



# Wildlife Outside Your Window

A handy guide to welcoming  
wildlife into your patch





Together, our gardens, yards, balconies and window boxes are a living landscape. Covering an estimated 5% of the UK, the way they are cared for can make a big difference to the natural world. Whether large or small, ledge or yard, **the space you look after can be a vital piece in the jigsaw of a healthy natural world, rich in wildlife.**

© Tom Marshall

## Go wild for nature!

**W**ildlife is struggling but it can and will recover if we help. If we make simple changes to the way we look after 30% of land, including our gardens, we can go back to a time when birds and butterflies were a common sight.

Hedgehogs, bats, sparrows, song thrushes and stag beetles are all declining in the UK, but if we manage our gardens to benefit wildlife, these creatures and many more can recover. The good news is that it's easy to help. This booklet is full of wild ideas and features – try as many as you like, or just pick one and then sit back, enjoy the view and see who visits!

Orbit is exploring how we could look after 30% of green spaces across our estates to help wildlife and you'll soon notice the difference. This booklet shows what you can do in your garden to help even more.

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## DID YOU KNOW?

The UK has 59 species of butterfly and around 2,500 moths

Amphibians like newts, frogs and toads use water as shelter and breeding grounds. Just about any water in your yard, from a tiny puddle to a pond, will be used by one kind of animal or another

Ladybirds hibernate through the winter among plant stems and shrubs, waiting until springtime when they venture out for food

Earthworms are vital for a healthy garden. They break down and recycle decaying plants, releasing nutrients back into the soil. Charles Darwin called them the most important animal in the history of the world!

Hedgehogs can roam up to two miles in a single night!

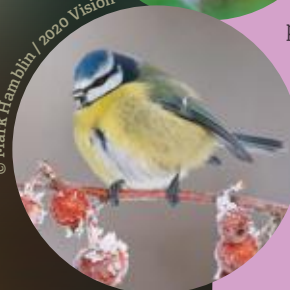
A single blue tit chick can eat 100 caterpillars a day, so planting caterpillar foodplants helps garden birds as well as moths and butterflies

A wildlife-friendly garden can be home to hundreds of different species of beetle

© Bertie Gregory / 2020 Vision



© Mark Hamblin / 2020 Vision





# Make your own nectar bar



No matter how big or small your space, there's lots you can do to help our insects!

## Window box nectar bar

1 You'll need a window box (or two if you've got space) with drainage holes.

2 Use peat-free compost in your window box.

3 Stock up on pollinator friendly plants that are suitable for window boxes. Choose from...



4 Water regularly over spring and summer!

## A garden border

1 Identify a strip of your garden border that you can keep just for pollinators.

2 Dig up any old roots to prepare your border.

3 Choose your pollinator friendly plants. We recommend:



4 If you have a fence, wall or tree stump grow ivy and honeysuckle against it! Ivy flowers in autumn so is a great source of nectar later in the year.

[www.wildlifewatch.org.uk](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk)

# Taking action for insects

Our insects are amazing! Some are beautiful, others fascinating – but all are important, as they pollinate our food crops, and provide food for much of our loved and cherished wildlife. **Yet, 41% of insect species face extinction. It's not too late to bring them back, but urgent action is needed.** Creating a nectar bar is a great way to help out pollinating insects and is perfect for window boxes or balcony space.

## Top tips for balconies, doorsteps and small spaces...

- Grow a variety of plants with different flowering times throughout the year
- Ensure plants are sheltered from the wind – which can damage and scorch them
- Place your pots in maximum light for best flowering. If you don't get sunshine, choose shade loving varieties
- Don't forget to water your pots or tubs during dry spells

Want to find out what other things you can do to help reverse the decline of insects? Scan this QR code and download your FREE Action for Insects guide.





# How to build a bug hotel



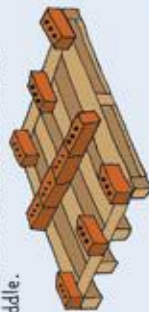
wildlife  
watch

## You will need:

- Wooden pallets x4
- Bricks
- Plastic bottles
- Bamboo canes
- Straw
- Leaves
- Tiles
- Cardboard
- Stones/pebbles
- Twigs/loose bark

\*Use old plastic bottles for this, and always recycle after use.

1 Place a wooden pallet in your chosen location. On top of the pallet, line bricks around the corners and across the middle.



