



#TeamWildier Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Food.

This resource contains lots of helpful information on how to ensure there is enough food in your outdoor space to support a variety of wildlife throughout the year.

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Image Credit: Gillian Day

1. Feeding the birds

Feeding birds in your outdoor space is a fun, rewarding and easy way to connect with nature. Follow these simple steps to transform your garden, yard, window box or community space in to an all you can eat buffet for birds.

Top tips!

- Remember to keep feeders and tables clean, so birds stay healthy and disease-free.
- Position your feeders in a relatively open area away from predators - birds will feel safer and visit more!
- Birds like to have somewhere to perch nearby so that they can hide in a safe space and watch to see if the coast is clear and exit quickly when there is danger. A tree, shrubs or hedges are great for this purpose.

When to feed birds:

Consistency is key. Give the birds in your neighbourhood a helping hand by keeping your feeders well stocked all year round.

Birds are creatures of habit, so once your feeder is fully established your regulars will depend on it as a consistent source of food. Keep your diners happy by sticking to a feeding routine and making sure there's always something for them to eat and drink.



What should I feed birds?

Seed mixes: A blended mix of seeds to attract a greater number of species.

Straight seeds: Unlike seed mixes, straight seeds consist of one seed type. Common straight seeds are black sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts, oil seed rape, crushed or chopped peanuts and red and white millet.

Husk-free seed mixes: A blended mix of seeds that have had their husks removed. This means there's less mess to clean up and birds that can't crack husks (such as blackbirds) can also eat them.

Suet (also called fat): Lots of birds love suet. It provides a vital source of energy, especially during cold winter months.

Live mealworms: A natural food type that many birds love, especially during breeding and fledging season when chicks are leaving the nest. Mealworms should be fresh – remember dead or discoloured is discouraged.

Dried mealworms: Soaking dried mealworms in warm water for 20-60 minutes before putting out makes them easier to digest - especially for younger birds.

Fresh and dried fruit: Fruits such as apples and pears cut in half and put on a table, or the ground are excellent for many species of garden birds. Dried fruit like raisins and sultanas are great too.

Feeding top tip:

1. **Help feed the birds in your garden by planting food sources.** Holly, elder, hawthorn, ivy, rowan, honeysuckle, and dogwood. They all provide fruit, berries hips and attract tasty insects. See [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Connectivity](#) for more information about planting for birds.
2. **Over feeding can create a surplus of food which can attract unwanted visitors like rats.** Once you know how much the birds in your garden eat daily, put a mark on your feeder, so you never overfill them.
3. **If you are concerned that your bird feeding is helping out some birds more than others, then try altering your seed mixes or feeder types.** See our [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Connectivity](#) if you're feeding birds near woodlands for extra advice.

Foods to avoid:

- **Salt:** Salt is very bad for birds. Make sure the food you have on offer isn't salted.
- **Cooking fats:** These often have a high salt content and can smear on feathers reducing their waterproofing ability.
- **Dog and cat food:** Tinned meats are popular with birds, but they attract cats which threaten birds.
- **Mouldy and stale food:** Some moulds can cause respiratory infections in birds.
- **Milk:** Birds do not naturally drink milk, so drinking it can cause severe digestive issues.



The best seat in the house.

Do you have a favourite restaurant or dish? The birds in your garden have their favourite meals and places to eat too. Some prefer hanging out at feeders, other prefer tables and some are happy to eat off the floor. The table below shows what food the most common garden birds prefer and where they like to eat.

