

Spring

Spring marks the arrival of warmer weather, bringing new growth and colourful plants and with that, our wildlife springs to life.

Birds will be busy looking for nesting sites to raise their new chicks. Leave nesting materials out for them (wool, hair, straw etc.) and keep feeding them.



The first insects will be emerging as the weather warms. Look out for queen bumblebees scouting out nectar and nesting places. Don't cut dandelions and clover - they are an important source of spring nectar for insects.



As the weather warms, mammals will become more active after the hardship of winter. Hedgehogs will emerge from hibernation. Make sure there is plenty of food for them by leaving leaf litter and long grass so they can forage for slugs and beetles.



Frogs and toads will descend on ponds to breed, look for their spawn. Try not to disturb ponds during spring.



What to do for wildlife

- Get some flower power: let the dandelions grow
- Try not to disturb ponds at this time of year
- Leave out nesting material for birds
- Let it grow: cut the grass less and leave areas long so insects have a place to hide
- Build a bug hotel or restore existing ones
- Plant perennial plug plants to create mini wildlife meadows later in the year - see below for help!

Look out for...

- The first queen bumble bees emerging to feed
- Birds building their nests
- Frogs and toads crossing roads to get to their ponds to spawn
- Spring bulbs and early spring flowers

How to plant plug plants

You can get plug plants (young seedlings) from local nurseries. Plant them using a trowel one hand-width apart, ideally in an area of grass that can be left to grow and gets full sun. Cut the grass at the end of August and remove the cuttings.

The most appropriate plants to choose from will depend on where you live but some of the common favourites for pollinators are:

- Common knapweed
- Ladies bedstraw
- Self-heal
- Common sorrel
- Field scabious
- Birds-foot trefoil
- Oxeye daisy
- Musk mallow
- Rough hawk-bit
- Yellow rattle
- Great burnet



TOP TIPS

Choose peat-free compost. Peat comes from bogs that are rare and important habitats for many species of wildlife. Peat bogs are also really good at storing carbon. When peat is taken from bogs it releases carbon and destroys the wildlife found in them.



Summer is nature's most active time but in terms of helping wildlife, less is definitely more!

Summer

Young chicks will be fledging the nest and some birds will rear extra broods of young. Migratory birds like swifts and swallows will be enjoying feeding on insects as they fly.



Summer is boom-time for insects and a great time to get to know what's in your wild space. Look out for grasshoppers, crickets, shieldbugs, butterflies, bees and hoverflies.



Mammals will be making the most of the warmer weather and abundance of food, busily raising their young and getting fattened up before the winter.



Young frogs and toads will be leaving their ponds for life on land. Insect nymphs emerge from underwater as flying adults ready to breed - look out for dragonflies, damselflies and mayflies. Bats, swifts, swallows and house martins feed on insects over the water.



What to do for wildlife

- Water for wildlife: make sure your patch has water for small mammals, birds and insects; in hot summers it can save lives. Top up ponds with rain water if they get low.
- Take notice: keep track of the insects and birds that visit your patch. Do a mini-beast hunt and see what you find.
- Be aware of nesting birds: avoid tree work in the summer
- Maintain wildflower areas - see below
- Build a hibernaculum for amphibians and reptiles to over-winter in
- Woodwork for wildlife: build a bat box or hedgehog home

Look out for...

- Adult birds collecting food for their young
- Fledgling birds leaving their nests and beginning to explore
- Pollinating insects hard at work collecting nectar
- Ponds full of life above and below the surface

TOP TIPS

The best thing you can do for wildlife at this time of year is to learn about it and understand what's living in your wild space.

The Big Butterfly Count is a great summer activity. You can learn more about butterflies and contribute to a country-wide monitoring scheme without having to be an expert. Look up the National Pollinator Monitoring Scheme for details.

