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Community Guide to Creating Wildlife Habitats

Transform your outdoor spaces into thriving wildlife havens with these easy-to-implement ideas.



Why Create Wildlife Habitats?

Urbanisation and habitat loss have significantly impacted local wildlife. By introducing small-scale habitats, community groups can provide essential resources—such as food, water, shelter, and nesting sites—that support biodiversity and foster a deeper connection with nature.



Simple Habitat Ideas for Your Community Space

Bug Hotels

Constructing insect hotels using natural materials like bamboo, logs, and pine cones can offer shelter for beneficial insects such as ladybirds, bees, and solitary wasps. Position them in sheltered, sunny spots to maximize their effectiveness.

Bird Boxes

Install bird boxes with appropriate entrance hole sizes to attract various species:

- ~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

Ensure boxes are placed in sheltered, shaded locations, ideally facing north-east to protect from prevailing winds. Find out more with [RSPB's Ultimate Guide to Nestboxes.](#)

Hedgehog Highways

Create small gaps (approximately 13cm x 13cm) in fences or walls to allow hedgehogs to move between gardens. This connectivity is crucial for their foraging and breeding activities.



For more advice, check out [The Wildlife Trust's How to Build a Hedgehog Home.](#)



Butterfly Houses

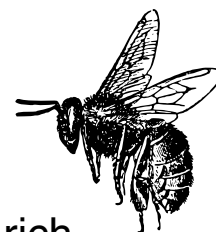
Create a welcoming space for butterflies by placing butterfly houses in a sunny, south-facing location, ideally near natural food sources such as meadows or wildflower areas.

- Position the house in a sheltered spot to protect residents from wind and rain.
- The slots inside the house mimic tree bark crevices, so they can be safely mounted on tree trunks.
- Install the house 4–6 feet above the ground for optimum safety and accessibility.

For more guidance on creating butterfly- and moth-friendly gardens, visit [Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland](#).

Bee Houses

Support solitary bees by providing a sheltered, sunny location for your bee house.



- Ensure the house is within 100–200 yards of pollen-rich plants for easy foraging.
- Position the house within 50 yards of a mud source, as solitary bees use mud to seal bamboo tubes for winter protection.
- Annual maintenance is essential: clean the house to remove fungi, debris, or parasites—but only when there are no bees or eggs inside.

Properly sited and maintained bee houses can become a thriving haven for these vital pollinators, enhancing both biodiversity and garden productivity.



What Happens Next?



In spring, solitary bees will start exploring your bee house. With a little luck, female bees will lay their eggs inside the bamboo tubes or stems of your hotel. Each egg is carefully provided with a pollen supply to feed the developing grub. Once provisioned, the egg is sealed behind a mud plug, forming a “cell.”

A single stem may contain several cells, and the young bees will emerge from their cells the following year, ready to continue the cycle and pollinate your garden.

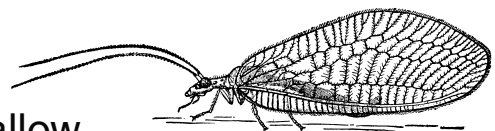
What else can we do to help biodiversity?

Log Piles

Arrange logs and branches in a corner of your space to provide shelter for amphibians, insects, and small mammals. These decomposing materials also enrich the soil.

Wildflower Areas

Reduce lawn mowing in certain areas to allow native wildflowers like dandelions, clovers, and daisies to bloom. These plants are vital for pollinators and contribute to a more diverse ecosystem.



Wildlife Ponds

If space permits, consider adding a small pond. Even a shallow container can support amphibians, insects, and birds. Ensure it has sloped edges for easy access and is free from chemicals. Check our [RSPB's How to Make a Wildlife Pond](#).



Tips for Success

Use Natural Materials

Opt for untreated wood, bamboo, and other natural substances to avoid introducing harmful chemicals.

Position Strategically

Place habitats in quiet, sheltered areas away from high foot traffic to minimize disturbances.

Engage the Community

Involve local residents in the creation and maintenance of these habitats to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

Monitor and Maintain

Regularly check and clean installations to ensure they remain safe and effective for wildlife.

Additional Resources

For more detailed guidance and inspiration, consider exploring the following resources:

- [Ulster Wildlife – Nature Recovery Networks](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation – Let's Create Wild Spaces](#)
- [Butterfly Conservation – Gardening for Butterflies](#)
- [Bat Conservation Trust - Putting up your bat box](#)



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