

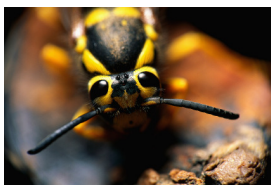
Plants for a Wildlife Garden

Use the right plants and you will attract a variety of wildlife into your garden. Children will have fun studying both the plants – their colours, texture and smell, and the insects and birds that will visit. Your garden will become one of your most valuable teaching resources.



A wildlife garden can offer teachers an excellent teaching resource – a rich habitat for insects, amphibians, birds and even small mammals of all kinds. The size of the plot may present limitations on the numbers and variety of the plants you choose, but some native plants are essential for an ecologically balanced wildlife community which can be further enhanced by colourful garden-border flowers for nectar, pollen and seeds. Remember that you will only attract the wildlife that is found in the locality into your garden, so look at the surrounding countryside and try to base your garden management on your observations.

When selecting plants for your wildlife garden, try as far as possible to aim at providing food and shelter for insects and birds during the whole year. Pollen- and nectar-rich plants, for example, feed bees, butterflies, hoverflies and other insects during the spring to autumn period. Seeds and berries, if left, are a rich source of food for birds in autumn and winter. Dead and withering foliage can shelter over-wintering insects. Many shrubs, especially thorny ones and evergreens, can provide shelter and nesting sites for birds. Ideally, place plants for butterflies, bees and hoverflies in sunny, sheltered places and avoid double-flowered forms as these often lack pollen and nectar for insects.



Wildflowers will attract a wide range of insects and may also provide seeds for birds. Many wildflowers are adapted to poor conditions and are therefore well suited to be grown in unfertilised soil.



Try not to disturb the balanced state of the garden community too much. The greater diversity of plants and wildlife, the more enjoyable and rewarding it will be. Don't be too quick to kill or tidy things and minimize disturbance. Avoid using fertilisers, pesticides and weedkillers wherever possible; biological control is preferable. Rose shoots, for example, are often populated with aphids, which provide food for other insects such as ladybirds. Pot marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*) and French and African marigolds (*Tagetes*) may help repel pests.



Finally, remember that it is illegal to dig up wild plants without the permission of the landowner. Removal of seeds from the wild should also be avoided. Wildflower seeds are now readily available from garden centres and mail order seed suppliers.

Some Plants for your Wildlife Garden

Many of these plants and trees will attract a variety of wildlife – bees, butterflies, birds, and other creatures.

For Bees

<i>Allium</i> species	Lavender (<i>Lavandula</i> species)
Bird's foot trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>)	Love-in-a-mist (<i>Nigella damascena</i>)
Clovers (<i>Trifolium</i> species)	Marjoram (<i>Origanum</i> species)
Cornflower (<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>)	Michaelmas daisies (<i>Aster</i> species)
<i>Cotoneaster</i> species	Poached egg plant (<i>Limnanthes douglasii</i>)
Cranesbill (<i>Geranium</i> species)	Single-flowered roses (<i>Rosa</i> species)
<i>Crocus</i> species	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>)
Devil's bit scabious (<i>Succisa pratensis</i>)	Scabious (<i>Scabiosa</i> species)
Firethorn (<i>Pyracantha</i> cultivars)	Snowdrops (<i>Galanthus</i> species)
Golden rod (<i>Solidago</i> species)	Sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>)
Heliotrope (<i>Heliotropium</i> cultivars)	Teasel (<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>)
Hemp agrimony (<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>)	Thyme (<i>Thymus</i> species)
Honesty (<i>Lunaria annua</i>)	Viper's bugloss (<i>Echium vulgare</i>)



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For Butterflies

Alyssum (<i>Lobularia maritima</i>)	Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>)
Aubretia (<i>Aubrieta deltoidea</i>)	Hebe species
Blackberry (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)	Ice plant (<i>Sedum spectabile</i>) – not dark red cultivars
Bugle (<i>Ajuga reptans</i>)	Knapweeds (<i>Centaurea species</i>)
Butterfly bush (<i>Buddleja davidii</i> and <i>B. globosa</i>)	Marigold (<i>Calendula officinalis</i>)
Candytuft (<i>Iberis amara</i>)	Mignonette (<i>Reseda odorata</i>)
Catmint (<i>Nepeta x faassenii</i>)	Thistle (<i>Cirsium species</i> and <i>Carduus species</i>)
Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>)	<i>Verbena bonariensis</i>
Globe thistle (<i>Echinops species</i>)	<i>Verbena rigida</i> .

For Birds

Berberis species

Crab apples (*Malus species*)

Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)

Field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)

Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Some species of rose (*Rosa rugosa* and *Rosa moyesii*)

Viburnum betulifolium

Wild roses (*Rosa canina* and *R. rubiginosa*).



Further Reading

1. C. Baines (1985), How to make a wildlife garden. Elm Tree Books. Revised as paperback (2000) Frances Lincoln. ISBN 0-7112-1711-4
2. LGibbons (1988), Creating a wildlife garden. Hamlyn. ISBN
3. Jenny Steel (2001), Gardening for wildlife. Webbs Barn Designs. ISBN
4. Jenny Steel (2001), Wildflowers for wildlife plants to make your garden wildlife friendly. Osmia Publications. ISBN
5. Jenny Steel (2001), Cottage garden plants. Webbs Barn Designs. ISBN

Suppliers of Native Wildflower Seeds

1. Emorsgate Seeds, Limes Farm, Tilney All Saints, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 4RT. Tel: 01553 829028
2. Flowers Farms, Carves Hill Farm, Shalbourne, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3PS. Tel: 01672 870782

Suppliers of Wildlife Plants

1. Landlife Wildflowers, National Wildflower Centre, Court Hey Park, Liverpool L16 3NA. Tel: 0151 737 1819
2. Naturescape Wildflower Farm, Lapwing Meadows, Coachgap Lane, Langar Notts NG13 9HP. Tel: 01949 860592.

