



Wildlife Aid
FOUNDATION

Helping Our
GREAT BRITISH
WILDLIFE

Small steps we can all take to help nature

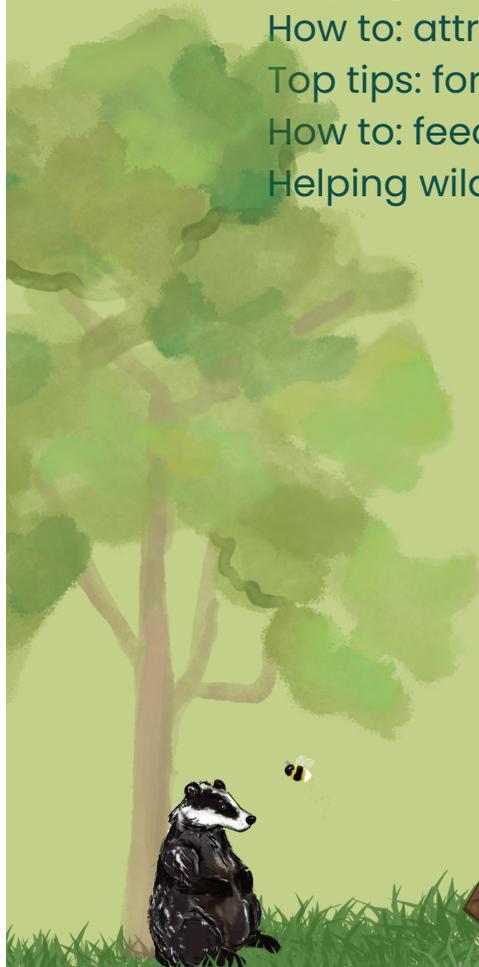




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Welcome



Getting to know wildlife

Helping to Inspire, educate and empower the public is a key driver for us, in our mission to make the world a brighter, safer place for wild animals.

We aspire to connect people with wildlife and wild spaces, encouraging them to learn, serve and value our precious wildlife. British wildlife has always been an integral part of our nation's natural heritage, from the Fantastic Mr Fox and Peter Rabbit to the Wind in the Willows, we are a nation that grew-up on their stories. However, a growing number of these beloved 'characters' are at risk, with many facing significant threats from habitat loss, climate change and pollution. With 1 in 6 of the UK's native species now at risk of extinction, we want to highlight the urgency of addressing the threats they face. This booklet is designed to put the power in your hands, the power to make a real difference to wildlife, for future generations.

Our work

A large percentage of the patients we see in our hospital are in need of our care as a result of the impact of humans. And, whilst this human impact is often unintentional, there are many things we can do to better co-exist with our wild neighbours. Our gardens, parks, woodlands, green spaces and more, are wild animals' homes. By taking the time to understand the small actions we can take to make their homes a safer place, the greater chance we will have of safeguarding them for future generations.



Did you know...?



60% of Woodland has been **lost in 50 years**

Insect abundance is declining by an estimated **1 to 2%** a year



More species have seen their populations decrease than increase

1 in 4 of UK's mammals are **threatened with extinction**



41% decreased

34% little change

25% increased

41%↓
of UK species have declined in the past **50 years**



31% of UK amphibians and reptiles are threatened

97%
of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s



43.3%
of UK bird species are classified in **threatened** categories



How to: start off small!

Starting off simple is the recipe for success. Nature already has so many tricks up its sleeve for enhancing, encouraging and creating habitats for nature and wildlife to succeed.

For instance, a log pile. Yes, this is exactly what it sounds like; a natural pile of logs can host a whole plethora of critters, providing them with dark, warm and usually humid spots. For insects like woodlice, beetles, caterpillars and, at the deeper levels, even earthworms to thrive in, these refuges provide everything they could need, and all you have to do is pile those logs up!

Whether you stack them in a neat pile, scatter them around your garden or under hedges, the insects will flock to their new five-star accommodation. Then, before you know it, **your little ecosystem will transform your garden into a wildlife haven**, enticing other bigger species, like wood mice, hedgehogs, frogs, garden birds and, if you're lucky, even the odd owl... they eat bugs, too!



