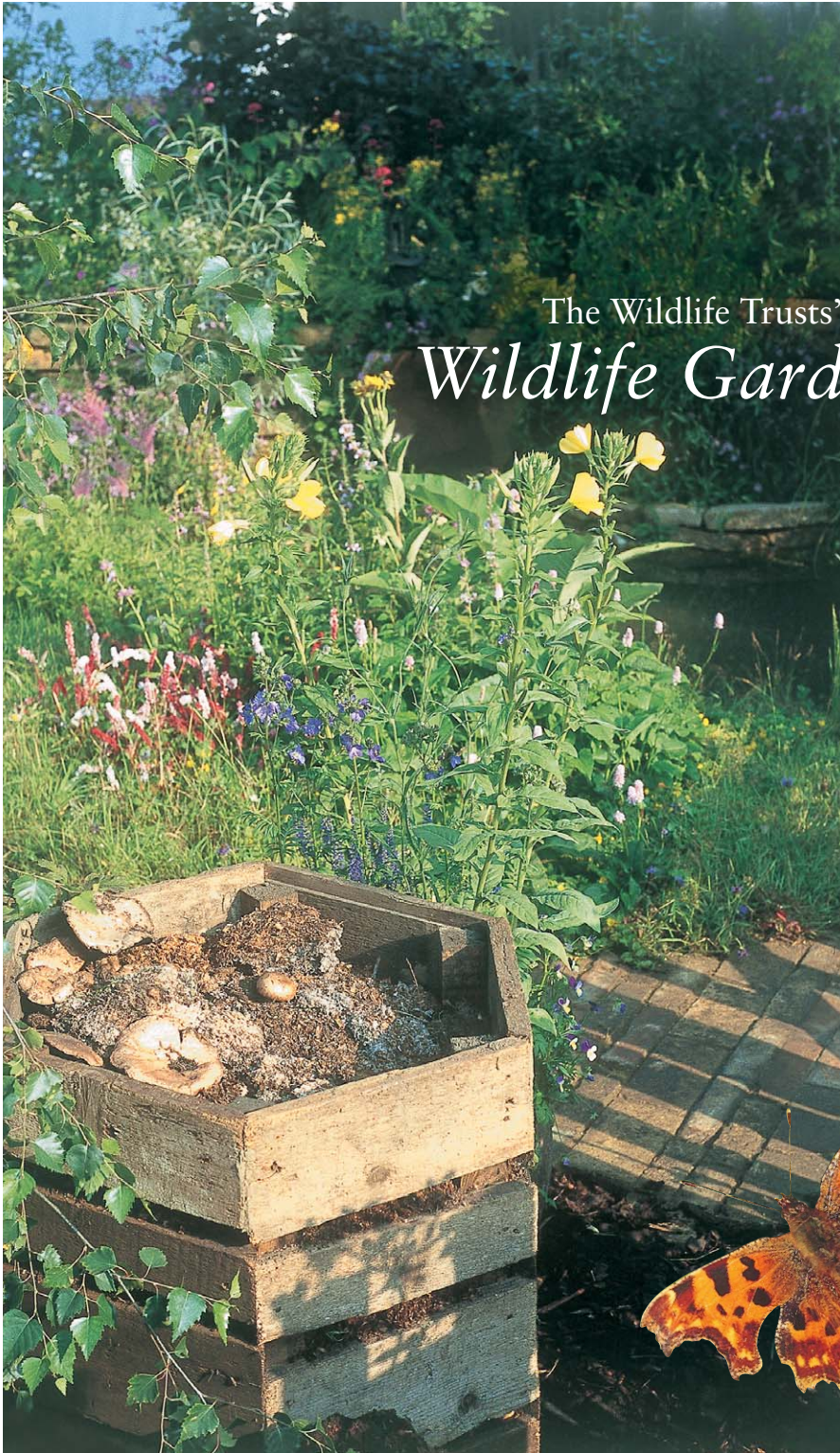




The Wildlife Trusts' Guide to  
*Wildlife Gardening*



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

# Making room for wildlife

Across the UK, we look after more than two million acres of garden – an area five times the size of Greater London. With our countryside increasingly under threat, every garden, however big or small, is a potential nature reserve.