Bird Species	Preferred food types	Preferred feeder types
Starling	Live mealworms Suet Sultanas	Ground feeders Hanging feeders
Robin	Sultanas Live mealworms Suet Sunflower hearts	Ground feeders
House sparrow	Sunflower hearts Black sunflower seeds Live mealworms	Ground feeders Hanging feeders
Blackbird	Sunflower hearts Crushed or chopped peanuts Sultanas Suet Live mealworms	Ground feeder
Chaffinch	Sunflower hearts Black sunflower seeds Crushed or chopped peanuts	Ground feeders Hanging feeders
Great tit	Sunflower hearts Suet Black sunflower seeds Crushed or chopped peanuts Live mealworms	Hanging feeder
Goldfinch	Sunflower hearts Black sunflower seeds	Hanging feeder
Bluetit	Sunflower hearts Black sunflower seeds Crushed or chopped peanuts Suet Live mealworms	Hanging feeder

2. Feeding Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs love to eat creepy crawlies. In fact, nearly 100% of their natural diet is made up of beetles, earthworms, and caterpillars. If you're looking to attract hedgehogs to your outside space, you should start by providing mini habitats for insects. Follow these easy steps to get started:

- **Grow pollinator friendly plants:** Attract insects for hedgehogs to eat by growing pollinator friendly plants.
- **Use garden compost:** Compost encourages worms, woodlice, and beetles into your outside space – the perfect treat for hedgehogs.



- **Create a leaf or wood pile:** Not only are small piles of wood and leaves ideal for hibernating hedgehogs, they also attract edible creepy crawlies.
- **Create a bug hotel:** Bug hotels are great for bugs and hungry hedgehogs. Read our guide and learn how to build your own from scratch.
- **Let your grass grow long:** Even a small patch of long grass will attract more insects into your outside space. Save yourself a job – leave the mower in the shed and watch the wildlife flock to your garden.

Supplementary feeding:

If you've got hedgehogs in your garden, provide a shallow bowl of clean water and supplementary food if you wish. Meat-based cat biscuits are best. You can buy specially made hedgehog food, but cat biscuits are just as good. If you have lots of cats nearby you may want to create an enclosed feeding station to prevent cats from accessing their food.

Remember to include two entrances to prevent squabbling between hedgehogs if you are lucky enough to have more than one visits your garden. Placing food in several locations in your garden can also prevent aggression at food bowls.

Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant so please do not give them milk. Bread is low in energy so also should be avoided.

Research suggests that unpredictable supplementary feeding is beneficial e.g. moving the feeding spots around and scattering food in a more natural way.

For more information: www.hedgehogstreet.org.uk



Image credit: Jo Rawson

Thinking big for hedgehogs.

Did you know hedgehogs love to travel? Some hedgehogs will walk up to 1-2km per night, over home ranges as big as 10-20 hectares in size. This means that in suburban areas, one hedgehog could range across an entire housing estate or neighbourhood.

Taking action for hedgehogs in your outside space is the perfect place to start. Why not encourage your neighbours to do the same? Consider working with your local community to create a network of hedgehog friendly outside spaces. By starting a sequence of small actions, you can make an incredible difference for your local hedgehogs.

3. Berry bearing shrubs and trees

Humble hedgerows:

The humble hedgerow is an essential element of any wildlife friendly garden. Not only do hedges provide shelter and essential nesting spaces, but they also offer feeding opportunities for animals of all shapes and sizes.

Hedges offer food in the form of leaves, nectar-rich flowers, berries, fruits, seeds, and nuts. They also create excellent hunting grounds for predators seeking insects and other invertebrates.



Choosing your hedge:

Hawthorn: Hawthorn blossom from May onwards, growing white flowers that are perfect for pollinators. In autumn and winter these white flowers are replaced by red berries (haws), offering a tasty natural food source for birds.

Blackthorn: The sloe or blackthorn is a thorny shrub. It flowers from March onwards, providing pollinating insects with an early source of pollen. During the autumn and winter deep purple fruits (known as 'sloes') ripen on its branches. Blackthorn is an important shrub for many kinds of wildlife.

Holly: This familiar tree may be associated with Christmas, but they offer food and shelter for our wildlife all year round. Throughout spring and summer their white flowers offer pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. In autumn and winter their deep red berries are an important food source for many birds and redwings and fieldfares.

Top tip!

Grow rambling plants, such as wild rose, bramble, and honeysuckle, through your hedge to provide even more shelter and food for wildlife.