How to maintain wildflower areas

- Weed out unwanted plants from wildflower patches. Species like thistle and bramble are likely to swamp a wildflower patch, so removing them early on will help prevent them returning next year.
- At the end of August, cut your wildflower meadow and leave the cuttings on the ground for a week to allow the seeds to drop into the soil. After a week, remove the cuttings from the patch so that nutrients do not go back into the soil.



Winter

Most of the UK's wildlife shuts up shop over winter, with mammals and insects and even our leaf-less trees running on energy saving mode. Winter is one of the best times to help wildlife, as even the smallest effort can make a huge difference at this tough time of year.

Winter is a hard time for birds as food is scarce due to the lack of insects, fruit and berries. Many of our favourites including blue tits, sparrows, starlings, finches and great tits find it difficult to survive. They will need all the food they can find to stay warm and give them energy for spring's activities.



Most insects will be over-wintering somewhere sheltered - like the bug hotels or log piles you may have made earlier in the year (or sometimes in our houses and sheds)!



Hedgehogs, bats and dormice are the only UK mammals that truly hibernate but many mammals will spend a lot of the winter resting, conserving energy, living off their reserves and staying warm until food becomes more abundant in the spring.



Winter is a quiet time for pond life. Amphibians will be overwintering until the warmth of spring arrives.



Look out for...

- Snowdrops and crocuses flowering: they are a good source of early nectar
- Blue tits, robins, starlings, goldfinches and woodpeckers. Many birds are easier to see and hear in the winter
- Animal prints in snow and mud: foxes, badgers and other animals on the lookout for food in the winter



What to do for wildlife

- Create a bird feeder and install it in your wild space: feeding the birds regularly is really important in winter
- Keep ponds clear of leaves and debris. A floating ball can help prevent freezing so wildlife can get a drink
- Leave ivy to grow - it's an important source of early nectar in spring
- Plant red campion, native bluebell, primroses and ramsons (wild garlic) into shaded areas
- Build new bird boxes and put up ready for spring

How to manage woodlands for wildlife

It's a great time to do work in woodlands because most wildlife will be recharging and asleep. Clear bramble and unwanted branches to let more light in, helping plants to flower in the spring.

TOP TIPS

Different birds have different shaped beaks so having a range of seeds, nuts, mealworms and fat balls will help attract a wider range of birds to your feeders.

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Nature begins to put the brakes on in autumn. It is also a time of change as trees start to lose leaves in order to save vital energy for when the cold really kicks in. As soils begin to cool, autumn is a time for planting new wildflower patches.

Autumn

Birds will be enjoying the feast of berries. Jays will bury acorns for extra food in the winter. Migratory birds like house martins prepare to head to warmer climates.



Many insect lifecycles are coming to an end. Adults of some species prepare to over-winter in a sheltered place, whilst others die-off having laid their eggs to start the next generation.



As nuts and berries ripen on the trees and shrubs, mammals will be feeding up to survive the leaner winter months. Squirrels will be burying nuts while hedgehogs, bats and dormice prepare to hibernate. Don't forget to check bonfires for hedgehogs before lighting.



Frogs and toads will be looking for damp sheltered spaces to over-winter. Autumn is a great time to build new ponds for insects, mammals and reptiles - however small.



Look out for...

- Fantastic fungi: the cooling weather brings out the best in fungi
- Wildlife of all kinds feeding before winter
- Craneflies (daddy long legs) are in abundance

TOP TIPS

Don't tidy up too much. Let things die away naturally rather than cutting back as this provides extra shelter for invertebrates.

What to do for wildlife

- Cut wildflower areas in early autumn if you didn't do in August
- Create new wildflower patches: autumn is the best time to sow wildflower seeds
- Clean out bird boxes and bug hotels before the end of September
- Keep ponds clear of falling leaves and create new ponds
- Leave seed-heads and rose-hips as food for the birds
- Rake fallen leaves into piles and pile up twigs and logs for winter shelter
- Plant crocus, daffodils and snakeshead fritillaries as a source of nectar for bumblebees and solitary bees that emerge in spring

How to create a wildlife pond

Ponds are one of the best ways to get more wildlife into your space. They don't need to be big and can be made from a variety of upcycled materials such as old bins, washing-up bowls or simply by lining a hole with pond lining. Whatever you choose make sure you provide a way for wildlife to get in and out easily.

