

Great spotted woodpecker

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

A new nest is excavated every year. Typically, it will be three to five metres high and is most often on the rotten part of the tree. It takes two or three weeks for the pair to make, and will be used in the following years as a roosting hole.



Great spotted woodpecker /
Dave Kilbey

Importing a rotten Birch trunk into your garden is a better bet for attracting them than a specially constructed and filled nest box.

Building materials

Due to the nature of their nest construction they do not tend to collect materials to line the nest.

Chick care

The chicks are very voracious and demand ever more invertebrates – particularly moth caterpillars.



Young great spotted woodpecker / Alan Price, Gatehouse

Special dietary requirements

Great spotted woodpeckers forage over a wide area and get to know where they can find food. They may call in at your peanut feeder for their own refuelling when they are feeding caterpillars to their chicks. Try attracting them in by putting a length of tree trunk with holes filled with food at your feeding station.

Night shelter

The greater spotted wood pecker is a solitary rooster, using old nest holes or excavating shallower holes specially for roosting. Just occasionally it will use a large nest box.

The ideal territory

Woodland tends to offer the best territory opportunities so it tends to live in or close to woodland of some sort. Great spotted woodpeckers are very forgiving, however, and will happily live in open parkland or among mature gardens.

When it's all happening

Nests are excavated in March and April, and the eggs are laid in late April or early May.



Great spotted woodpecker / Alan Price, Gatehouse



Great spotted woodpecker / Darin Smith

Breeding Starts: Mid April

Number of Clutches: 1

Number of Eggs: 3-8

Incubation Days: 10-16

Fledge Days: 18-21

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