Planting your hedgerow:

Aim to plant your hedge between November and March. During these months trees are dormant, meaning you can move them without harm. Avoid planting in cold, windy, or wet weather, this will reduce the risk of damage to the roots. Most importantly, don't plant in soil that is frozen or waterlogged.

1. Mark out the position of your new hedgerow using string or twine. Create two parallel lines, that are about 50cm apart.
2. Remove any vegetation between your two lines.
3. Mark out the distance between your trees and shrubs using 25cm lengths of cane, creating a zigzag shaped pattern.
4. Plant your trees and or shrubs in groups of the same type.

See [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Shelter](#) for more information.

4. Native fruit trees

Native fruit trees give your outside space a natural splash of colour and provide wildlife with excellent feeding opportunities. But with so many different types of trees to choose from, it can be difficult to know where to start.

Follow this handy guide to find the best fruit bearing trees for your outside space.

Crab apple: The crab apple is a small tree, often found in woodland edges and hedgerows. From spring onwards, it grows beautiful pink and white flowers that attract bees and other pollinators.



In late summer these flowers ripen in to small, green apples. These small fruits are much loved by many bird species, including robins, greenfinches, and blackbirds.

Rowan: Rowan is a small, slender tree that is often found on mountains, heathland, and along woodland edges. In spring the rowan will grow creamy white flowers. In autumn these flowers are replaced by clusters of bright red berries. These berries are a favourite food of birds, such as visiting waxwings, redwings, and other thrushes.

Holly: Holly is a familiar tree, found throughout Yorkshire. In spring and summer its small white flowers are excellent sources of pollen for bees and other important pollinating insects. In winter, holly bushes become laden with clusters of small red berries, which are an important food source for many birds including redwings and fieldfares.

Silver birch: The silver birch is a small, spindly tree with thin branches and papery bark. In spring, the silver birch grows catkins, which it uses to distribute pollen. Birch seeds are popular food sources for many small birds, including siskins, goldfinches and greenfinches.

Next Steps ... Once you've selected your tree, you're ready to start planting. See our guide to planting a tree in [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Planting Shelter](#).

5. Mini-wildflower meadows

Wildflowers are a vital food source for many different types of pollinating insects including bees, butterflies, and moths. Fortunately, you don't need huge tracks of land to create your own wildflower meadow, in fact you could create your own in a plant pot or window box.

Option 1 - sit back and let the grass grow.

Long grass is one of the rarest garden habitats, yet it's incredibly beneficial for wildlife. If you have a lawn, consider leaving a section of it to grow long – you might be surprised by the variety of wildflowers that appear.

See [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Management](#) and [#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions – Connectivity](#) for more information about ideas to transform your lawn and encourage wildflowers.

Option 2 - start from scratch.

Depending on the condition of your outside space, you may want to consider starting you own wildflower meadow from scratch.

Before you begin you should check the pH of you soil, your soil type and the amount of sun that the area receives, this will help you to decide what kind of seeds to sow. Armed with this information, wildflower merchants will be able to provide you with suitable seed mixes. Remember, you do not need nutrient rich soil, subsoil and rubble are perfectly adequate for wildflowers!

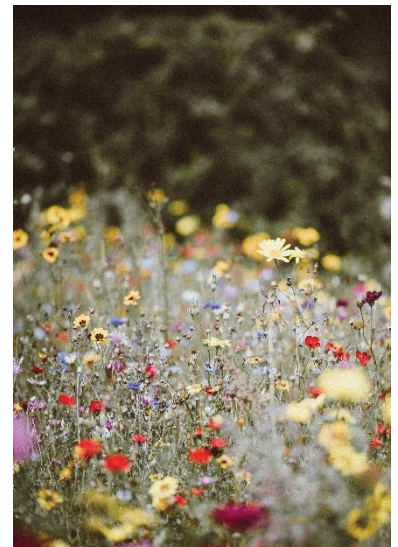


Image credit: Annie Spratt



To create your patch from scratch:

