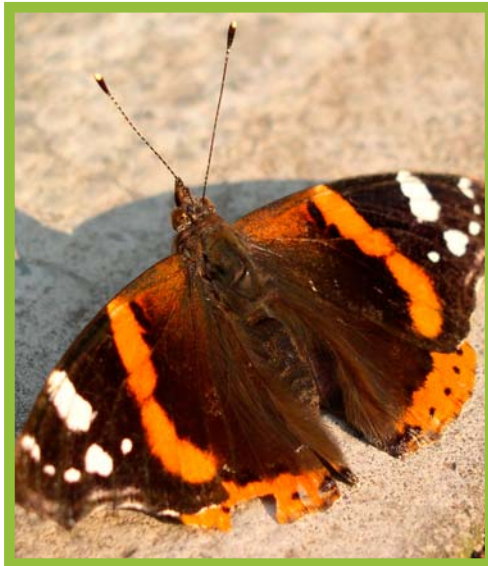


# How to attract wildlife



Making a few small adjustments can really tip the balance when you're trying to encourage wildlife. Just by implementing a few of these hints and tips you can quickly turn your estate into a haven for birds and butterflies and reap the benefits of a more attractive, interesting, educational and joyful place to live.

**1 Feed me** – Put out various nuts and seeds to attract a variety of birds to your local green space.

**2 Water** – A water feature, which could just be a washing-up bowl in the ground, is a simple way to attract a huge range of wildlife. Make sure there is an easy escape route for any animal that falls in.

**3 Native plants** – These are plants that are often best for wildlife.

**4 Stop mowing** – A wildflower meadow, or just some longer grass, provides a home for insects and other animals.

**5 Big box, little box** – Installing a few specially built boxes around the place will soon encourage birds, bats, hedgehogs and even bees to make a home nearby.

Wildlife doesn't need much help, primarily relax the management, cut out the chemicals, and provide some food and shelter.

Use of insecticides and other chemicals and the intense management to keep green spaces overtidy has seriously affected Britain's wildlife.

There are a lot of simple actions you can take to help reverse this trend. First, don't use garden chemicals. It's tempting if you've got problems with insects but it is a very short-term solution. Sure, you might kill the insects but the chances are you'll also kill other birds or animals. The irony is that the animals and birds you kill tend to be the ones that eat the insects! So next year, when the insects are back, there will be nothing to eat them. If problems persist, however, try natural solutions.

Putting out food is always good for attracting wildlife. An easy bird feeder can be made from spreading some peanut butter on a pine cone or a stale piece of bread and rolling it in seed. Easy. If you haven't got time, there are some reasonably cheap feeders available from garden centres and hardware shops.

Some plants are especially good for attracting nectar-seeking insects. Lavender, foxgloves, ox-eye daisy, poppies and cornflower are all fairly easy to grow.

Be creative. Wildlife needs shelter. A rock or log pile, an old wall, a longer patch of grass, or some suitable boxes can all be homes for wildlife. They aren't particularly fussy. They just need somewhere they can build a home that's safe and sheltered.

As you can see, a few simple changes can make all the difference and it really is hugely rewarding. So start small and see how you can tip the balance back towards nature.

**Further reading:**

*A natural estate*, Neighbourhoods Green (2007)

Gardening to encourage wildlife:

<http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/Miniguides/Wildlifegardening/tabid/187/Default.aspx>

[www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk)