



West Lothian
Council

GARDEN FOR NATURE

WEE CHANGES TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE IN
WEST LoTHIAN



NATURE NEEDS

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WHY HELP WILDLIFE

We are currently experiencing a nature crisis 43% of species are in decline across Scotland, with 11% at risk of extinction from Great Britain. Once common garden visitors, hedgehogs have now declined by as much as 75% over the last 20 years alone.

In 2023 West Lothian Council has declared both a Nature and Climate crisis, with a mission to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.



This guide aims to provide details on how you can help support wildlife on your patch, whilst enjoying the benefits of nature for our health and wellbeing.



ACCESS

Before making changes to your garden, it's important to consider how the wildlife you want to attract will get in. Many gardens have solid fences which may create barriers to amphibians and small mammals.

HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY

If fenceing creates a barrier, consider cutting a small hole (the size of a CD case) at the base of fences or gates to provide access to hedgehogs and smaller wildlife that may not be able to get in otherwise.



WATER

Water is vital to survival, providing hydration to many species. Amphibians and some invertebrates also have an aquatic lifestage.

Insects can easily drown while accessing drinking water. Add pebbles to water dishes, so insects like bees can escape easily.



Bird baths provide birds with water for drinking and bathing, remember to keep these clean to ensure the birds remain healthy.

Even small, container ponds can be hugely beneficial for wildlife. They can be made out of old sinks, half barrels, large bowls, etc. Just be sure to include sloping edges, ramps or logs to make sure everything can get in and out easily.



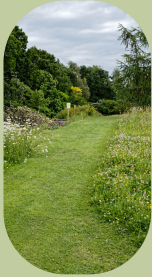


FOOD

Wildflowers in lawns provide food for pollinators. Leave a patch of grass to grow to see what comes up, but make sure to keep the edges neat. If leaving a larger patch, mow a path through it, to keep it looking managed. It's important to cut long grass once a year in August and remove the cut grass - either to a compost heap, or use it as a mulch on flower beds or place in your brown bin.



If you like to feed the wildlife, ensure you are following current advice and providing appropriate food. Leaving out pumpkins after halloween or dishes of milk can harm hedgehogs. It is also important to keep feeders clean to avoid spreading disease.



PLANTING

WHAT TO PLANT



Plant native wildflowers, trees and bushes or plants labeled as RHS Plants for Pollinators to attract a variety of species.

PLANTS TO AVOID

Avoid planting invasive species if you can. Plants like Buddleia can escape gardens and cause problems on neighbouring land or gardens.



NatureScot provide a list of invasive species in their [Developing with Nature](#) guidance.

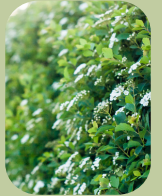
IMPORTANT: Please do not use pesticides or herbicides as these will harm the wildlife you attract to your garden.



SHELTER



Shelter can be provided naturally with trees, bushes, hedges and small areas of long grass or meadow.



Built shelter can be as simple as creating a nice and neat pile of logs, sticks leaves or rocks. There are also many boxes and hides available to buy or build yourself. These include bird and bat boxes, bug hotels, Frogilos and toad abodes.

MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE

- when cutting back, leave some flowerheads to go to seed, providing food for birds over winter
- rotate areas of mowing, so some bits long and some short to leave shelter for animals
- grow pollinator-friendly climbers up trellises on walls / fences, for shelter and food
- trim hedges, shrubs and ivy outside of bird nesting season (March to August inclusive)

