

# 10 Easy Ways to Make a Wildlife Garden

Making a Wildlife Garden with Limited Time & Money



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# Introduction

## Creating your Wildlife Garden



The most important factors limiting the potential of your garden for wildlife are your time and money. However, even with limited time and money, it is possible to radically improve your garden for wildlife.

Simply by selecting the best plants for wildlife, you can make a huge difference. As a general rule, select native plants, although some non-native plants such as Buddleia and Tobacco Plant are very good for insects such as butterflies and moths.

This is not to say that you cannot or should not have some non-native plants or cultivated forms; after all, this is your garden too!! Just intersperse the native plants amongst what you already have, or simply have separate areas for the natives and non-natives.

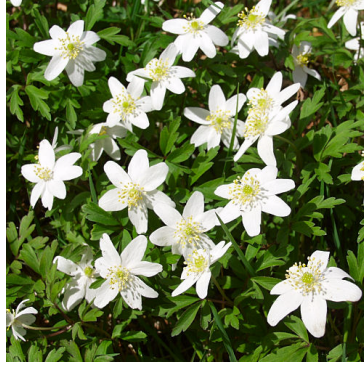
The best thing about native plants is that they are generally easy to grow, as they have evolved to suit our climatic conditions, but they are also stunningly beautiful.

In this booklet, I will give you 10 easy steps to create wonderful wildlife habitats, that will help to ensure the survival of our native wildlife.

Don't forget to click the Save button to store the booklet on your computer!!

Martin Bailey

## Wall to Wall Wildflowers



This is by far the easiest bit of the whole process of transforming your garden into a stunning habitat for wildlife.

You will have a mass of beautiful wildflowers, now rare in the countryside, which will in turn attract butterflies and many other beneficial insects.

Follow these simple steps to create a feature that your friends are bound to comment on:

1. Find or make a patch of bare soil;
2. Lightly dig or hoe the soil so you break the surface;
3. Measure the area you wish to cover with wildflowers;
4. Buy 2 grammes per square metre/yard of Cornfield Annuals;
5. Shake the bag to mix the seed, and scatter evenly on the soil;
6. Lightly hoe the soil so the seed is just under the surface;
7. Wait for a fantastic display of colourful wildflowers;
8. At the end of the season, shake all the seeds onto the soil;
9. You can repeat this every year, just disturb the soil in the spring!
10. Sit alongside the flowers with a cup of tea or a glass of Pimms!!

Best sown in the spring, and you can obtain your Cornfield Annual seeds from us at [www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/wildflowerseeds.html](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/wildflowerseeds.html)

## Climbers



Whatever the size of your garden, you will have some vertical surfaces available. Whether it's the wall of your house, an old garden shed, an old tree, or just an old stump, you can easily create a valuable wildlife habitat.

If you fancy growing climbers up a wall, first put up a trellis or similar, but don't mount it straight onto the wall - fix some lengths of 4 inch timber on the wall first, so that when you attach the trellis there will be a gap between it and the wall. This will provide a fantastic place for birds to nest, insects to hide, and maybe even bats will roost behind there too!!

You can grow ivy up an old tree or over an old stump. Ivy is a wonderful plant for wildlife, providing safe hiding places for insects and a great source of food for wrens, producing nectar-rich flowers late in the season for the butterflies and hoverflies, and a great crop of berries over the winter. It doesn't suck the life out of trees, and is arguably the best all-round wildlife plant we have, so cherish it.

You have a vast choice of climbing plants, including *Clematis*, Honeysuckle, Ivy, Bryonies, and even runner beans, but try to choose those that have lots of nectar, pollen and fruit.

You can obtain all your native climbers from us at [www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/plants.html](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/plants.html)

## Hedges



You may not have room for miles of thick hedgerow, though if you do you should make the most of the opportunity! For those of us with less space, even a small garden can accommodate a hedge. Do you have a border around your garden with a few shrubs in it? If so, you're halfway there! Just plant some bare-rooted native trees between the existing shrubs to fill in the gaps, and you'll have an, almost, instant hedge.

