



# Wild About Gardens



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Sharing the best in Gardening



**Your Pollinator Protection Pack**  
Planting and activity ideas to  
help pollinators flourish in  
your garden



[wildaboutgardens.org.uk](http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk)

# What is a pollinator?

An insect or other animal that transfers male reproductive material (pollen) from one plant to the female parts of another, allowing them to produce fruit and seeds. This is why many flowers look and smell great – to attract these useful visitors!

## Be a pollinator protector...

The UK's pollinators need your help. Did you know that a recent study\* has found that 46% of European bumblebee species are in decline, with 24% at risk of extinction, and that we have already lost 23 bee and flower-visiting wasp species in Britain? Habitat loss and changes in the way we use our landscape have meant that many insects struggle to find the food and shelter they need.

Without pollinators, where would we be? They are crucial for the production of food – in fact it's estimated that pollinators contribute £1.8bn to the UK's farming economy every year by performing their normal pollination service. That's nature working for us in a big way!

So now that you know why you should care about the small, the winged and the creepy-crawly wildlife, how can you help? This booklet is packed full of simple ideas to give pollinators a helping hand in your garden, on your allotment or on that little outdoor patch you're not sure what to do with.

\*International Union for Conservation of Nature: <http://www.iucn.org/?14612/Bad-news-for-Europes-bumblebees>

Want to find out more about the plight of bees and wild pollinators in the UK?

Visit... [wildlifetrusts.org/bees-needs](http://wildlifetrusts.org/bees-needs)



## What pollinators need...

Pollinating insects need two things in order to thrive:

- **Food** – nectar and pollen
- **Shelter** – such as log piles, thick vegetation and untidy areas

## Winter survival

You may already know that planting nectar-rich flowers is a great way to support pollinators in the spring and summer when they are at their most active, but did you know that many insects need protection during winter? Some butterflies, moths and other insects overwinter as adults, pupae or eggs and need sheltered places to spend the colder months before awakening in the spring.

## Unsung heroes

You might already be familiar with bees and butterflies, but did you know that many flies, beetles, moths and bugs are also important pollinators? By planting nectar-rich flowers or building a bug hotel, you'll also be helping to protect countless lesser known insects, not to mention the birds, mammals and other animals that feed on them.

## Your mini nature reserve

Your garden is the perfect place for insects to find these two crucial ingredients. It's part of a huge network of 15 million gardens that criss-cross the UK. Put all together they cover 667,000 acres - an area seven times the size of the Isle of Wight! Think of the difference this could make for nature if each was cared for in a wildlife-friendly way.

Read on to find out what easy steps you can take to turn your outdoor space into a pollinator paradise.



# Who's who?

## Common British Pollinators:

More than 1,500 insect species are known to pollinate plants in the UK and almost any insect that visits flowers will aid pollination. Can you spot any of our most common pollinators?

Tick each species that you find

## Butterflies



Small white

Les Binns



Brimstone

Les Binns



Orange-tip

Les Binns

## Moths



Small tortoiseshell

Scott Petrek



Peacock

Bob Coyle



Hummingbird hawk moth

Dave Appleton



Silver Y

Margaret Holland



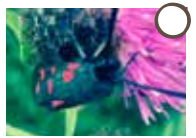
Common blue

Jon Hawkins



Red admiral

Amy Lewis



Six spot burnet

Emma Webstale



Hebrew character

Amy Lewis



Comma

Amy Lewis



Small skipper

Jim Higham



Garden tiger

Denis Jackson



Swallowtail

Dave Appleton

Discover more garden wildlife at... [wildaboutgardens.org.uk/wildlife.aspx](http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk/wildlife.aspx)

## Bees



Honey bee

Richard Bowler



White-tailed bumblebee

Penny Frith



Red-tailed bumblebee

Rachel Scopes



Tree bumblebee

Penny Frith



Leaf-cutter bee

Cécile Bassaglia



Tawny mining bee

Philip Precey



Red mason bee

Penny Frith



Ivy bee

Will George



Hairy-footed flower bee

Penny Frith



Large bee-fly

Margaret Holland



Drone-fly

Gilles Gonthier



Marmalade hoverfly

Zsuzsanna Bird



Carder bee

Rachel Scopes



Early bumblebee

Penny Frith



Buff-tailed bumblebee

Jon Hawkins



Hornet mimic hoverfly

Joan Burkmar

# How to help

Let your garden become a little wilder for pollinators  
Pollinating insects matter, and there are lots of simple ways you can help them in your garden. By giving pollinators a helping hand, you will also reap the benefits – they will help pollinate your fruit and veg and bring colour and diversity to your garden.



