



Guidance for Installing Homes for Wildlife



Bat boxes:

- Positioned so it will get some sun during the day so the inside of the box can warm up – ideally a south-facing direction.
- Location should be sheltered and out of the wind.
- At least 4 ft off the ground.
- Should **not** be lit by artificial light sources.



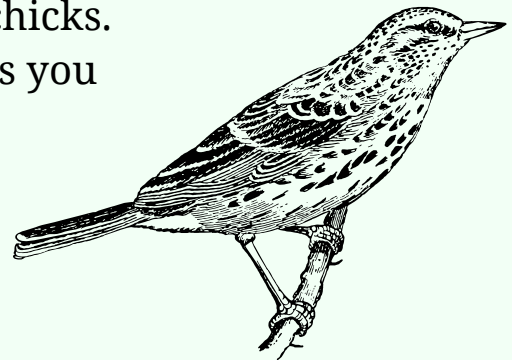
For more information on bats, you can look up the Northern Ireland Bat Group at: www.bats-ni.org.uk

Bird boxes:

- In the UK, our harshest weather usually comes from the west. Therefore, bird boxes should be north-easterly facing to provide shelter.
- Bird boxes should **not** be placed in direct sun as this causes the inside to heat up and it can become too warm for chicks.

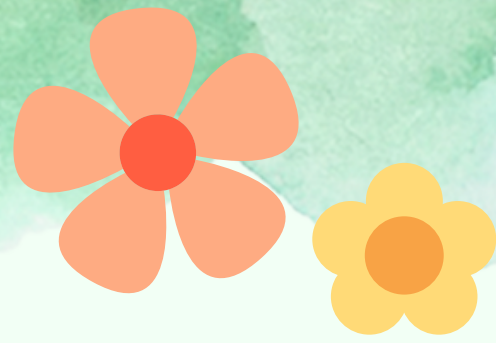
The entrance hole size depends on the species you hope to attract:

- ~25 mm for blue tits and coal tits
- ~28 mm for great tits and tree sparrows
- ~32 mm for house sparrows
- ~45 mm for starlings
- ~A box with an open front would be suited to robins, pied wagtails and wrens.



For more info on birds and how to give them a home, check out RSPB's website: www.rspb.org.uk and search for their nest box advice.





Hedgehog boxes:

Where to put your hedgehog box:

- Place the box out of direct sunlight, with the entrance facing away from prevailing winds.
- Keep the box sheltered, e.g., under thick vegetation / under garden shed.
- If you know where a hedgehog has built a nest in the past, consider putting your new one nearby or in a similar environment.
- Resist the temptation to remove the lid to check if the box is being used.

It's always best not to disturb any potential hedgehog residents.

General hedgehog advice:

- Make sure they have lots of dense undergrowth to hide/nest in.
- You may choose to provide hedgehogs with supplementary food and water. This is particularly useful during dry periods when natural insect foods may be harder to come by.
- ***Never feed hedgehogs milk or bread - They can't digest them!***
A particular favourite is hedgehog food, complete cat biscuits or meaty cat or dog food.
- ***Hedgehogs like to move from garden to garden***, so it's useful to provide them '***hedgehog highways***'. If your garden is contained by a fence or wall, try to make a small opening on either side, so that they can easily wander between areas.

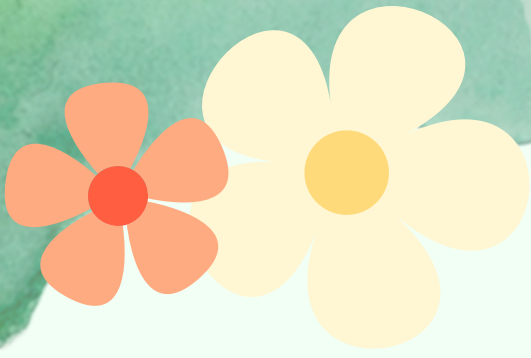
For more advice on building your home for hedgehogs, check out The Wildlife Trusts website: www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home

**LIVE
HERE**



**LOVE
HERE**





Butterfly houses:

- Ideally placed in a south-facing/sunny location and near food sources, e.g., near a meadow
- Location should be sheltered
- The slots in the butterfly house mimic the cracks in a tree so the boxes can be installed onto tree trunks.
- Should be 4-6 feet from the ground.

You can read more about gardening for butterflies and moths on Butterfly Conservation's website: butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/northern-ireland-branch.

Bee houses:

- Choose a sunny location for your bee house that is sheltered from rain.
- Make sure your location is around 100 to 200 yards of a pollen source.
- The location should also be within 50 yards of a mud source (solitary bees use mud to close the bamboo tubes off in winter).
- Remember to clean your hotel once a year to remove any build-up of fungi, debris and parasites (make sure there are no bees or eggs in the house when you do this!)

What happens next?

Solitary bees will begin to investigate your bee house in the spring. With some luck, the females will lay their eggs inside the stems of your hotel. Each egg is left with a store of pollen for the grub to eat when it hatches. The egg is sealed up behind a plug of mud in a 'cell'. One stem may end up with several 'cells' in it. The young bees will emerge the following year.



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What else can I do to help biodiversity?

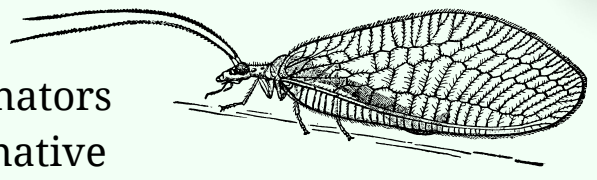


Attract beneficial insects to your garden

Ladybirds, lacewings and their larvae are ferocious predators of aphids and other garden pests. To encourage them into your garden, try providing suitable hibernation sites, such as a ladybird box. This may also attract other beneficial beetles that either eat pest insects or specialise in dead and rotting wood, speeding up decay.

Don't Mow, Let it Grow

Another great way to attract insects and pollinators to your garden is to let your grass grow! Our native wildflowers, such as dandelions, clovers and daisies provide the best sources of food and shelter for our invertebrates, so why not go wild? Sow native meadow seed or just reduce the frequency of your grass cutting.



Remember not to use pesticides if you want to attract beneficial insects to your garden patch!



Create a wildlife pond

Ponds provide a habitat to many aquatic and amphibian creatures. They also attract various beneficial insects, such as dragonflies and damselflies, which prey on pest species, including midges!