During autumn and winter, leaf piles can provide a great shelter or nesting spot for hibernating species, like hedgehogs, small mammals, frogs, and a variety of insects, like bees. Birds will also peck through leaf litter, looking for a tasty meal.

Wondering where to place your log or leaf pile? It depends on what species you want to attract. In shaded areas, the log pile stays damp, encouraging fungi and mosses to grow. In the sun, the wood dries out, providing a good source of nest material for solitary bees. Either way, you can't go wrong.

What you need:



Logs!



Twigs or branches for mini piles, too.



Leaves



Sun or shade

How to build it:



Neatly



Messy



Underground



How to: create habitats

Habitat fragmentation is one of the leading causes of species decline in the UK; the rise in small and scattered habitats being cleared for developments and farmland puts increased pressure on resident wildlife, such as badgers, dormice and hedgehogs.

These animals, inevitably, become confined to an area with less space to find the resources they need to survive. On average, a hedgehog's home range can equate to almost 50 acres, where the average UK house covers just 1/10th of an acre. If each home is then surrounded by barriers, such as walls or fences, you can imagine how difficult the hedgehogs' journey around their home range - to find food and suitable nesting sites - becomes.

But, there is hope, and all it takes is a little elbow grease and a saw! By placing a small hole in the base of your fence or wall, you can **create a network of wildlife corridors**, re-establishing the animals' ability to safely roam around their historical wild homes.

What you need:



Saw



Ruler



Pencil

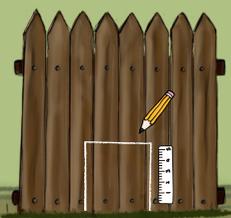


Sanding block

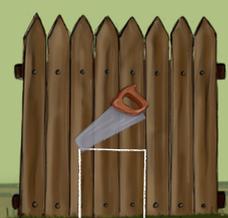


A fancy highway sign (available in our shop!)

How to do it:



Measure and mark a 13cm x 13cm hole at the bottom of the panel



Safely cut along the marked lines, removing the block cut out



Sand-down any sharp or rough edges



Hey-presto You've created a wildlife corridor!



Looking to attract more birds to your garden? Want a simple solution? **Create a mini meadow.** Long grass infused with flowers is a rare habitat in our UK gardens, yet it can drastically improve life for an array of wild creatures. We promise, it's easier than it sounds! By allocating an area of your garden to grow wild, yes, that means you don't need to do anything at all (!), you can increase your wild visitors, considerably. No grass in your garden? You can build a dedicated mini-meadow patch from scratch and watch the bugs and birds flock to it.

What you need:



or



x4 pieces of wood cut to your desired size or use a ready-made planter



Drill/hammer, screws/nails



Polythene sheet



Wildflower seeds



Watering can



Wildflower friendly soil to fill your 'Patch'

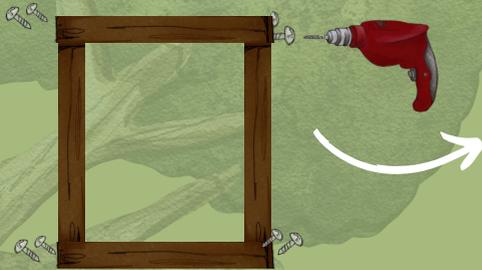


Trowel



Time

How to do it:



Using a drill or hammer secure your 4 pieces of wood together.



Secure your polythene sheet to the base and place regular drainage holes, this will help to drain excess water and provide air to the soil.

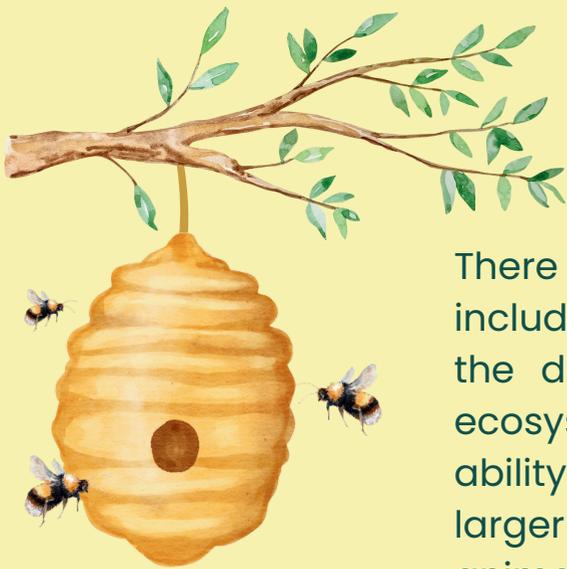


Fill your patch with wildflower friendly soil



Sow your wildflower seeds, and regularly water, especially in the first six weeks.





