

Making Our Gardens Wildlife-Friendly

A guide for our church community as part of our Eco Church journey

Why Wildlife-Friendly Gardens Matter

As Christians, we are called to care for God's creation. Yet across the UK, wildlife is in decline—habitats are shrinking, and many species are struggling to survive.

Our gardens, however small, can become part of the solution.



Collectively, gardens cover a vast area—larger than many nature reserves. By making simple changes, we can:

- Provide food and shelter for birds, insects, and small mammals
- Support pollinators like bees and butterflies
- Help connect fragmented habitats
- Experience the joy and peace of nature close to home

Caring for our gardens is a practical way to live out our faith and stewardship.

**“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”
(Genesis 2:15)**

What a Wildlife-Friendly Garden Means

A wildlife-friendly garden works *with* nature rather than against it. It doesn't need to be untidy or wild—but it does mean making space for living things.

Key Principles

Provide Food

- Nectar-rich flowers for pollinators
- Seeds and berries for birds
- Native plants that support local species

Create Shelter

- Hedges, shrubs, and trees
- Log piles or leaf piles
- Nesting spaces for birds and insects

Include Water

- A pond, bird bath, or shallow dish
- Essential for drinking, breeding, and cooling

Reduce Harm

- Avoid pesticides and herbicides
 - Reduce mowing and leave areas to grow
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Simple Ways to Get Started

You don't need a large garden—these ideas work in any space, even balconies.

Plant for Pollinators

- Choose nectar-rich flowers like lavender, buddleia, and wildflowers
- Aim for blooms from early spring to late autumn
- Include native plants where possible



Let Nature Grow

- Leave a patch of lawn to grow longer
- Allow wildflowers to establish
- Reduce mowing frequency (e.g. "No Mow May")

Even a small untidy corner can become a haven for insects.

Create Habitats

- Build a log pile for insects and fungi
 - Add a bug hotel or leave dead stems standing
 - Install bird boxes or hedgehog shelters
 - Grow hedges instead of fences where possible
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Add Water

- A small pond can attract frogs, newts, and insects
- Use shallow edges so animals can get in and out safely
- Keep a bird bath topped up with fresh water



Avoid Chemicals

- Reduce or eliminate pesticides and weedkillers
 - Encourage natural pest control (ladybirds, birds, frogs)
 - Accept that a few nibbled leaves are part of a healthy ecosystem
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Make Space for Wildlife Movement

- Create small gaps in fences for hedgehogs (“hedgehog highways”)
 - Avoid netting that can trap animals
 - Keep pathways open between gardens
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As a Church Community

Together, we can make a bigger difference:

- Share plants, seeds, and cuttings
- Encourage wildlife-friendly church grounds
- Run garden workshops or Eco Church events
- Celebrate what’s growing and living among us

Small individual actions become powerful when multiplied across a community.

Challenges and Encouragement

Wildlife gardening may look different from traditional tidy gardens:

- It can appear less “neat” at times
- Results take time to develop
- Not everything will work first time

But every step helps. The aim is not perfection, but **creating space for life to flourish**.

A Final Thought

When we welcome wildlife into our gardens, we reconnect with creation in a deeply personal way. These small acts of care reflect a bigger hope—that people and nature can thrive together.