- **Start by digging or rotavating your wildflower patch.** Bury any existing vegetation to a depth of 20cm. This will also help to bring less fertile soil to the surface – which is ideal for wildflowers.
- **You can lift off a whole section of turf and use this elsewhere, the bare soil below is perfect for wildflowers and wild grasses.** An old gravel area is also a good place to transform.
- **Rake the surface of your meadow to create a seedbed.**
- **Don't add manure or fertiliser to your wildflower bed,** this will encourage grasses and other plants to grow, which could outcompete your wildflowers.
- **Sow your seeds by hand in autumn, this will give them time to settle over winter.** If your soil is a heavy clay, you should consider waiting until spring to sow.
- **Scatter your seeds evenly by sowing half of them lengthways and the other half widthways across the plot.** Consider mixing your seeds with sand, this will help you to see any gaps.
- **Once your seeds have been sown, lightly rake them in to the soil and water them thoroughly.**
- If tough grasses are going to be problem, then **add some yellow rattle seed** to your meadow mix as it helps keep fast growing grasses at bay.

Maintaining your meadow:

After mowing, always leave the clippings for a couple of days to drop any seed, then rake up and remove to keep soil fertility down.

During the first year, it is essential to get the mowing regime right. Cut to 5-7 cm whenever the height reaches 10-20 cm.

Control weeds like thistles, nettles, and docks by hand-weeding. It takes a while for a meadow to establish, so be patient in year one, and quite patient in year two as well! Know that all your hard work will eventually pay off.

After the year one, you can reduce to two or three cuts a year. When you mow and how often you mow depends on what flowers you want to encourage and whether the grasses are outcompeting your flowers – this may require you to cut and rake more. Follow this link for detailed information about meadow care: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/lawns/wildflower-meadow-maintenance>

Suggested plants:

Plant	Description	When to sow
Red campion	The bright rose-red flowers of red campion brighten up roadsides, woodlands and hedges throughout the summer	Spring/Summer



Primrose	A hardy, white spring plant that favours woodland clearings, hedgerows and grassland habitats.	Spring
Cowslip	The cowslip brightens up ancient meadows and woodlands with its egg-yolk-yellow, nodding blooms.	Spring
Ribwort plantain	The brown, oval flower heads of ribwort plantain balance on top of thin, wiry stems; seed heads provide food for birds in winter.	Spring/Summer
Selfheal	The brown, oval flower heads of ribwort plantain balance on top of thin, wiry stems; seed heads provide food for birds in winter.	Spring
Wild daffodil	The yellow trumpets of daffodils brighten up the dullest spring day as they cluster together in gardens, on roadsides and in parks during March and April.	Spring
Bluebell	The bluebell spends most of the year as bulb underground only emerging to flower and leaf from April onwards.	Spring
Meadow buttercup	Meadow buttercup is a tall and stately buttercup, with buttery-yellow flowers.	Spring
Ox-eye daisy	The oxeye daisy is easy to identify by its large, round flower heads that appear on single, tall stems.	Spring/summer
Musk mallow	An elegant relative of Common mallow, musk mallow has delicate pale pink flowers that appear in July and August.	Summer
Toadflax	Common has yellow-and-orange flowers that appear in June. They look like the flowers of snapdragons (familiar garden plants).	Summer
Bird's-foot-trefoil	Common bird's-foot-trefoil is a member of the pea family. Its yellow flowers look like little slippers and appear in small clusters.	Summer
Tufted vetch	Tufted vetch has long, grey-green leaves that grow in a symmetrical row from long, trailing stems.	Summer
Bladder campion	Bladder campion has large, balloon-shaped swellings behind its white, five-petalled flowers. It is a medium-tall plant that is usually hairless and greyish.	Summer
White campion	Bladder campion has large, balloon-shaped swellings behind its white, five-petalled flowers.	Summer
Wild carrot	The white umbels of Wild carrot are very densely packed and rounded. Its leaves are divided into narrow leaflets, and the plant is hairy.	Summer
Greater knapweed	The large, bright pink-purple 'flowers' of Greater Knapweed are actually composite flower heads made up of many small 'florets' (tiny flowers).	Summer



Planting for butterflies:

Although most wildflowers with pollen will support butterflies, caterpillars often need specific 'host' plants to support their development. Although growing host plants in your outside space isn't a guaranteed way to attract specific species of caterpillar, they will at least offer an extra source of food for pollinating insects.

Species	Host plant
Comma	Stinging nettle, hop, currants
Common blue	Bird's-foot-trefoil
Dingy skipper	Bird's-foot-trefoil, horseshoe vetch
Green-veined white	Hedge mustard, cuckoo flower, nasturtium
Holly blue	Holly, ivy
Large skipper	Cock's-foot, false brome
Large white	Cabbage, Brussels-sprout, nasturtium, wild mignonette
Meadow brown	Fescues, meadow-grasses and bents
Orange-tip	Cuckooflower, garlic mustard, honesty
Painted lady	Thistles, stinging nettle
Peacock	Stinging nettle
Red admiral	Stinging nettle, hop
Ringlet	Cock's-foot, false brome, tufted hair grass, common couch
Small copper	Common sorrel, sheep's sorrel
Small skipper	Yorkshire-fog
Small tortoiseshell	Stinging nettle, small nettle
Small white	Cabbage, nasturtium, wild mignonette, garlic mustard
Wall brown	Cock's-foot, false brome, Yorkshire fog, wavy-hair grass

6. Night scented flowers

Lots of people have a butterfly garden, but have you considered having a moth garden?

With over 2500 species of moths living in the UK you could be attracting a lot of new visitors to your garden! A startling 2021 study revealed that the overall number of larger moths in Britain has declined by 33% and 50 species of larger moths have become extinct this century.

Attracting moths will also mean that you are providing **food for night-time visitors**, bats, web building spiders, owls and small mammals will all eat night moths. If garden birds find them in the day asleep then they are also an easy meal!



Moth caterpillars are easier to catch than moths and our common garden birds will have more success raising a family if you have a plentiful supply of caterpillars.

Planting for moths:

Night time scent	Moth caterpillar plants
Argentinian vervain (<i>Verbena bonariensis</i>)	Common hawthorn
Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>)	Currants
Dame's-violet (<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>)	English oak
Miss Willmott's ghost (<i>Eryngium giganteum</i>)	Hazel
Cherry pie (<i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>)	Holly
Evening primrose (<i>Oenothera biennis</i>)	Hop
Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)	Ivy
Night-scented catchfly (<i>Silene noctiflora</i>)	Stinging nettle
Night-scented stock (<i>Matthiola bicornis</i>)	White willow
Nottingham catchfly (<i>Silene nutans</i>)	Bedstraws
Soapwort (<i>Sapnoria officinalis</i>)	Cleavers
Sweet rocket (<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>)	Clematis
Tobacco plant (<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>)	Dog rose
White jasmine (<i>Jasminum officinale</i>)	Mint

Top tips!

- Set up a moth trap at night to check what visitors you have, adapt your planting, and try again to see if your interventions are working.
- Choose pale blue and white flowers to reflect the light at night so night flying insects can see them easily.
- Hedges are fantastic habitats for moths (the loss of hedgerows has probably hugely impacted on their decline – another reason to plant that hedge!)
- Don't worry about the damage that moth caterpillars will cause plants as they will not be present in large numbers.
- Many plants considered to be weeds are valuable for day and night moth caterpillars, so when you are weeding or thinking about your wild corner remember to keep in plants such as thistles, nettles, rose-bay willow herb, ragwort, and valerian.

7. Herbs

Herbs are plants that just keep giving: global travellers, often drought resistant, great for containers, scented, medicinal, transforming food, a long history of folklore tales and when flowering they attract and feed huge numbers of pollinators.

If you have a small garden or little yard and can only grow one thing, then a herb planter is for you. You can intersperse herbs with flowers and bulbs for a vibrant container. Herbs being so versatile



will also happily occupy a bed, although many prefer good drainage. Just be careful when you plant them in the garden, as some can become very large in the right conditions (e.g., rosemary and sage), some will spread as far as they can (e.g. mint and lemon balm) and some will self-seed far and wide (marjoram and fennel).