How to: attract bees

There are more than 270 species of bee in Britain, including bumblebees, mason bees, mining bees and the domesticated honeybee. They provide essential ecosystem services to us through their unbeatable ability to efficiently pollinate our arable crops at a much larger scale, compared to other methods, such as other animals or the wind.

Sadly, 97% of flower-rich meadows have been lost since the 1930s, leading to a decline in food sources and shelter for bees. Wildflower meadows are extremely diverse habitats, with a huge variety of flowers that are ideal for bees, and even if you don't own acres of land, you can still help replace these missing lifelines by using a simple window planter.

When planting for bees, follow these pointers:

- Choose a sheltered, sunny spot
- Place plants in groups, so that the colour and scent are easy to detect
- Select plants so that you have a show of flowers from early spring to late autumn
- Choose flowers with a simple (often flat) structure, like old cottage varieties, as they are the easiest for insects to feed from

Some plants species that are great for all bee species include:

Poppy

Honeysuckle

Ox eye Daisy

Primrose



How to: build a bee hotel



What you need:



Hammer or drill



Secateurs



x8 nails or screws



Bamboo, brambles, or reeds (lots of them)



x4 pieces of wood at least 10cm wide

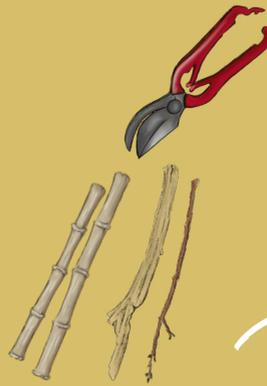


Pine cones

How to build it:



Secure the 4 wood pieces together to make a rectangular frame.



Cut the bamboo, brambles or reeds to the depth of the frame



Fill the frame with the bamboo, brambles or reeds of different diameters. 3-5mm are preferred for bees



How to: provide a home!

The loss of homes and places to shelter is a big problem for our wildlife. As more of their habitats are cleared for urban development, they become increasingly displaced, with nowhere to settle, call home or raise young. But it doesn't have to be that way. Making space for our wild neighbours can be really simple and a great way to attract them to your garden.

Voted the UK's favourite wild animal, the European hedgehog needs all the help it can get. As a quintessential part of British wildlife and our story books, Britain's iconic prickly mammals have been a common sight across the length and breadth of the UK for many years, even finding their way into our gardens to nest.

Sadly, these spikey mammals are in decline; threats, such as habitat loss, nest disturbances, the use of chemicals in gardens, and road traffic accidents, have resulted in the UK losing over 96% of its hedgehog population since 1960.

With the species often breeding twice a year, once in spring and again in autumn, providing them with a hedgehog house gives them somewhere safe to nest and raise their young. This increases the chances of their offspring surviving, and may even reduce nest disturbances, which often lead to mum abandoning her young.