2 Place your next pallet on top of this and repeat the process for all of your pallets.



3 Cut off the top two-thirds of your bottles. Fill up half of them with bamboo canes/plastic straws and the other half with rolled up cardboard. Place these inside the hotel.



4 Fill in the remaining spaces with bricks, leaves, pebbles, stones, tiles, loose bark and straw.



5 Add in any extra materials that you want to recycle e.g. old pipes, carpeting, toilet tubes, old plant pots. Be creative - add a welcome sign or give your hotel a name!



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

It is estimated that 84% of all crops and 80% of wildflowers depend on insect pollination. Insects such as wonderful bees and butterflies, but beetles too! Not only do beetles come in an amazing variety of colours, sizes, and shapes - they also act as food for larger animals (such as hedgehogs and birds), and they even help to recycle nutrients, by eating and digesting plants and returning their goodness back to the soil.

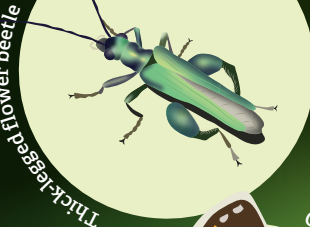
## In harmony with nature

We can help look after our much-loved garden visitors by reducing our use of harmful chemicals. Chemicals such as weed killers and slug pellets harm insects and destroy the habitat they rely on. Growing without harmful chemicals takes a bit more thought and planning, but by harnessing nature's natural defences a happy balance between predator and prey can be found.

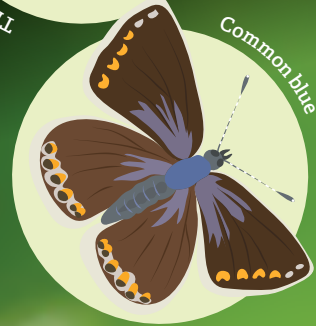
LOOK OUT FOR THESE MINIATURE MARVELS IN YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE...



Red-headed cardinal beetle



Thick-legged flower beetle



Common blue

## Create barriers

If you need to protect vegetables or flowers. Try things like crushed eggshells or sharp grit around the base of plants, or run copper tape around pots to deter slugs.

## Don't panic

If you see aphids and blackfly, leave them. Ladybirds, lacewings and birds need them to feed on.



## How to build a mini wildlife pond



### You will need:

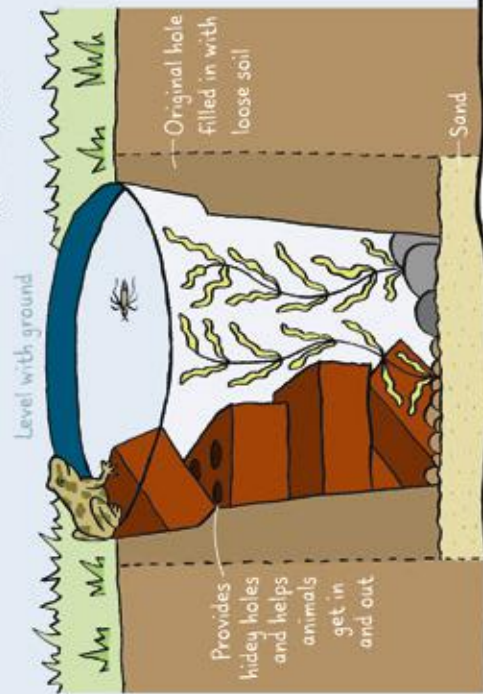
- an old bucket or watertight container
- spade
- sand
- old bricks, rocks and pebbles
- native pondweed (eg. curled pondweed)

1 Dig a hole deep enough to hold your container.

3 Sit the container in the hole and fill the gaps with loose soil.

2 Remove any sharp rocks and line bottom with sand.

4 Build a pile of rocks and bricks in bottom, scatter pebbles and add pondweed. Fill with rainwater.



Provides hidey holes and helps animals get in and out

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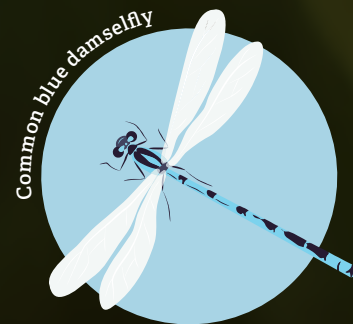
Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2015

Adding a pond is one of the best things you can do for wildlife in your garden! They can support a huge range of species from dragonflies and damselflies to frogs and newts. Your pond needn't be big. **A washing-up bowl, a large plant pot, or a disused sink could all be repurposed as ponds**, providing you make sure creatures can get in and out. Some specialist plants can help to oxygenate the water and provide a perch for visiting wildlife.