In the past 50 years, the countryside has changed dramatically with the destruction of much of our ancient woodlands, meadows and wetlands.

We can't replace these losses but we can help wildlife in our gardens and enjoy watching it at the same time.



Individual gardens may be small but together they form a patchwork, linking urban green spaces with nature reserves and the wider countryside.

Making our 15 million gardens wildlife-friendly will help the plants and animals that make the UK special, and ensure that they are there for future generations to enjoy.

Wildlife gardening is about creating places for animals and plants to thrive

alongside people. You can practise it on a large or small scale, with formal designs and tidy edges, or more informally.

Wildlife gardening brings life to your garden. Small ponds and meadows are easy to create and quickly become focal points. Being wildlife-friendly also means using fewer chemicals, saving you money and helping the environment.

## Top tips for greening your garden

- Choose local seeds and plants that are suitable for your soil. Your local Wildlife Trust can advise you.
- Wild flowers belong in the wild – before buying, check plants, seeds and bulbs are labelled as being from cultivated stock.
- Ask your garden centre for peat-free products and use reclaimed stone or stone substitutes. Don't buy water-worn limestone as it may have come from limestone pavement, a threatened natural habitat.
- Save water. Install water butts under downpipes outside your house.

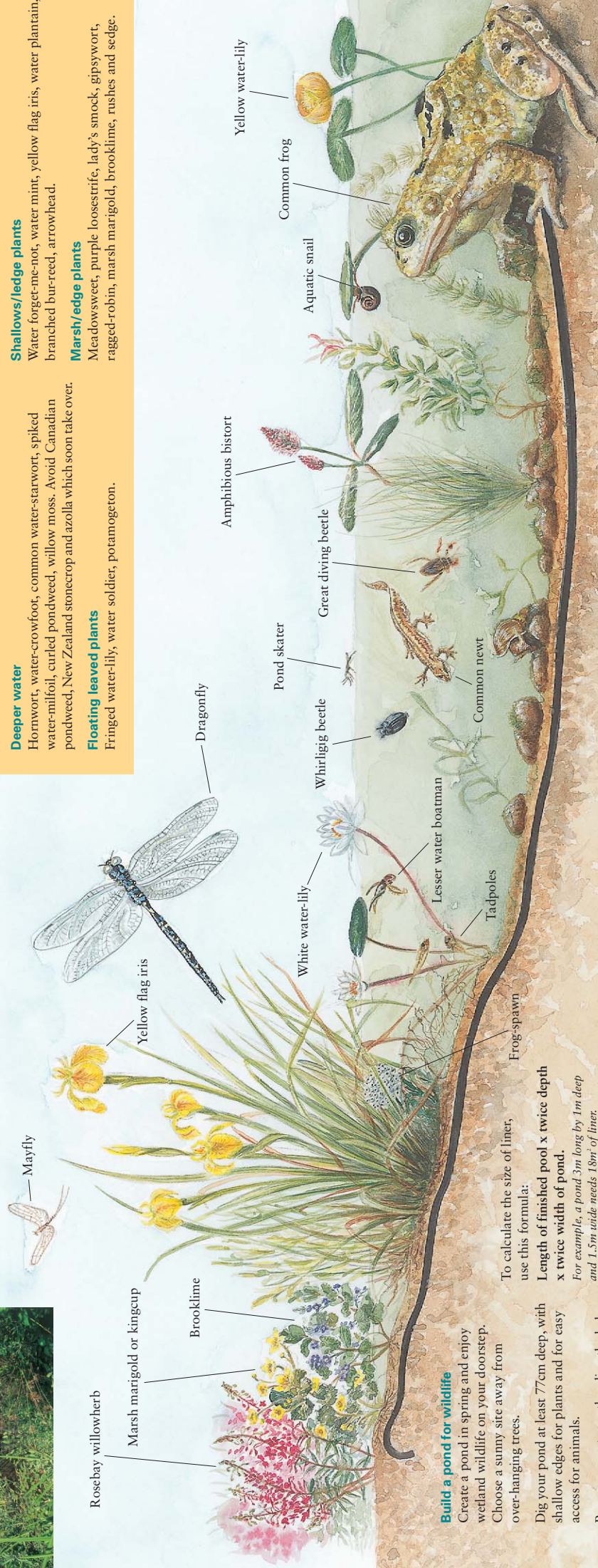
## Common water plants suitable for small garden ponds

### Deeper water

Hornwort, water-crowfoot, common water-starwort, spiked water-milfoil, curled pondweed, willow moss. Avoid Canadian pondweed, New Zealand stoncrop and azolla which soon take over.