In an ideal situation you should plant your trees in 2 staggered rows about a foot or two apart, and 5 trees per metre/yard (or if you have less room, a single row at 3 trees per metre/yard). Plant bare-rooted trees during the winter, but not when it's too dry, wet or cold. The beauty of bare-rooted trees is that they're pretty cheap, but if you want ease of planting you can buy them in 'cells', or even pots if you can afford them.

Good wildlife hedges generally contain a lot of hawthorn, but you may already have *Pyracantha* or similar, so just choose from the following to suit yourself. Remember, some produce lovely blossom, some colourful fruits, and all are good for wildlife.

Hawthorn, Guelder Rose, Elder, Hazel, Oak, Holly, Field Maple, Wild Privet, Dog Rose and Honeysuckle are all good in a hedge.

You can obtain all your native hedge plants from us at [www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/plants.html](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/plants.html)



## Log Piles



This is a nice easy way to provide a valuable wildlife habitat in your garden. It doesn't need to be in full view, though increasingly log piles are being made into interesting features in more formal gardens, but wherever you put it, it will provide a home for lots of different insects, and a safe hiding place for frogs, toads, newts and even hedgehogs.

Any type of logs will do, but ideally you should use native 'hardwood' logs, such as oak, ash, cherry, etc. These will take longer to rot away, and will provide a wonderful habitat for wood-boring insects, that have declined so much in the countryside. You can use 'softwood' logs if you like, species such as larch, spruce, fir, pine, etc. They all provide shelter, and each species provides food for a different range of insects. And of course insects provide food for the birds and other larger animals.

We can't supply you with logs, but if you have any questions about wildlife gardening, or have made any interesting discoveries in your garden, we'd be pleased to hear from you. Just email us at [customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk](mailto:customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk)

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## Ponds



Ponds provide a wonderful wildlife habitat and a fantastic focal point for your garden. A pond can be as simple as an old Belfast sink, or as impressive as a small lake, depending on the available space and the size of your bank balance!

Any pond is better than no pond, but if you can manage a pond of reasonable size you will never regret it. You can spend hours watching the birds bathe, admire the aerobatic skills of the dragonflies and damselflies, or gaze into the depths at all the wonderful minibeasts living out their lives beneath the surface.

So, what do you need for a good wildlife pond? First of all, make it as big as possible, because it will look much smaller when the plants have grown. Make it 'saucer-shaped', not 'saucepan-shaped', so that hedgehogs and small children can climb out - a wildlife pond needn't be a danger to children if properly designed. This will also let you cover the edges with soil so you can't see the liner, and the pond will just blend into your garden.

Have lots of shallow-water-covered-soil around the edge, and a deep bit in the middle of about a metre/yard. Plant lots of native wildflowers around the pond edge, in the wet soil, and chuck some native oxygenating plants into the middle. Don't use non-native plants, or source from ordinary garden centres, as you may get more than you bargained for!! Believe it or not, we can provide everything you need (except the water!!)



## Wildflower Meadow



Wildflower meadows are one of the most amazing wildlife habitats you can create in your garden. They are right up there with the wildlife pond, and certainly something to be considered, even if you don't have a field to play with.

They provide a wonderful spectacle of native wildflowers and grasses, teeming with insect life, and are very easy to create, in theory at least.

Method 1: Thoroughly dig over the soil, remove all perennial weeds, create a 'fine tilth', and scatter our very reasonably-priced wildflower meadow seed across the ground. Then wait.

It can take 3-5 years for a meadow to develop from seed, in the first years it can be very patchy, full of those perennial weeds you thought you'd got rid of, and even if you do everything right it might be very disappointing - and it's a long time to wait for failure!

Method 2: Dig over the soil as before, then lay our wonderful wildflower turf on the soil, like carpet tiles. Water it if it doesn't rain, and you can expect a fantastic display during the first summer.

Of course, it's much more expensive than using seeds, but almost guaranteed, and pretty much instant. The turf even acts like a weed blanket to suppress those unwanted wildflowers.

You can buy our wildflower turf in easy-to-use pieces of 1.25m<sup>2</sup>, and do as little or as much as you like. We have supplied this turf to several of the RHS garden shows, including Chelsea & Swansea.