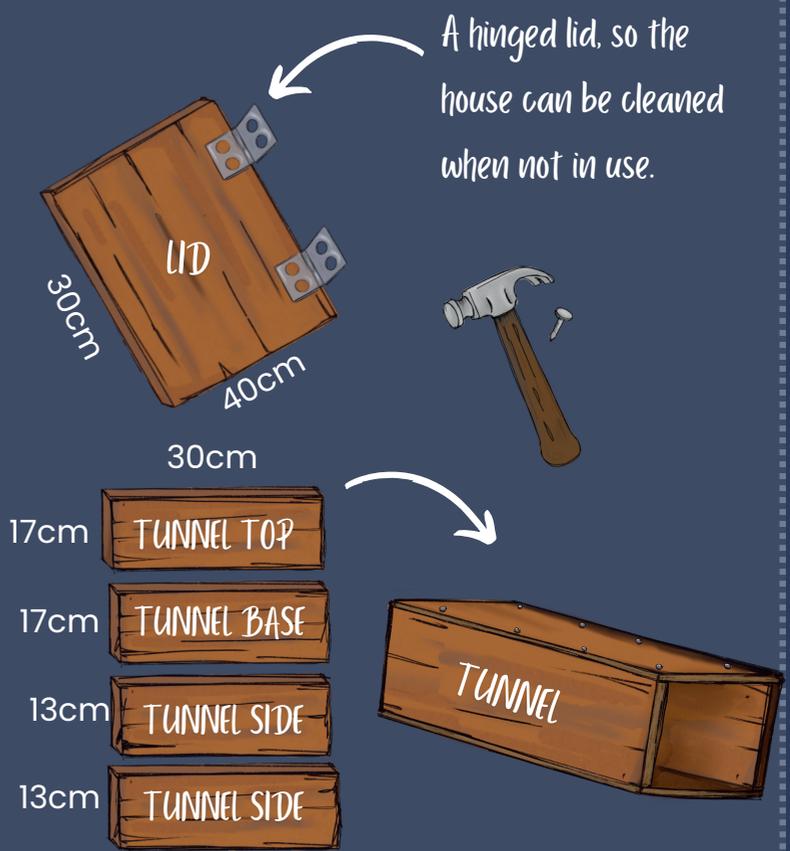
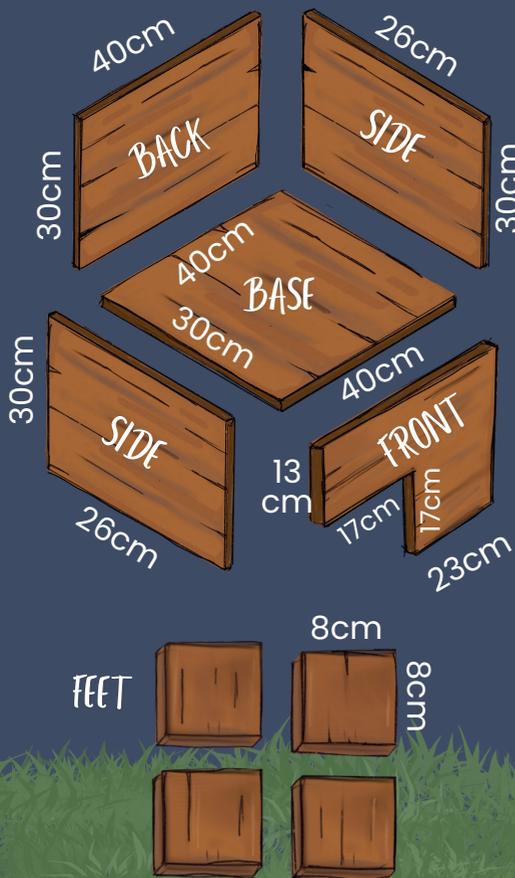
How to: build a hedgehog home

What you need:



How to build it:

- 1 Follow the diagram and dimensions here to construct a hedgehog house.



- 2 Put the straw inside, cover the house with the polythene sheeting, then pack soil and dead leaves around the outside.



How to: keep wildlife safe

Firework displays and bonfire nights see wildlife rescues throughout the UK admitting an influx of animals that have ended up displaced, hit by cars or burnt in bonfires.

To these creatures, a pile of wood looks like the perfect spot to rest (remember page 4, how to create homes with log piles?). Wildlife is oblivious to the danger that lurks when bonfire night arrives.

But, these simple steps can help prevent any injuries and, most importantly, any fatalities to our precious wildlife.

