opportunities for moths and butterflies who's long tongues' can reach down for the nectar
- ◆ Daisy like flowers that are open with many floret's offer excellent feeding opportunities for prey with short tongues such as flies.
- ◆ Flowers that are pale in colour such as blue or white are seen more easily by night flying insects.
- ◆ Flowers that are night scent such as jasmine attract night flying insects.
- ◆ Don't forget the landing platform, plants in families such as the carrot allows many insects to gather together.



Honeysuckle and Oxeye daisy / Alan Price, Gatehouse

## Trees

- ◆ Trees and shrubs can offer a range of benefits if you want to attract bats to your plot. opportunities they offer include...
- ◆ Food for insects and their larvae
- ◆ Shelter for insects
- ◆ Roosting opportunities for bats
- ◆ Flight-lines to move through the landscape



Trees / Sarah Atherton

While trees such as oak or willow are not suitable for all gardens, smaller specimens that can be coppiced such as Elder or Hawthorn can offer great supply of food for leaf eating insects.



Young lily pads / Alan Price, Gatehouse

## Ponds

No matter what your aim a pond is always a good way to increase the biodiversity in your garden, no matter how big or small ponds and marshy areas can create areas for attracting insects.

Planting night-scented plants will attract night-flying insects, which in turn will offer food to hungry bats. Plants you might like to include:

Night-scented stock	<i>Matthiola bicornis</i>
Tobacco plant	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>
Cherry pie	<i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>
Evening primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>
Nottingham catchfly	<i>Silene nutans</i>
Night-scented catchfly	<i>Silene noctiflora</i>
White jasmine	<i>Jasminum officinale</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Sweet rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Soapwort	<i>Spanoria officinalis</i>

## Things to avoid

### Insecticides

If you are using insecticides in your garden you could be doing far more harm than good by killing off essential prey for bats.

### Domestic Cat

Many bats and other small mammals fall prey to the natural instinct of cats. To reduce the likelihood of cats harming bats it best to keep them in an hour before sunset to allow bats to emerge more safely.