Jon Hawkins

## Let it grow wild!

Letting your garden or allotment grow wilder will make it a friendlier place for pollinators and is easy to achieve. Simply:

- Let some weeds flourish (even if it's just in the corner!). One man's weed is another man's wildflower
- Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees
- Cut grass less often
- Think responsibly about using pesticides
- Be considerate to dandelions and nettles – these are crucial for many egg-laying pollinators

## Feed your pollinators!

- Plant a mixture of species to provide year-round food
- Grow plants that are rich in pollen and nectar - turn to pages 12 & 13 for ideas!

## Shelter your pollinators!

- Leave patches of long grass - pollinators can overwinter here
- Leave perennial plants uncut over the winter. This will keep their stems hollow – the perfect shelter for overwintering insects
- Build an insect or bug hotel - see pages 8 & 9 for inspiration!
- Leave small log, leaf-litter and pebble piles – great places for breeding and nesting insects

# In the Night Garden

Spending moonlight hours in the garden can bring exciting encounters with some of our best-looking pollinators. Start by luring in some interesting species!



## Lure in a tiger!

### The moth kind, that is...

Experiment with different styles of moth trap and you'll be amazed at the hidden beauties that shelter in your garden. Then release them back into the night. You don't need fancy equipment, just a white sheet and a torch – moths will start to arrive quite quickly.

Or for the more adventurous, have a go at tempting in moths with sweet, sugary smelling syrup. Visit [wtru.st/attract-a-tiger](http://wtru.st/attract-a-tiger) to watch a short step-by-step film and downloadable activity sheet on how to do this.

### Plant night-scented flowers

Evening primrose, tobacco plant and honeysuckle are often regarded as the best. Their long, tubular flowers are perfect for moths with long tongues which can reach inside to sip up their nectar.

#### A few to try:

- Buddleia
- Evening primrose
- Globe artichoke
- Jasmine
- Hebe
- Tall eryngo 'Silver Ghost'
- Verbena
- Tobacco plant
- Bluebeard 'Heavenly Blue'
- Honeysuckle

### Nocturnal wildlife watching

Now relax under the stars with a hot chocolate and see what wildlife comes to visit. If you spot a moth, visit [wtru.st/nocturnalmoths](http://wtru.st/nocturnalmoths) to download your free spotting sheet. Can you identify what it is? Seen something bigger? Use our night time detective sheet to see what you've discovered at [wtru.st/afterdarkspotter](http://wtru.st/afterdarkspotter)

Ross Hoddinott / naturepl



© Tom Marshall

Nick Upton / zozoVISION



# How to Make an insect hotel



## the express way!

### What you need:

- hollow plant stems, like bamboo canes
- twigs and sticks
- String

- 1 Collect handfuls of stems, twigs and sticks.
- 2 Tie the bundles quite tightly in two places.
- 3 Post into a hedge / bush or hang in a sheltered place.



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## the deluxe way!

### What you need:

- Small logs or untreated timber
  - hollow plant stems, like bamboo canes
  - twigs and sticks
- An adult to help with tools:**
- wood saw
  - nails and hammer or screwdriver and wood screws
  - drill and 5mm wood bit



- 1 Make a wooden frame, fixing the wood with screws or nails.
- 2 Fill the frame with stems, twigs and sticks.
- 3 Fix a wire loop to the back of the frame and hang somewhere sheltered.



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# How to build a bug hotel

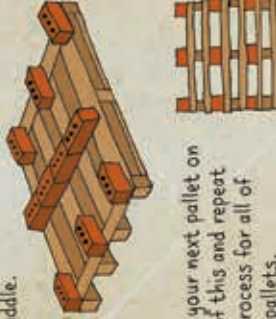


### You will need:

- Wooden pallets x4
- Bricks
- Plastic bottles
- Bamboo canes and/or plastic straws
- Straw
- Leaves
- Tiles
- Cardboard
- Stones/pebbles
- Twigs/loose bark



- 1 Place a wooden pallet in your chosen location. On top of the pallet, line bricks around the corners and across the middle.



- 2 Place your next pallet on top of this and repeat the process for all of your pallets.

- 3 Cut off the top two-thirds of your bottles. Fill up half of them with bamboo canes/plastic straws and the other half with rolled up cardboard. Place these inside the hotel.



- 4 Fill in the remaining spaces with bricks, leaves, pebbles, stones, tiles, loose bark and straw.



- 5 Add in any extra materials that you want to recycle e.g. old pipes, carpeting, toilet tubes, old plant pots. Be creative - add a welcome sign or give your hotel a name!

