



KEEPING NATURE IN MIND

**Tips on how to make your garden more nature friendly,
and how to start noticing the nature outside your door.**



CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Our landscape has changed dramatically over the past 100 years. Industry and infrastructure have reduced the number of green spaces, particularly across towns and cities, and in many places farming has become more intensified.

Unfortunately this has had negative effects on British wildlife and nature, with many species suffering huge declines. Habitats and homes for nature have been lost, and food sources have decreased for birds, mammals and insects alike. **It has also affected our connection with nature**, and many of us spend less time outside and see fewer species than we would have done 50 years ago.

As individuals most of us don't own very much land and we may not be able to directly influence the work of councils, contractors and farmers on the land they own. We can make our voices heard about causes that we believe in, but we can also think about the land we do own or rent—no matter how small. **There are an estimated 15 million gardens in Britain—when combined together this is a lot of land!**

Changing the way we think about gardening is really important to make them more nature friendly, and allow us to build more of a personal connection with nature. **For example, could we start to think differently about common 'weeds'?** Dandelions feature in many garden lawns and grass verges and many people think they are a pest. However, dandelions are actually a really great food source for bees, and could help support more of them. If 'weeds' grow in areas where they cause issues for growing food or outcompete other plants, we may have to remove them, but if they aren't causing issues, why not leave them?



There are lots of different ways to make our gardens more wildlife and nature friendly. Below are just a few suggestions, and there is lots more information provided by organisations and charities such as The Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Woodland Trust, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Butterfly Conservation Trust. If possible, visit their websites to find out more.

- **What are you planting?** When planting in your garden, choose a range of native plants and flowers (from Britain). Plant a selection that flower at different times of the year, ensuring as much colour and pollen as possible! Some examples include: Marigold varieties, lavender and chives (which have multiple benefits because they can also be eaten by you!).
- **Leave some areas wild:** A tidy garden isn't always great for nature. If you can, especially before winter, leave areas with dead plants, fallen leaves or bits of twig as natural habitat piles. Don't try to prune or cut a hedge back too much, a thicker hedge or shrub provides more space for nature!
- **Leave the lawn mower in the shed:** Reducing the number of times you cut the grass may just allow for a range of wildflower species to appear and flourish. This then provides more nectar for pollinators, and a great habitat for more nature. Look out for Plantlife's **No Mow May** campaign, where they will encourage you to avoid mowing the lawn throughout the month and count all the flowers that appear.
- **Space for a new habitat?** If you have the time and space, building a small pond in your garden is a real boost for nature. It doesn't have to be very big at all, and you can bury a bucket or similar. Or if not a pond, you may have space for an insect hotel—potential home to thousands of important mini-beasts.



You don't need a large garden to support local nature. You may have space on a front step for a plant pot and some pollinator friendly flowers, or space on a balcony to make a mini bug hotel.

GARDEN SAFARI

Our gardens can support lots of life, especially if we take time to make them more nature friendly.

Don't be disheartened if you don't think you can see very many visitors, some of them may take a while to appear, others are super small and some may only come out at night! Once you spot things, the next step is to work out what species they are. There are lots of books and resources online that can help with this – here we have included a few examples of bumblebees and butterflies.

Here are 3 species which you may begin to spot from spring:

Bumblebees

There are currently 24 species of bumblebee in the UK, but a group of 7 include the ones most widespread. Bumblebees live in a nest, which is ruled by a queen and supported by other (smaller) female bees called workers. Late in summer, male bees are also produced so that they can reproduce to produce new queens. New queens then survive the winter by hibernating, before emerging in spring to start preparing the nest. You may see large queen bees in spring, as they emerge and then go on the hunt for nectar, to replenish energy stores after hibernation.



Tree bumblebee

Happy to nest in manmade objects, such as nest boxes, and so are often found in gardens or woodlands.



White-tailed bumblebee

This species is found in a wide range of habitats, and is the traditional black and yellow striped. It's white tail is distinguishable



Common carder bee

A ginger bumblebee that you may find in lots of habitats, including your garden.

Butterflies

As well as being a wonderful and colourful sight, butterflies are also really important indicators for the health of the local environment. They are very sensitive to changes in levels of pollutions, temperature etc. and are one of the many animals that are being hugely affected by climate change. There are 59 species of butterfly in the UK, but some are limited to geographical location or type of habitat.

Below are 3 species which you may see in your gardens or local parks:



Small tortoiseshell

Can make an appearance throughout the year across urban areas, and is one of the most recognised butterfly species in the UK.



Peacock

Another well-known species, due to the 'eye-spots' on the wings that are used to confuse predators.



