

Gardens and growing spaces have huge potential to provide safe habitats and connected corridors for wildlife.

Here are five simple, impactful things we can all do to improve our outdoor spaces for wildlife:

1. **Create a wildlife pond** – even a mini patio pond will become a magnet for wildlife. ☒
2. **Plant for pollinators** – extend the nectar season with flowers at different times of year. Also think about flowers that open in the evening to attract moths. ☐
3. **Don't be too tidy** – resist the urge to tidy up in autumn. Seedheads provide winter food for birds, stems provide shelter for insects, and log and leaf piles provide shelter for frogs, toads and hibernating hedgehogs. ☐
4. **Climbers** – Look for empty vertical space. Climbing plants provide nesting sites for birds and are a haven for insects and small animals (make sure to include some evergreens). ☐
5. **Love your lawn** – Leave some areas of long grass and embrace wildflowers (plug plants will help). ☐

We need others to garden for wildlife too – and this is where you can help!

The most important thing you can do is encourage others to make changes for wildlife too. No matter how far along your wildlife gardening journey, share what you're doing with your neighbours by hosting your own Wilder Open Garden. If you can get your neighbours involved too then you'll be well on the way to being a wilder community!

For further tips and guidance on the above, and how to host your own Wilder Open Garden, go to:
somersetwildlife.org/garden



IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING... DO NO HARM!

- **Peat:** Peat compost is devastating to our peatlands, so only use peat-free compost (or even make your own).
- **Pesticides:** Say 'no' to chemical pest-control and you'll soon find natural predators of pests will help you out.
- **Herbicides:** Love your "weeds" and invest in alternatives, like mulching or matting.
- **Water:** Install a water butt and use rainwater instead of mains water.



APPLY FOR YOUR 'WILDER GARDEN' AWARD

If you're already making an effort to welcome wildlife into your garden, apply online with our simple self-assessment survey and, no matter what size your garden, we'll send you a "This is a Wildlife Garden" plaque to display proudly in your wildlife-friendly space:

somersetwildlife.org/garden

We also have awards for communities, churchyards and allotment plots!

WILDER GARDENING ON A BUDGET

It doesn't cost the earth to make a wildlife friendly garden.

- **Grow annuals from seed:** Pollinator favourites like sunflowers and cosmos are easy – simply sow in pots of peat-free compost and plant out in early summer.
- **Make new plants from old:** Dig up herbaceous plants like nepeta and cranesbills and use an old bread knife to slice the rootball in two, with intact stems. Replant and water well.
- **Take softwood cuttings:** Cut 10cm shoots from shrubs like lavender, remove lower leaves and push into pots of moist, gritty compost. Cover with a plastic bag sealed with an elastic band and keep on a bright windowsill for eight weeks.
- **Make a log pile:** Neighbours pruning or cutting down a tree? Ask for some logs! Piled up in a corner or beneath a bench they provide an easy, inexpensive habitat.
- **Be less tidy:** Let an area of grass grow long, allow leaves to pile up in borders, deadhead and cut back less.
- **Make your own habitat boxes:** From bird and bat boxes to feeding stations download our guides to make your own wildlife homes.
- **Grow your own bird food:** Avoid cutting back seed-bearing plants like lavender, knapweed, grasses and sunflower, and watch the birds flock to feed from them.
- **Enjoy free gifts from birds:** Birds make great farmers. Keep an eye out for holly and hawthorn seedlings, often found at the base of fences or other 'perches'. With the landowners permission, dig them up and plant in your garden!

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL

For tips and practical advice on transforming school grounds into a wildlife haven that supports curriculum learning, let your local school know how our Wilder School Grounds Pack can help: somersetwildlife.org/wilder-schools

RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

For a wealth of information tailored to churchyards and burial grounds, with example management plans and heaps of other resources, invite your local church to become part of the Wilder Churches community: somersetwildlife.org/wilder-churches

PRIVATE & COMMUNITY NATURE RESERVES (PCNR) NETWORK

Are you a landowner, smallholder or community group that manages land primarily for nature? The PCNR network was set up to provide peer-to-peer support to owners, land managers and community groups who are keen to conserve wildlife on their land: somersetwildlife.org/pcnr

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

- ✉ Subscribe to Somerset Wildlife Trust's monthly Team Wilder e-newsletter, full of tips and advice to support you on your journey: somersetwildlife.org/form/team-wilder-newsletter-signup
- 📍 Find your closest environment group: somersetwildlife.org/team-wilder-map
- 🖱 Visit Somerset Wildlife Trust's Wilder Gardening webpage: somersetwildlife.org/garden



Wilder Open Gardens is a wilder alternative to a coffee morning fundraiser that spreads the word about gardening for wildlife, whilst raising funds in aid of Somerset Wildlife Trust.

somersetwildlife.org/wilder-open-gardens