What to do to keep wildlife safe:

- ➔ Build bonfires on the **same day as lighting them**
- ➔ **Thoroughly check bonfires** before lighting them – move them completely, if possible
- ➔ **Light the bonfire from one side**, allowing any small animals to escape
- ➔ **Reduce stress** for all animals by attending public firework displays
- ➔ **Create alternative shelters** with log piles and leaves
- ➔ **Slow down** on roads



How to: attract moths and bats

Bats and moths are excellent indicators of environmental health. *What does that mean?* we hear you ask. It means having these species in your garden signals you're heading in the right direction, in providing a vibrant wildlife haven. But how do you attract them? Well, you need to create a habitat that supports their needs. For moths, plant night-blooming flowers, like **Evening Primrose, Jasmine or Native Honeysuckle**, as these plants release fragrance and nectar after dusk – perfect for drawing in moth species, which, in turn, will attract bats looking for a night-time snack.

Avoid using pesticides, as they can harm these nocturnal visitors. **Install a water source**, like a small pond or birdbath, and **provide shelter**, such as trees, hedges, or **bat boxes**, to encourage bats to roost.

What you need to build a bat box:



Untreated FSC plywood boards cut to the sizes shown below



Hammer and nails (or drill and screws)



Saw



Ruler & Pencil

How to build it:

- 1 Follow the diagram and dimensions here to construct a bat box.



- 2 Nail together the boards using the risers to create gaps in between.



x2 risers to create crevice



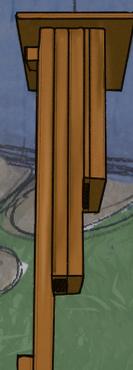
x2 risers to create crevice

- 3 Fix as high as possible in a sheltered wind-free position, exposed to the sun for part of the day.



View looking up from base

Side view



Helping wildlife in the heat: **build a pond**

Now we're getting to the heavy-duty part of helping wildlife; if you managed to do all the other helpful tasks listed in this booklet, then **we're sure building a wildlife pond will be a breeze for you!**

Water is essential, we don't think we needed to tell you that, but we want to emphasise just how much a water source can, quite literally, save a life. The vast majority of patients that come through our hospital doors have a degree of dehydration. Our first port of call is to warm them up, and then rehydrate them, getting their bodily functions working properly, again.

So, during the dry heat of summer, providing a water source, whether that be a shallow bowl of fresh water or going all-out and building a huge wildlife pond, either one will provide a vital source of help for our wildlife.

What is so special about a wildlife pond? Not only can it help the surrounding wildlife, but it can also provide a home and nesting ground for frogs, toads, dragonflies, newts and even plant species. Wildlife ponds can be havens of biodiversity, and **lots of biodiversity means lots of LIFE!**

Biodiversity shapes our entire ecosystems, from the ground up, and if we create biodiverse spaces, it has a knock-on effect, by supporting other bigger species. Then, before you know it, your garden is its own magnificent ecosystem!

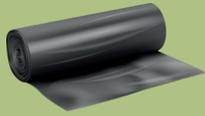
So, what are you waiting for? **Let's get building!**



What you need:



A patch of garden preferably that gets some sun



Pond liner made of butyl rubber



Builder's Sand



A variety of large rocks



A variety of pond plants



A watering can or a hose would probably be quicker



Shovel



Measuring tape



Plank of wood

How to build it:



Choose a warm/sunny area of your garden and measure out the size of your pond.



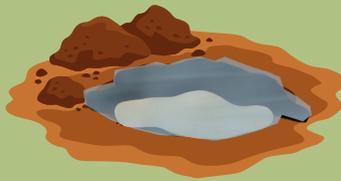
Measure out different depths of your pond. Shallow areas should be no deeper than 25–30 cm (1 ft) and deeper areas at least 60 cm (2 ft)



Remove any sharp stones from the bottom of the hole before adding a 5cm thick layer of sand.



Place your pond liner in the hole and tuck the edges into a bordering trench.



Fill the bottom of the pond with remaining sand, before filling it with water.



Introduce native plants to your pond approximately 1–2 weeks after filling with water.

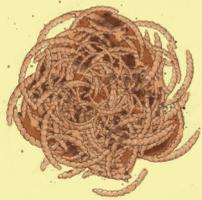


How to: attract garden birds

Attracting garden birds is pretty simple and easy to do. By either providing natural areas that help produce food sources, like log piles and hedgerows, or supplementing natural foods with bird seed and mixes, you can help support a plethora of bird species.