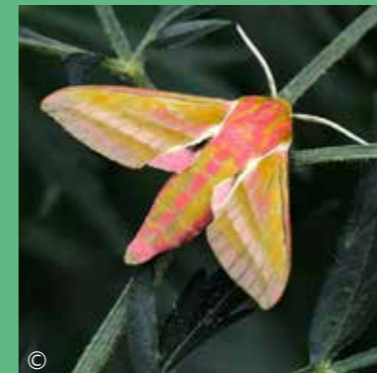
Small white

Can be seen in gardens, and particularly in allotments where cabbages are grown! White wings can make it easy to spot against green vegetation.

Moths

We can't forget about the moths! Many moths are nocturnal, which means they come out at night, however there are also species which fly in the day. They also have a reputation for being a lot less colourful than butterflies, but that's simply not true. Don't forget to look out for caterpillars!

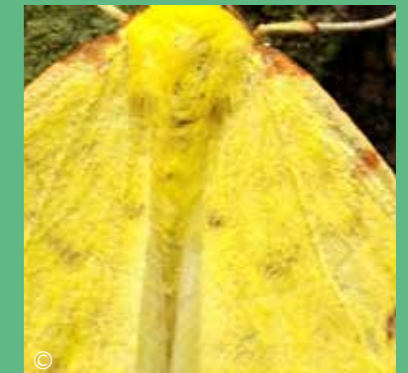
3 species of moth you may have seen



Elephant hawk-moth



Garden tiger moth



Brimstone moth

The wildflowers and plants you grow and other positive changes you make in your garden can affect what else visits your garden and how much nature it can support. The plants and insects you attract are an important part of food chains and many birds and mammals rely on them for food. Nature friendly gardens can support a wide range of plants, insects and animals because many are connected through what they eat, where they live and how they survive.



Healthy soil is really important as it carries out a lot of complex processes that produce a healthy environment, supports plants and food that we grow and also is home to lots of tiny creatures such as worms and ants.



Other tips for making your garden as safe as possible for nature:

- **Avoid using weedkiller and pesticides:** Not only will this kill weeds/wildflowers, it will also potentially release harmful chemicals into watercourses as it is washed away down drains and can harm other wildlife.
- **Don't use slug pellets:** Slug pellets are really harmful for hedgehogs in particular, and if slugs are a problem there are other more natural ways of trying to deter them from eating your plants. Some people surround plants with egg shells or copper tape, and others design their garden so that it include plants that slugs really don't like.
- **Always use peat free compost!** This is super important because it is much more environmentally friendly. Peat is really important in the battle against climate change, and we don't need to be destroying it by using it in compost.
- **Keep bird feeders and bird baths clean.** If you regularly fill up your bird feeders, or top up a bird bath, please remember to clean them regularly as well. Nasty infections can spread rapidly where lots of birds gather, e.g. bird feeding stations.
- **Watch for man-made items in your garden:** Try and keep items like garden twine or anything else that could be sharp as neat as possible, and make sure they aren't hazards for any sort of wildlife. Make sure there is nothing that a hedgehog could get trapped in!

Our gardens and outdoor spaces can be home to different animals throughout the year. We may see more evidence of this in spring and summer, when the long days and warmer temperatures encourage the birds to sing louder and the bees buzz for longer. However, there is also a lot going on in autumn and winter. As trees lose their leaves, and hibernating creatures are getting ready for a long sleep, worms are still wriggling under our feet and birds are still on the hunt for food in the colder days.

Birds

More insects and worms means more food for some bird species! Leaving 'wild areas' can also offer shelter for birds; and hedges and trees can provide space for nests. Many people like to support birds by offering more food or nest spaces. If you want to support the birds that visit your garden, or attract more, you can buy bird food (seed, meal worms, fat balls etc.) or make your own bird feeders out of toilet roll and plastic bottles. If there aren't many nesting spaces, you can build a nest box and fit it where safe and appropriate.



Mammals

There might be lots of different mammals that use our garden, but this may depend on where we live, as well as what is offered in the garden itself. A regular visitor in many gardens is the house mouse, who usually like to eat from bird feeders and sometimes sneak into the warmth of our attics and porches. But if you're lucky, you may have a visiting hedgehog (or 2). Hedgehog numbers are in huge decline and they rely on our gardens for food, to hibernate and to safely travel through at night. If you think your garden could be hedgehog friendly, is there a gap big enough for them to get in? Why not encourage your neighbours to make a gap in their fences to make a 'hedgehog highway'? Hedgehogs can help with slug issues, as they are their tastiest snack. Other mammals that may visit our gardens could include foxes, or bats! Bats are flying mammals, and also like gardens which support a lot of insects. If you think bats would like to visit your garden, please remember to turn outside lights off when they are not needed, otherwise these may confuse the bats.