To find out more about what plants to choose and other advice for looking after your pond, visit our webpage - [wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond](http://wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond)

### Don't have space for a pond?

Fill saucers and bird baths with water for wildlife to have a drink or a splash; or add marbles or stones to a shallow water dish for insects to rest on.

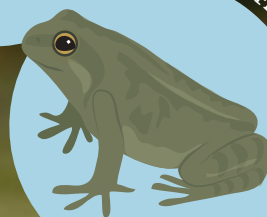


Common blue damselfly

Water boatman



Froglet



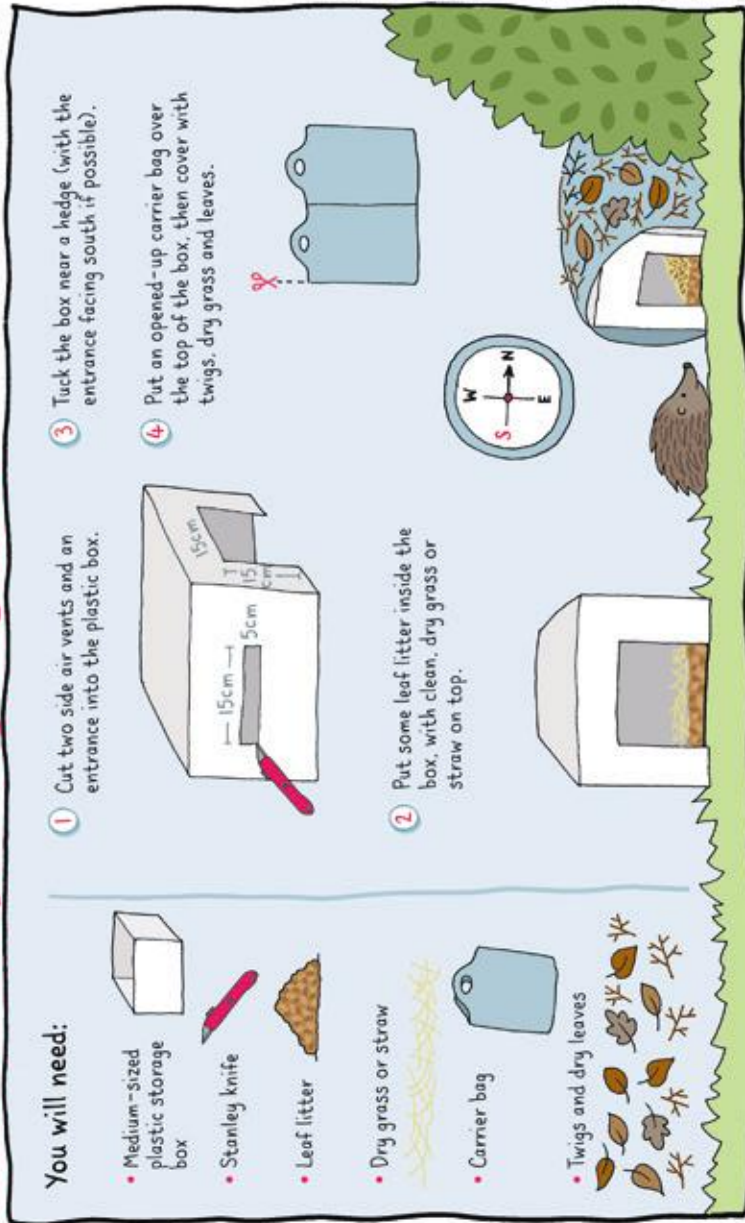
Water snail





# Make a simple hedgehog house

wildlife  
watch



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

## Mindful moments

There is lots of evidence that shows that being in nature is good for us. Connecting with nature and spending time in green spaces can help us take care of our wellbeing. However busy our lives, and no matter where we live, getting outdoors can make us happier and healthier.

Here are some ideas you might like to try!

### Nature table

Gather pebbles, feathers, seed heads or leaves to bring home (only take what you need). Lay the objects out on a table and explore them with your senses and see what emotions and memories arise for you.