### Floating leaved plants

Fringed water-lily, water soldier, potamogeton.



### Shallows/ledge plants

Water forget-me-not, water mint, yellow flag iris, water plantain, branched bur-reed, arrowhead.

### Marsh/edge plants

Meadowsweet, purple loosestrife, lady's smock, gipsywort, ragged-robin, marsh marigold, brooklime, rushes and sedge.

## Build a pond for wildlife

Create a pond in spring and enjoy wetland wildlife on your doorstep. Choose a sunny site away from over-hanging trees.

Dig your pond at least 77cm deep, with shallow edges for plants and for easy access for animals.

Remove any stones then line the hole with sand and old carpet, before laying a butyl rubber lining. Turn liner under at the edges and cover with turf.

To calculate the size of liner, use this formula:

**Length of finished pool x twice depth x twice width of pond.**

*For example, a pond 3m long by 1m deep and 1.5m wide needs 18m<sup>2</sup> of liner.*

Fill with water, then introduce native plants a week later. Please don't take frog-spawn from the wild.

Safety first: If small children use or visit your garden you should include a barrier over or around the water such as a fence or rigid mesh (allowing 75mm squares for small animals and plants).

# Gardening for wildlife

## getting you started

Wildlife needs four things: food, water, shelter and places to breed.

You can provide some if not all of these things and bring your garden to life. Here are some ideas to get you started and help you to make a difference for wildlife, whatever the size of your garden.



### Climbing plants

Climbing plants on fences and walls make nesting and roosting sites for birds, and a haven for insects and small animals. Choose plants like quince and honeysuckle which have nectar-rich flowers followed by fruit. Make sure you have some evergreens too, ivy is especially valuable.

### Go organic

You can have an attractive and productive garden without using chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

You can make and use your own compost, encourage insect and slug-eating creatures and adapt natural processes to maintain your soil.

Gardeners' friends include frogs and toads, birds, and small mammals like bats and hedgehogs – all of which eat insects or slugs. Ladybirds, lacewings and hoverflies feast on aphids.

### Butterfly gardens

Butterflies bring beauty to any garden. Attract them to yours with nectar-rich flowers like buddleia, sea-bios and ice-plant. Plant in a sheltered sunny spot and don't forget to provide food plants for caterpillars too.

(See the box below)

### Peat-free gardening

Peat bogs are very special places for wildlife but, partly due to gardeners' demand for peat, nearly all have been destroyed in the UK. Help save our remaining bogs by using peat-free composts and mulches, such as chipped bark, leaf mould or coir. Contact The Wildlife Trusts for details of where to buy peat-free products.

### Cracks and crevices

Many plants grow on walls, including ivy-leaved toadflax, various ferns, red valerian and, of course, wallflower. Spiders and solitary bees like nooks and crannies, and rockeries will shelter many small creatures. Hollow stems left over the winter provide homes for insect larvae and pupae.

### Food plants for caterpillars

#### Butterfly

Meadow brown, hedge brown wall brown, marbled white and large skipper

Large and small white

Green-veined white

Orange tip

Brimstone

Common blue

Painted lady



### Feeding birds

Different birds eat different things, in different ways and places. Provide nuts, seeds, fat and kitchen scraps in feeders, trays and on the ground. Move feeding places from time to time to guard against predators, disease and unwelcome visitors such as rats.

### Native trees

Favour native trees, but remember other species are good for wildlife too.

Trees: alder, ash, aspen, beech, birch, bird cherry and wild cherry, crab apple, field maple, hazel, holly, juniper, oak, Scot's pine, rowan, yew, whitebeam, willow, wych elm.

