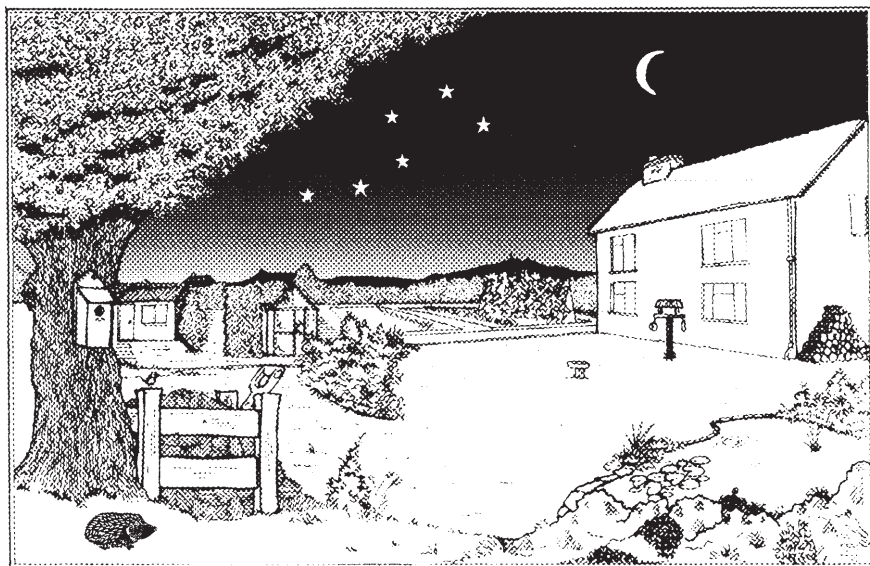


*British Hedgehog
Preservation Society*

**Creating a Wildlife
Garden**



Part of the

Know your Hedgehog

series

*PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY,
HEDGEHOG HOUSE, DHUSTONE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 3PL
www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk*

CREATING A WILDLIFE GARDEN

The creation of a wildlife garden, or a wildlife area in your garden, will attract a diversity of wild creatures and go some way toward redressing the balance of human interference with nature, which has destroyed so many habitats in the countryside. Also, by helping hedgehogs, birds, bats, frogs and toads to survive the winter and providing places for them to raise their young, you will be rewarded by their helping to keep garden pests under control.

Your wildlife garden could include several (or all) of the following features:

WOOD PILE: Hedgehogs might build a nest underneath and, if left undisturbed for some time, algae and mosses will cover it, attracting insects. They will, in turn, be fed on by larger garden creatures. The dark interior may also encourage slow worms (another predator of the slug) to seek shelter.

COMPOST HEAP: Birds will feed off the mini-beasts that congregate in a compost heap, as will hedgehogs and toads that may nest in its centre. A word of warning though, before using the compost test the base and sides gently for sleeping wildlife.

HEDGES INSTEAD OF FENCES: Flowering hedges provide flowers and fruits for wildlife, nesting places for birds and cover for hedgehogs, voles and shrews. They are also much more attractive than fences. Recommended hedging species: beech, holly (evergreen winter shelter for roosting birds), buckthorn, dog rose, hazel, goat willow, hawthorn, berberis.

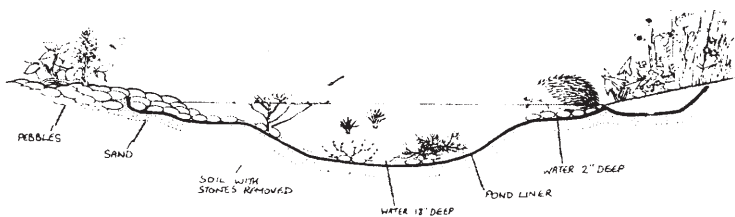
WILDFLOWERS & SUITABLE PLANTS: Flowers provide nectar and pollen to feed insects such as butterflies, hoverflies and bees. Plant wildflowers from seed (it is illegal to remove them from the wild). Wildflower seed packs will probably include: bird's foot trefoil, vetch, hawkweed, wild white clover, bluebell, broom, wild cornflower, hound's tongue, common knapweed, lady's smock and wild marjoram. Recommended garden plants: buddleia (attracts butterflies), scabious, ice plant, michaelmas daisy, phlox, sweet william, marigolds, sunflowers, ornamental grasses, wild irises, pyracantha, snowberry, hostas and cotoneaster.