### Slow down

Take time while outside to sit and soak in the moment. Pause to look at the trees, plants, flowers, smells and sounds you notice.

### Bring the outdoors in

Houseplants not only bring interest and cheer to a room but some also help to purify the air.

### Watch wildlife in action

Why not take a look at some wildlife webcams online? From puffins and owls, to badgers and ospreys, webcams provide unique insight into the lives of our native wildlife. Take a look at The Wildlife Trusts' webcams at [wildlifetrusts.org/webcams](http://wildlifetrusts.org/webcams)

### Brilliant birds

Spend some time bird watching whether outside, in a park, garden or from your window. Keep a diary of all the different bird species you spot.

### Looking up at the night sky

By simply looking at the moon each night and recording the way it looks (either by writing or drawing), you can get a real sense of nature's rhythms and the moon's everchanging phases.

### View from your window

If you can't get outside, you can still enjoy some of the benefits of nature from home. Sit by a window and see what you can spot as the seasons change. What noises can you hear? What animals can you spot? What flowers can you see?



© Paul Hobson

## BREATHING SPACE



We all struggle with our mental health at times. We offer a free confidential support service, find out more at [orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/breathingspace](http://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/breathingspace)





# Grow your own mini garden meadow

wildlife  
trusts

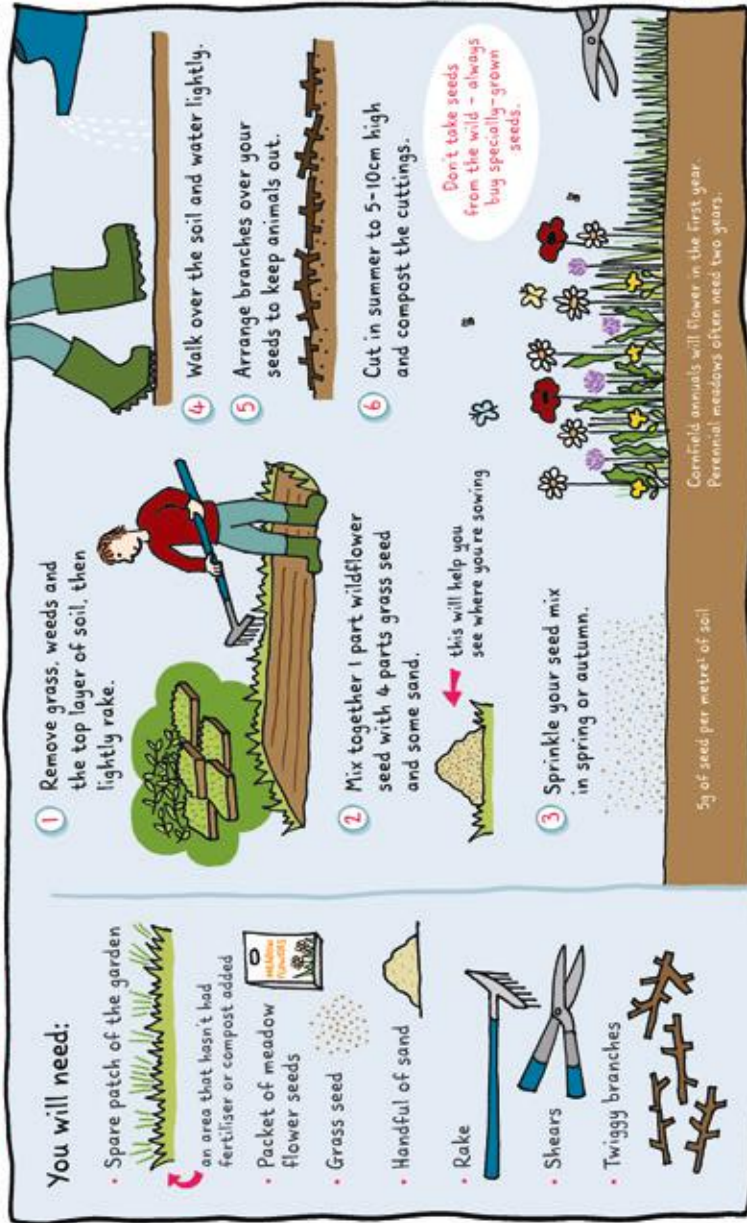


Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2015

To help wildlife thrive throughout the year, we can create spaces where they can live, feed and breed and which help them move around more easily. If we all take a few simple steps, they can add up to make a huge difference to wildlife!

