



Hedgehog. Photo: Jon Hawkins

Other ways to help wildlife on your patch

Provide water: water is an essential element to attracting wildlife to your garden, from pollinators and birds to newts and frogs. By putting out a simple dish of water you'll be giving local birds a place to bathe and a drinking station for bees. A pond is even better – providing one can be as simple as sinking an old washing up bowl into the ground.

Help a hog: do your bit for our struggling hedgehogs. One of the biggest problems they face is gaining access to our gardens to find food. Help them by making a hedgehog-sized hole in fences, gates and walls. Encourage your neighbours to do the same.

Photo: Emily Stallworthy



Create nooks and crannies: pollinating insects including bees, butterflies and moths like small out of the way spaces to hibernate in and/or lay eggs. Make hidey-holes by building a log or rock pile. Piles of plant stems, bamboo canes or ready-made bug boxes will also do the job.

Go chemical free: minimise your use of insecticides, slug pellets and herbicides.

Top tips for your wildlife-friendly garden

Start a compost heap – great for recycling and for creating a world of new possibilities for your garden's minibeasts

Keep feeding the birds all year round – our friends at Vinehouse Farm offer a great selection of bird food and feeders at www.vinehousefarm.co.uk

For lots of other tips and help for making your patch great for wildlife visit www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk



Photo: Lesley Edmonds



Common frog. Photo: David Kilbey

Exeter Wild City is a partnership project between Devon Wildlife Trust and Exeter City Council. Its aim is to enrich the city by encouraging wildlife and making wild places.

To see the work of Exeter Wild City in action look for its urban meadows in parks, schools and on roadside verges.

Devon Wildlife Trust has its own wildlife garden at Cricklepit Mill, in Exeter. This is open to the public between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays). Plan your visit at www.devonwildlifetrust.org/visit-us

Your support

Our charity works to protect all of Devon's wildlife: on the land and in its seas. Our work is making a difference to the lives of people and wildlife through our 50 nature reserves, schools programmes, landowner advice work, marine education projects, endangered species initiatives, and much more.

You can help us in this important work today by:

- Becoming a supporter – this is your chance to show your commitment to a wilder future for Devon
- Becoming a volunteer – get involved in front-line work to help Devon's nature
- Leaving a lasting legacy – provide a legacy in your Will and help us protect Devon's wild beauty for generations to come

Take the next step to helping Devon's wildlife at www.devonwildlifetrust.org/support-us

Devon
Wildlife Trust



This project has been generously supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery
Front cover photo: Paul Harris

Become a wildlife hero... make a meadow!

Whether you have a window box, courtyard or country garden, you can give nature a home.

Meadows are great for wildlife! Wildflowers give shelter and food for insects which in turn feed hedgehogs, birds and bats.



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Follow our step-by-step guide and become a meadow maker

How to make your own meadow

1. Getting started

Wildflowers need sunshine: choose a sunny spot for your meadow.

Meadows come in all shapes and sizes: your meadow can be as small or as large as you like. A window box, patio plant pot, a garden border or part of your lawn, all will do.



2. Two ways to go

There are two ways to establish a meadow. One is easy to do, the other requires a little bit of work...

Leave to grow

With this method you simply leave a sunny patch of grass to grow, allowing different flowers and other plants to establish naturally. Stop cutting your designated patch in March and see what happens through spring and summer. You'll be surprised what grows.

Now turn to step 3 'Managing your meadow'.

Top tip: add interest to your unmown meadow by cutting it into a stylish shape. Try a circle or crescent meadow, the choice is yours.



Strip and sow

This method takes more work but will produce colourful results. It can be done in spring or autumn.

Choose a sunny patch of lawn or border. Remove as much of any existing grass and other vegetation as you can. You should be left with patches of bare earth.

Rake the area to break up the soil's surface.

Sow your seeds mid-March to mid-May (spring sowing), or late August to late October (autumn sowing).

Scatter the seeds over your patch at about 1 teaspoon or 3g per square metre. Seeds don't need to be buried but walk over your patch to make sure the seed has good contact with the soil.

Keep the meadow watered until your wildflowers have become established.

Now turn to step 3 'Managing your meadow'.

Top tip: wildflower seeds prefer poor soils to very rich ones. Don't be tempted to 'help' your seed by adding artificial fertilizers, compost or manure.

What seed to use and where to get it?

Use either a meadow mix of wildflowers and grasses or a 100% wildflower mix. We often use a cornfield annual mix and a perennial mix together. The annuals provide the first year of colour and the perennials ensure that the meadow should last for several years.

You can source seed from most garden centres. If you received this leaflet from your local school then you will also have been given wildflower seed as part of Devon Wildlife Trust's 'Sow and Share' project!



3. Managing your meadow

Your meadow won't need a lot of care and attention once it's established. A bit of regular maintenance should be all that's required. This includes:

- Regularly remove thistles, docks, tree seedlings and any grasses that look like they are taking over the patch
- Cut the meadow each year in late August or September. Be sure to leave the cuttings on the patch for around a week before removing and composting them. This allows seeds to drop and replenish your meadow
- As an alternative to cutting in late summer leave the patch over winter before cutting in early spring. Your meadow's dead stems will provide excellent insect hibernation spaces over winter
- You may want to 'top-up' your meadow in its first years of life, sowing more seeds to fill any bare patches



Photo: Tom Marshall

Photo: Paul Harris



Six-spot ladybirds. Photo: Christina Carpenter