A good pond will have:

- Different depths
- Plants to add oxygen to the water
- Rocks to provide hiding places for frogs, toads and newts
- Be in a sheltered spot that gets sun for part of the day

For downloads, how to guides and more information about making your



Birds will visit several bird feeders each day

How to use this guide

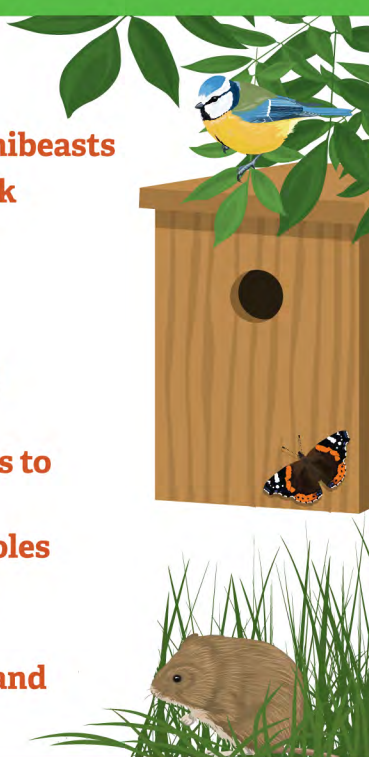
Beeble



Many insects play a vital role in our natural world because they help plants to reproduce by moving pollen from one flower to another as they hunt for food - this is called pollination. These insects help to pollinate 80% of our plants and we rely on them for one in three mouthfuls of food including most of our fruit and vegetables in the UK as well as favourites from around the world like coffee and chocolate.

Pollinating insects are also part of the food chain as prey for birds, reptiles and some mammals. Having a healthy, messy patch that's perfect for pollinators also helps much more of your local wildlife. What's great for wildlife is great for people too!

- ☐ A bug hotel for beetles, bees, wasps, butterflies and many other minibeasts
- ☐ A bee home for solitary bees: drilled holes in fence posts do the trick
- ☐ A bee bank using builders sand for ground-nesting bees
- ☐ A bird box, not in full sun and safe from predators
- ☐ A bat box in a high up, sheltered position that gets a little sun
- ☐ Piles of fallen leaves, logs and deadwood in a quiet corner for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles to shelter in
- ☐ A hedgehog house and space under fences for wandering hedgehogs to get through
- ☐ Patches of longer grass for sheltering mammals such as mice and voles
- ☐ Hedges rather than fences: good choices include hawthorn, privet, holly and hazel
- ☐ Climbing plants like ivy and honeysuckle make great nesting sites and are a haven for insects



- ☐ A mixture of flowers that bloom at different times, providing nectar through the year
- ☐ Wildflower patches that provide food for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, beetles, wasps, moths and many more
- ☐ Birdfeeders to help the sparrows, blue tits, and finches
- ☐ Dandelions and clover that flower in spring for bumblebees and other insects to feed on
- ☐ A sunny patch of nettles for the red admiral, peacock and tortoiseshell butterfly to lay their eggs on
- ☐ No pesticides: encourage insect and slug-eating creatures to be your pest control
- ☐ Native trees like alder, ash and crab apple
- ☐ Getting plenty of minibeasts onto your patch is the best way to attract other wildlife that will feed on them



- ☐ A bird bath for birds to drink and keep clean throughout the year
- ☐ A water dish for mammals such as hedgehogs to keep them hydrated in dry conditions
- ☐ Fish-free ponds are important for amphibians like newts, frogs and toads as well as dragonfly larvae and other aquatic invertebrates that spend their early stages underwater



Remember if you create a wild space, the wildlife will come!



**Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust**

Your Wild Space

A guide to making your local patch better for wildlife