© Penny Dixie



## Space to grow

### Value dead or dying plant material

Logs, old plant stems and dried grass are all safe havens for insects to hibernate or take cover in poor weather. So don't tidy them away until spring! The more insects there are, the more natural food sources are provided for other visitors too, such as hedgehogs, birds and frogs.

### Keep some grass long

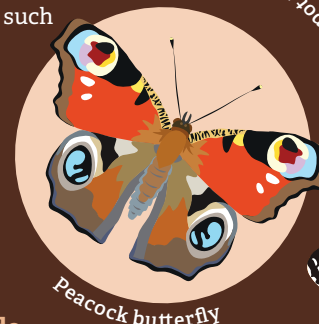
A short-mown lawn doesn't provide shelter or much food for insects. Allowing even just an edge or strip of long grass to flower in summer can have huge benefits for wildlife.

### Choose plants that provide food for insects

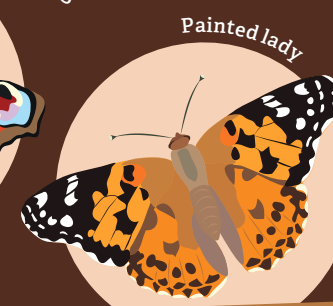
When deciding what to grow, choose nectar-rich flowers that are native to the UK and locally sourced where you can. Flowers with an 'open' structure, flowering herbs and even some grasses are all a good choice.



Six-spot burnet moth



Peacock butterfly



Painted lady

The Wildlife Trusts care for more than 2,300 wild places for nature. To find one near you, [visitwildlifetrusts.org/nature-reserves](http://visitwildlifetrusts.org/nature-reserves)

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# Giving nature a helping hand

## What to do and when

### June – July

If you have the space, leave out a low, shallow dish of water each day for visiting wildlife to take a drink. Add a stone against one side so that any flying insects can climb out if they fall in.

### August – September

Now is a good time to let flowers (and some vegetables if you have them) run to seed. This provides food for wildlife and gives you new plants next spring.

### December – January

Leave plants that will grow back next year uncut to provide cover for insects and beetles. Seed heads can also look pretty in frost!

Prune hedges during late winter once the fruit and berries have been enjoyed by wildlife. This will also allow you to shape and manage the hedges ahead of fresh spring growth when they provide essential cover and nesting habitat for birds, and flowers for pollinators.

### February – March

Plant new berrying trees and shrubs.

Make your own compost heap using a compost bin if you can. These can be picked up at DIY stores, or check if your local authority provide subsidised bins or to see if they have further advice on home composting.

### April – May

Leave a patch of lawn to grow wild.

Sow wildflower seeds in pots or in a prepared flower bed.

### October – November

Clean out bird nesting boxes.

Leave ivy untouched.

If you have space, now is a great time to plant spring bulbs in pots or borders. Choose ones with the bee symbol on that provide the most nectar for bees emerging after winter hibernation.





# About us

## The Wildlife Trusts

No matter where you are in the UK, there is a Wildlife Trust inspiring people about the natural world and saving, protecting and standing up for wildlife and wild places near you. We believe that people are a part of nature; everything we value ultimately comes from it and everything we do has an impact on it.

Everyone should have the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife in their daily lives. Daily connection to nature has a profound effect on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, and so The Wildlife Trusts are committed to bringing the natural world closer to where we live, work and play. For more ways you can help nature thrive where you live, including wildlife gardening ideas, visit our website: **[wildlifetrusts.org/gardening](http://wildlifetrusts.org/gardening)**.

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Registered Charity Number 207238



## Orbit

We created Orbit Earth, our environmental programme, with a vision to take responsibility for our impact on the environment. Through this, we pledge to improve the lives of our customers now and in the future. Here's how:

### Climate action to become net zero carbon

We aim to minimise our own business emissions by preventing, reducing and offsetting. By engaging with our customers and organisations we work with, we seek to reduce emissions associated with our homes and activities.

### Enhancement of our greenspaces to improve their quality and biodiversity

We are committed to ensuring that the greenspaces we care for enhance biodiversity, encouraging nature to thrive as well as being spaces for our customers to enjoy and improve their wellbeing.

### Responsible partnerships to develop and manage a sustainable supply chain

We will collaborate with our supply chain to find new and innovative solutions to deliver a better environment for us all.

**[orbitcustomerhub.org.uk](http://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk)**

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