Check it out at [www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/meadowturf.html](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/meadowturf.html)

## Herb Garden



If you plant a herb garden, you not only give yourself a fresh supply of yummy herbs, but if you let some of them flower, you'll find that lots of insects like them too, especially the smaller bumblebees.

Just pick a well-drained bit of ground that gets a lot of sun, or better still make yourself a raised herb bed using sleepers, bricks or anything else you can lay your hands on. Then either buy some well-grown plants, or go mad and get lots of packets of seed.

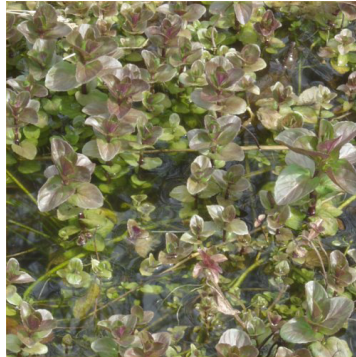
Plant/sow them, and hopefully you'll have a plentiful supply of herbs for the kitchen, and enough spare to let the bumblebees have a wonderful time too!

Which herbs to grow? Well, start with those you like to use in the kitchen. Then there are some you can use to make a tea from, such as mint. Make a big enough herb garden, and you can grow a bit of everything, and on a hot sunny day - we will get one or two, honest - the air will be full of their wonderful aromas.

We don't normally supply herbs, but we can manage water mint, and if you ask nicely we can get seeds for just about everything!!

Just email us at [customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk](mailto:customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk)

## Bog Garden



We're back to water again!! Hopefully, you'll have made your wildlife pond, and you'll have a nice boggy area around it, full of beautiful boggy flowers. No? Oh, well, even if you have, there's nothing to stop you having a bog garden as well - unless your pond has taken up every last bit of your garden (together with the wildflower meadow, hedge, etc).

What do you need for a bog garden? Simple, just a piece of wet soil. If you don't have a piece of permanently wet soil, and few of us do, simply dig a hole and line it with something that holds water - maybe a plastic sheet or even a large bucket or planter. Then chuck the soil back in and either wait for it to rain, or get the hosepipe out.

When it is nicely boggy you can plant/seed some of our wonderful wetland wildflowers, such as ragged robin, water avens or marsh cinquefoil.

If you need any advice, or simply want to order some plants or seeds, you know what to do:

email us at [customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk](mailto:customersupport@wildlifeservices.co.uk)

## Cottage Garden



Do you remember how easy it was to create your Cornfield Annual Patch? Well, this one's just as easy, but doesn't rely on just native wildflowers.

Prepare the ground just as you would for the cornfield annuals or wildflower meadow - you really should consider the wildflower turf - making sure you get a 'fine tilth'. Then pop down to your local garden centre, or drop us a line (you know the email address), and get yourself a packet or two of Cottage Garden seeds.

Scatter them across your lovingly prepared soil in the spring, and wait for an impressive profusion of flowers that will delight the senses, and be good for the wildlife.

This wildlife gardening lark is easy, isn't it!?!

## Nesting Sites



OK, so you've created some wonderful habitats, and you have some truly amazing wildlife visiting your garden, so why would you need to add artificial nesting sites? Well, there are some things that are very likely to be missing in your garden, such as old rotten trees with cracks, crevices and cavities in them.

The solution is to use the amazing variety of artificial nesting and roosting boxes that are now available. You can buy everything from the standard blue tit box to underground bumblebee boxes (as shown above), hedgehog boxes, and a vast range of bird and bat boxes.

Not only that but you can provide nesting and hibernation sites for insects, too. Just make a note of the wildlife you spot around your garden, find out what they need in the way of nesting and hibernation sites, and if they can't already find it in your garden you could think about supplying it for them.

And guess what? We can supply them for you!!

[www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/nestboxes.html](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/nestboxes.html)

## **Further Reading & Resources**



### **Books**

How to Make a Wildlife Garden by Chris Baines

Attracting Wildlife to your Garden by Michael Chinery

### **Native Wild Plants and other stuff**

Trees, Shrubs, Wildflowers, Bulbs, Seeds,  
Wildflower Meadow Turf, Ponds, Nestboxes

All available from Wildlife & Countryside Services at  
[www.wildlifeservices.co.uk](http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk)

Telephone/fax: 0845 2300 927