WILD CORNER: Allow nettles and weeds to take over a corner of your garden. They will provide privacy for small creatures and food for caterpillars.

ROCKERY: Toads, newts and female frogs usually spend winter on land, under rockery stones (or in a log pile). Recommended rock plants: aubretia, hardy geraniums, ivies, sedums, sempervivum and wild thyme.

MINI-POND/BOG GARDEN: An area of water attracts a multitude of creatures including frogs, toads, newts, diving beetles, water scorpions and thirsty hedgehogs. Choose an area away from trees (especially sycamore). One side of the pond should gradually slope to allow hedgehogs and other creatures an exit. Butyl rubber pond liners are recommended. Around at least one third of the pond



perimeter should include a shelf that is only 5-6cms below the normal water level. Put stone-free soil on top of the shelf and introduce some native water plants. Recommended water plants: water milfoil, water starwort, miniature water lily, water soldiers, (floating plant). If you don't want a pond, perhaps because of small children, an area of BOG GARDEN will provide interesting drinking point for wildlife. Line a shallow depression in the soil with pond liner, fill two thirds with soil to hold water, your bog garden could support: meadowsweet, loosestrifes, marsh marigold, ragged robin, cuckoo flower, cotton grass, bog pimpernel, creeping jenny & reeds.

HEDGEHOG, BIRD & BAT BOXES: Providing nesting boxes for hedgehogs, birds and bats might encourage these creatures to reside in your garden, though tenancy cannot be guaranteed! Place bird and bat boxes in trees with cover, but if you have no trees fix them on walls or fences, preferably in the cover of foliage from a climbing plant, and well away from the reach of cats and other predators. Hedgehog boxes should be sited in a quiet spot hidden by ground covering plants, low shrubs or tree branches. To purchase ready made boxes contact each relevant organisation:



Bat Conservation Trust, 5th Floor, Quadrant house, 250 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5RD. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL. British Hedgehog Preservation Society Trading Ltd., Hedgehog House, Dhustone, Ludlow, SY8 3PL.

Instruction sheets for making your own boxes can also be acquired from these organisations (an sae would be appreciated).

BIRD BATH AND TABLE: A bird bath provides birds with somewhere to drink and bathe (feather cleaning is essential) and a bird table holding a variety of foods will attract various of our feathered friends. Peanuts in dispensers are favoured by Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Great Tits, but Greenfinches, Nuthatches, Siskins and even Woodpeckers might be seen pecking at the nuts. Seeds and specially purchased bird food sprinkled on the table will attract Finches, Robins, Sparrows and Starlings. Half a fresh coconut provides much needed energy for small birds. Once the shell is empty it can be used to hold a bird cake mix (recipe available from RSPB).

DO NOT USE pesticides or slug pellets in your wildlife garden or you will kill off species that are links in the food chain. Also, you run the risk of killing those creatures you do not wish to harm, as pesticides tend to be indiscriminate and they, and slug pellets, **CAN** kill hedgehogs. If you are overrun with slugs and your resident hedgehog(s) do not seem to be keeping the number down you could try beer traps (pots of beer placed at the bottom of plants into which the slugs fall or climb). Or the skin of half a grapefruit placed on the ground like a dome. You can also protect precious plants with a ring of sharp sand, coffee grounds or crushed eggshells around the base. Copper bands and tape can also be used around the base of plants or pots.

Now, sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour! Spend time in your wildlife garden just looking, and get to know the many and varied creatures that share it with you.

Further recommended reading: *The Natural Gardening Book* by Peter Harper (Gaia Books Ltd), *Creating a Wildlife Garden* by Bob & Liz Gibbons (Hamlyn), *The National Trust Book of Wild Flower Gardening* by John Stevens (Dorling Kindersley).

You may also like to look at the website of the Henry Doubleday research association at www.gardenorganic.org.uk



The aims of the Society are: —

- a) To encourage and give advice to the public concerning the care of hedgehogs particularly when injured, sick, treated cruelly, orphaned or in any other danger.*
- b) To encourage children to respect our natural wildlife —by supplying information and giving lectures, and thus fostering an interest in hedgehogs.*
- c) To fund research into behavioural habits of hedgehogs and to ascertain the best methods of assisting their survival.*

For further information please send a s.a.e. to:-

*The British Hedgehog Preservation Society,
Hedgehog House, Dhustone, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3PL*

Tel: 01584 890801 E-mail: info@britishhedgehogs.org.uk

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