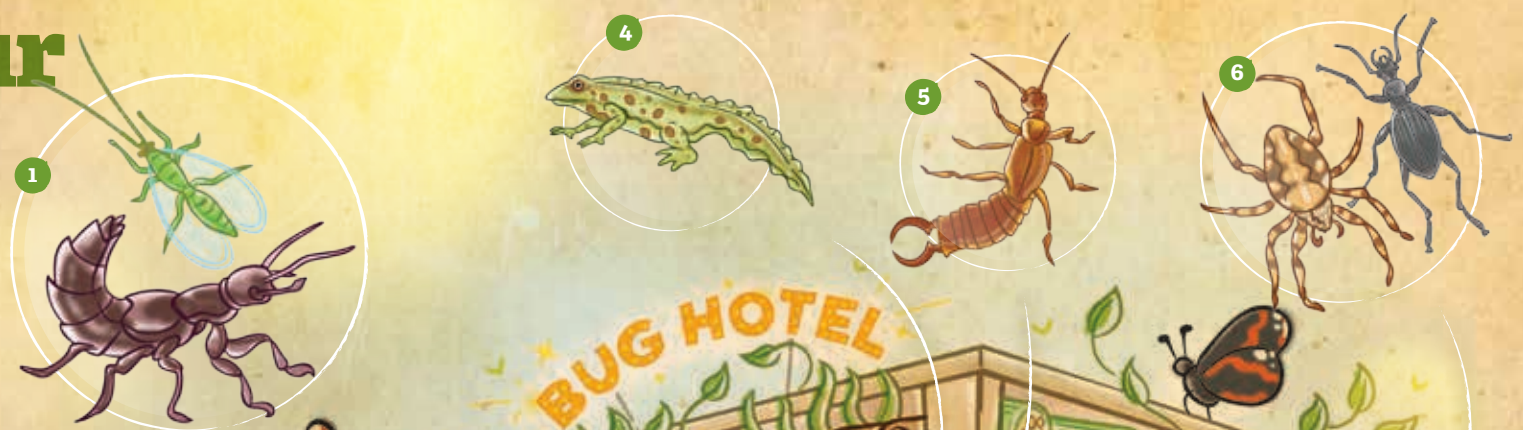


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# Who's in your bug hotel?

Building a bug hotel is a fun and creative way to help nature in the garden. By recycling lots of old materials including tubes, tiles, plant pots and twigs you can provide diverse micro-habitats that many species will make home in over the winter. Here are just a few of the different creatures you might find burrowing, hiding and overwintering in your hotel.



## 1 Straw

- Lacewing
- Devil's coach-horse

## 2 Loose bark

- Eyed ladybird
- Zebra spider
- Common centipede

## 3 Holes

- Leaf cutter-bee
- Mason bee

## 4 Tiles

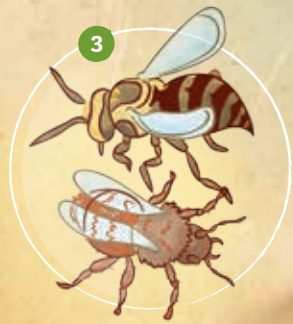
- Smooth newt

## 5 Corrugated cardboard

- Common earwig

## 6 Tubes

- Ground beetle
- Garden spider



Nectar-rich flowers that provide food throughout the season including...

Yarrow Dandelions, Musk-mallow, Devil's-bit scabious and Yellow-rattle

Turn to pages 8 & 9 for help on building your own!

# What to plant

There are lots of simple ways you can make your garden perfect for pollinators, and growing food is one of them. Here are a selection of 30 great varieties to help you get started that will provide plenty of nectar and pollen for bees and many other pollinating insects. Plant a good mixture to feed pollinators all year round.

For more wildlife-friendly planting ideas have a look at the RHS Perfect for Pollinators list: [rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators](https://rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators)

Tick which plants you decide to add to your garden

RHS Sarah Curtie



2 Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*)

RHS Carol Sheppard



6 Golden barberry (*Berberis x stenophylla*)

RHS Herbarium



10 Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*)

RHS Mike Sleigh



3 Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)