SEASONS CHANGE

Accessing the outdoors can be very beneficial for our mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as increasing our awareness about the nature around us. With a garden or private outdoor space, it can be easier to access that space closer to home, but sometimes heading further is more difficult. Some days we may not step outside because of many reasons, from family and work commitments, to current mental health and lack of motivation.

Spending time developing a wildlife friendly garden, or getting involved in nature friendly activities is a great way to build motivation to access the outdoors. Noticing nature can be very calming, and very rewarding—actively looking out

for different species of birds or walking through different types of environments. As the seasons change, the more time we spend outside the more we notice how the landscape changes around us.

What changes do you notice? Some of these events in nature have been put together to form **72 seasons**, a project within the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, encouraging everyone to take notice and get outdoors. 72 Seasons is based on a Japanese calendar which focuses on changes in the environment every four or five days, rather than just the four traditional seasons. The wonderful illustrations you will see on the next few pages have been created by **Cath Ford**, and words by **Kirsty Rose Parker**.

Remember the landscape changes differently every year, some events happen earlier and some later. This is due to many things but mainly the weather. If these events don't happen in the suggested dates, please make a note of it, and record when you do see them happen.



72 SEASONS

6-10 March

Hibernating Creatures Open Their Doors—Hedgehogs start to appear, sleepy after a winter of hibernation. Have you seen any or any signs of them nearby?



Hibernating Creatures Open Their Doors



The Sparrow Builds Her Nest

21-25 March

The Sparrow Builds Her Nest—Birds are starting to get ready to nest. Sparrows like to nest close to each other, in cracks in walls or in man-made bird boxes on houses. They aren't called House Sparrows for no reason!

5-9 April

The Swallows Arrive—Swallows start to arrive after their long journey from Africa. They will nest and spend the summer here before returning. Have you spotted any yet?



The Swallows Arrive



Bluebells Carpet The Woods

25-29 April

Bluebells Carpet the Woods—Take a walk through your local woodland—notice any bluebells? Bluebells tend to only grow in ancient or semi-ancient woodlands, and in some places they bring visitors from miles around to view the wonderful blue purple carpets.

30 April-4 May

Trees Turn Green—The leaves are back! After being bare for so long, the landscape is starting to change and our favourite trees are ready for spring and summer.



Trees Turn Green Again

15 – 20 May
Birdsong Fills the Sky – Although some birds sing throughout the year, others wait until spring when the days are longer and they start to mate. Which birds are singing the loudest?



Birdsong Fills The Sky

3-7 August
The breezing is hiding
 – Does the air feel quite still and warm?



The Breeze Is Hiding



Cow Parsley Lines The Hedgerows

26 – 30 May
Cow Parsley Lines the Hedgerows - Cow parsley is a notable plant sitting under the hedgerows, particularly alongside roads.



The Sunflower Stretches High

23 – 27 August
The Sunflower Stretches High – Usually seen in gardens or in parks, you may have already been watching a sunflower to see just how high it can stretch!

6-10 June
The Blackbird Fledglings Leave the Nest – Baby birds are ready to go! If you have been keeping an eye on a blackbird nest, keep watch to see if the babies fledge.



The Blackbird Fledglings Leave the Nest

13-17 September
Tree's Drop their First Leaves – And just like that autumn is here!



Trees Drop Their First Leaves



Bees Are Busy

16 – 20 June
Bees are Busy – The buzz of bees is the soundtrack to sunny days, as they are busy collecting pollen and nectar.



The Swallows Leave

18-22 September
The Swallows Leave – We say goodbye to our summer visitors as they start their long journey back to Africa.

12 – 16 July
The Raspberries Turn Red
 – It's time to get picking



The Raspberries Turn Red

We haven't included all the 72 seasons here, **why not add some of your own in the dates missing?** Base them on what you observe in your garden or local landscape.

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Comma butterfly Mary Reed (font cover)

Tree bumblebee Penny Frith (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

White-tailed bumblebee Forest of Bowland AONB

Common Carder bee Rachel Scopes (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Small tortoiseshell Forest of Bowland AONB

Peacock Jon Hickling

Small white Andrew Dejardin (www.butterfly-conservation.org)

Elephant hawk-moth Amy Lewis (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Garden tiger moth Margaret Holland (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Brimstone moth Amy Lewis (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Common pipistrelle Tom Marshall (www.wildlifetrusts.org)