What and how you provide food will affect the species of birds that you attract. For example, ground feeding birds, such as blackbirds, robins and pigeons, prefer food provided on the ground. Whilst smaller birds, like your blue tits, sparrows and finches, will happily take food from a feeder.

What to feed:



Mealworms are great, particularly for their protein content, which is vital for growth and energy.



Mixed seeds offer a variety of food sources to attract different species and provide a balanced diet.



Chopped peanuts are high in fat and protein, and therefore provide a very useful source of energy to garden birds, especially in winter.



Top tips: for feeding garden birds

→ Keep feeders clean - this stops the spread of diseases, such as *Trichomoniasis*.

→ Make sure food is always available - food shortages can occur both in winter and summer, and birds have different needs throughout the year, such as feeding young.

→ Keep feeding stations out in the open - feeders near shrubs make it easy for cats to pounce.

→ Only put out what gets eaten - this way you won't attract unwanted guests.

Don't forget!

Water is just as important as food! Whether for drinking or bathing, remember to provide fresh clean water during dry and freezing weather.



How to: feed hedgehogs and badgers

Feeding hedgehogs and badgers can be a rewarding way to support local wildlife, especially in urban or suburban areas, where natural food sources may be limited, and seeing these nocturnal species can be rare. **However, it's important to do so responsibly to avoid causing harm.**

For hedgehogs, offer high-protein, meat-based wet or dry cat or dog food. Avoid feeding them bread, milk, or mealworms, as these can cause serious health issues, like metabolic bone disease. Use a shallow dish, in a quiet, sheltered area of your garden during the evening, with a shallow bowl of water, nearby.

When feeding badgers, use moderation and select natural foods, such as fruits (like apples and pears), unsalted peanuts or raisins. Avoid sweet, salted or spiced food, or anything processed, and, whilst we understand the temptation, no, they do not need mashed potatoes!

To discourage dependence, feed at random times and in small amounts – **just enough to supplement their diet, not replace it.** Place the food in a designated spot in your garden, where badgers can access it without disturbing neighbours or becoming habituated to humans. **Avoid direct interaction; too much contact with wildlife can endanger them by reducing their natural fear of humans, leading animals to approach people more often and increasing their risk of conflict, injury, or death.**

Top Tip: regularly clean feeding stations to prevent the spread of disease, and avoid overfeeding, which can attract unwanted visitors or cause imbalances within the ecosystem. Responsible feeding helps keep these wonderful native creatures healthy, wild, and thriving in their natural habitat.



Helping wildlife: **in the cold**

Winter can be a tough time for many wild animals. As temperatures drop and food becomes scarce, birds, hedgehogs, foxes, and other creatures must work harder to survive. You can make a real difference by providing small but meaningful support. For example, leaving out fresh water and high-energy foods, like seeds, nuts, and suet balls, can help birds maintain their energy. Avoid bread, as it lacks nutrients, and try to refill feeders, regularly. A shallow dish of water can freeze quickly, so check it daily and break any ice.

You can also create safe spaces for wildlife in your garden or outdoor area.

- **A pile of logs, leaves, or even an undisturbed corner of your garden can provide vital shelter** for hedgehogs, insects, and frogs.
- **Avoid disturbing compost heaps or woodpiles** in case animals are hibernating there.
- **If you find an injured or lethargic animal**, especially a hedgehog out in the day during winter, it may need help; contact a local wildlife rescue centre, like us, for advice.

Even small acts of kindness can have a big impact on the wellbeing of our wild neighbours, during the coldest months.





Wildlife Aid
FOUNDATION

In Britain, we are fortunate to enjoy a huge diversity of native animals. However, every year, millions of these animals are killed, injured or suffer some trauma, either as a result of direct contact with humans or the impact that humans have on the environment.

The Wildlife Aid Foundation works to help redress the balance between Man and nature and to play our part in preserving our heritage for future generations to enjoy.

While there are many organisations dedicated to the vital work of preserving natural habitats, there are still very few that help preserve the species that live within them. At the Wildlife Aid Foundation, we are dedicated to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife.

Additional Illustrations by Sian Peach