RHS Barry Phillips



7 Borage (*Borago officinalis*)

RHS Carol Sheppard



11 Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

RHS Carol Sheppard



4 Confused Michaelmas-daisy (*Aster novi-belgii*)

RHS Graham Titchmarsh



8 Greater knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*)

RHS Mark Bolton



12 Wild teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)

Kristian Peters



5 Purple rock cress (*Aubrieta deltoidea*)

Jean Jones



9 Red valerian (*Centranthus rubra*)

RHS Philippa Gibson



13 Wallflower 'Bowles's Mauve' (*Erysimum*)

RHS Graham Titchmarsh



19 Douglas meadow foam (*Limnanthes douglasii*)

RHS Graham Titchmarsh



23 Oregon-grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

RHS Leigh Hunt



27 Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*)

RHS Tim Sandall



20 Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)

RHS Rebecca Ross



24 Wild marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*)

RHS Mike Sleigh



28 Ice plant (*Sedum spectabile*)

RHS Barry Phillips



15 Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

RHS Mark Bolton



17 Stinking hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*)

RHS Tim Sandall



21 Ragged-robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*)

RHS Sheila Dearing



25 Shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*)

RHS Carol Sheppard



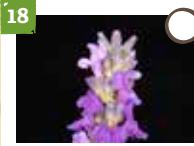
29 Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*)

RHS Claire Campbell



16 Common heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*)

RHS Julian Weigall



18 Lavender 'Grosso' (*Lavandula x intermedia*)

Steve Chilton



22 Purple-loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

RHS Janet Cubey



26 Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)

RHS Paul Debois



30 Purple top (*Verbena bonariensis*)

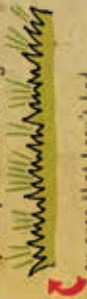


# Grow your own mini garden meadow

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## You will need:

- Spare patch of the garden



an area that hasn't had fertiliser or compost added

- Packet of meadow flower seeds



- Handful of sand



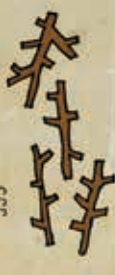
- Rake



- Shears



- Twiggy branches



- 1 Remove grass, weeds and the top layer of soil, then lightly rake.



- 2 Mix the wildflower seeds with a handful of sand.



this will help you see where you're sowing

- 3 Sprinkle your seed mix in spring or autumn.



- 4 Walk over the soil and water lightly.



- 5 Arrange branches over your seeds to keep animals out.



Don't take seeds from the wild - always buy specially-grown seeds.

Cornfield annuals will flower in the first year. Perennial meadows often need two years.

5g of seed per metre<sup>2</sup> of soil

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# How to make a pooter



For catching minibeasts for a closer look.

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## What you need:

- plasticine
- jar with lid
- 40cm of clear, flexible plastic tubing, 7-10cm wide (try a big DIY store)
- a small piece of gauze, net curtains or tights
- elastic band
- green and red stickers or tape

- 1 Make 2 holes in the lid (ask an adult to help with this)



- 2 Cut 2 lengths of tubing about 15cm and 25cm long and poke them through the holes.

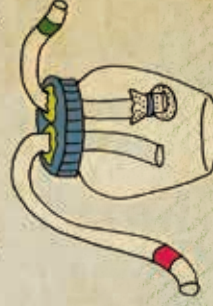


- 3 Put the gauze over the end of the shorter tube and mark the other end with a green sticker/tape.

- 4 Mark the longer tube with a red sticker/tape (red means 'don't suck this tube').



- 5 Put some plasticine around the tube holes to make them airtight.



Now you're ready to pooter!



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# About us

For more information on how you can help wildlife in your garden including gardening advice, activity ideas and species guides, visit The Wildlife Trust / RHS partnership website [wildaboutgardens.org.uk](http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk)



## About The Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts are the UK's largest people-powered organisation caring for all nature – rivers, bogs, meadows, forests, seas and much more. There are 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK with a shared mission to restore nature everywhere we can and to inspire people to value and take action for nature.

Our goal is nature's recovery – on land and at sea. To achieve this we rely on the vital support of our 800,000 members, 40,000 volunteers, donors, corporate supporters and funders. To find the Wildlife Trust that means most to you and lend your support, visit [wildlifetrusts.org/your-local-trust](http://wildlifetrusts.org/your-local-trust)

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Cover images: Zsuzsanna Bird, Rachel Scopes and Scott Petrek

## About the RHS

The Royal Horticultural Society was founded in 1804 by Sir Joseph Banks and John Wedgwood for the encouragement and improvement of the science, art and practice of horticulture.

Today the RHS is committed to providing a voice for all gardeners. We are driven by a simple love of plants and a belief that gardeners make the world a better place. 210 years on we continue to safeguard and advance the science, art and practice of horticulture, creating displays that inspire people to garden. In all aspects of our work we help gardeners develop by sharing our knowledge of plants, gardens and the environment.

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