Shrubs: alder, buckthorn, blackthorn, buckhorn, broom, dog-rose, dogwood, elder, guelder-rose, hawthorn, spindle.

### Bird boxes

Tits and nuthatches need boxes with a 28mm entrance hole, house sparrows around 32mm. Open-fronted boxes attract robins and flycatchers. Large open-fronted boxes high in trees may attract owls or kestrels.

Do not put boxes in full sun and site them away from places that predators might attack from, such as overhanging branches.

### Meadow magic

To bring vibrant colour into your garden, meadow flowers can be sown or planted to produce spring or summer displays. A meadow makes a wonderful alternative to plain grass on your lawn. Your soil type and how and when you mow will dictate which species you should plant, but generally cowslip, ox-eye daisy, meadow cranesbill, yellow rattle, self-heal and meadow buttercup will do well.



### Compost bins

Make your own natural fertiliser. Compost garden waste and vegetable kitchen scraps in a home-made box or bought compost bin. If you have limited space, you can still make compost in a small 'worm bin' in your house or back yard.



### Pile of logs

A pile of logs in a shady corner will feed beetle larvae and shelter many other animals, including frogs, toads and slow worms. The rare slug beetle needs dead wood to breed in. Hedgehogs often hibernate in wood piles, so if you're having a bonfire, check for sleeping hedgehogs first.

### Nettle feeders

Nettles are the food plant of the caterpillars of some beautiful butterflies: red admiral, peacock, small tortoiseshell and comma. Butterflies prefer not to lay their eggs in the shade, so choose a sunny spot to grow your nettles.



### Handy hints for the wildlife gardener

- **Avoid using slug pellets. They don't just poison slugs, they also affect the birds, frogs and hedgehogs that eat the slugs. Control slugs with a barrier of grit or sand around plants, or use pitfall traps – a cup or jar with a little beer in the bottom, sunk into the ground, is ideal.**
- **Newly planted trees can be watered more easily via a drainpipe sunk into the ground alongside their roots.**
- **Epsom salts sprinkled around plants will prevent rabbit damage.**
- **Dilute household detergent is effective against greenfly and blackfly, and is thought not to harm other insects.**
- **You can treat seed-eating birds to a free meal by planting globe thistles and teasels.**
- **Enjoy your garden – wildlife-friendly gardening is about making your back yard into a haven for people and wildlife.**

### Help and advice

This leaflet is intended as a simple guide to get you started on wildlife gardening. Once you have begun, you might get hooked, so below are some suggested sources of additional information, supplies and further reading.

Wild About Gardens is a joint project between The Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society.

To find out more and share your wildlife gardening tips, visit [www.wildaboutgardens.org](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org)

Organic gardening: advice, gardens to visit, fact sheets, seeds and product catalogues available from:

Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA)  
Ryton Organic Gardens  
Coventry  
CV8 3LG

Tel: 02476 303517

Where to buy peat-free products leaflet and advice on peat alternatives – download from [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org) or free with an A5 SAE:

The Wildlife Trusts  
The Kiln, Waterside  
Mather Road  
Newark  
NG24 1WT

#### Further reading

*Wildlife Gardening* by Fran Hill, from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust  
Tel: 01773 881188 – £7.95 inc p+p  
£4.50 if ordering 10 or more copies  
(cheques made payable to Derbyshire Wildlife Resources).

*Attracting Wildlife to Your Garden* by John Burton/David Tipling, New Holland, price £16.99

### Join The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts is the UK's leading organisation working on all aspects of nature conservation. Managing more than 2,500 nature reserves, we campaign tirelessly on behalf of wildlife and run thousands of projects and events, nationally and locally. The Trusts' work is dependent on support from people like you.

Membership of The Wildlife Trusts gives you:

- **A full colour magazine, *Natural World*, three times a year.**
- **A newsletter from your local Wildlife Trust, keeping you up to date with local wildlife news and events.**
- **The opportunity to get involved in many activities and events, and access to spectacular nature reserves around the UK.**
- **The knowledge that your support is crucial in helping to keep the UK's wildlife safe for the future.**

To find out more about joining The Wildlife Trusts, or if you'd like to make a donation to support our vital work, please visit our website [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org) or write to:



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