Here are some herbs that are wonderful for pollinators and great for people too! Always seek advice before drinking herbal tea or tinctures when pregnant.

Herb name	Description	Uses for people
Rosemary <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary can flower as early as February providing great early nectar for bees. Make sure you don't waterlog the roots.	Lovely on potatoes or with lamb. Add to a steam bath for colds and as a wash for your hair and scalp.
Caraway <i>Carum carvi</i>	A biennial which grows to 20 cm and sends 60 cm flower heads in the second year. Lots of white umbels, irresistible to pollinators.	Use the seeds or 'fruits' for indigestion and for breads, desserts, and pickling. Popular in eastern European cuisine
Hyssop <i>Hyssopus officinalis</i>	Grows to 60 cm, with a very long bloom of blue flowers, perfect for short and long tailed bumblebees but also attractive to other pollinators.	A very strong scented herb, use sparingly in food, it was traditionally used for digestive and respiratory health.
English lavender <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	A favourite of bees! Trip back each year in autumn to encourage new growth the following spring	A very pungent herb! Use sparingly in cooking but great for helping calm the mind and a restful night sleep.
Common sage <i>Salvia officinalis</i>	A long season of wonderful purple flowers. You can experiment with lots of other types of salvias, with different leaf colours and scents.	Use as a tea for sore throats. Great for cooking and useful in many types of cuisine.
Wild thyme <i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Produces densely packed heads of pinky-purple flowers from June to September.	A wonderful addition to lots of recipes. Helpful for coughs.
Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Its tall yellow umbels are a favourite of hoverflies, and the seeds are a treat for birds in autumn and winter	A delicious tea that is great for the digestion. Useful for sweet and savoury cooking.
Chives <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	A wonderful purple ball of flowers loved by bees.	A wonderful addition to a cheese sandwich or salad.
Common mint <i>Mentha spicata</i>	Allowed to flower bees, butterflies and hoverflies will all visit, and the tall stems provide shelter for other animals.	Great for a cup of tea to aid digestion.
Wild marjoram <i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Attractive especially to our smaller butterflies.	Lovely for adding to a pizza or pasta sauce
Angelica <i>Angelica archangelica</i>	Find the right spot for this majestic biennial as it can grow to 2 metres in the second year. For bees moths and butterflies it is worth the wait.	Another aniseed tasting plant use as a tea for digestion or make some candied stems for sweets.



Borage <i>Borago officinalis</i>	Loved by bees, produces late season nectar for your garden, it will keep flowering until the first frost.	Borage supports your adrenal system, have a cup of tea when you are stressed and busy.
Parsley <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	The little white flowers attract hoverflies. Grow the curly leaf variety too as it is a perfect place for native ladybirds to shelter.	Delicious for a wide range of cooking
Catmint <i>Nepeta cataria</i>	A member of the mint family, abundant flowers for pollinators.	Some cats love it! Dry some and use it to stuff a cat toy
Lemon balm <i>Melissa officinalis</i>	Its Latin name 'melissa' translates to 'bee'! it needs some space so don't try and squeeze this wonderful plant in.	A wonderful tasting tea that calms you down and cheers you up
Wood betony <i>Stachys officinalis</i>	A favourite of ours for sheer determination in shady spots and resilient to drought and waterlogged soil. Beautiful pink/purple self-seeding flowers all summer.	A herb with a rich folklore, called 'the life plant' in Gaelic, drink in a tea to support your nervous system.

8. Shade loving plants

Every bit of available space in your outside area can potentially be adapted to benefit wildlife – even the shady parts under trees, bushes, and shrubs.

To help you get the most out of your space, we've put together a list of wildlife friendly plants you can grow in those awkward shady areas.

Plant	Description	When it flowers
Bugle	Often found carpeting damp grassland and woodland clearings, the blue flower spikes of bugle are very recognisable. A short, creeping plant, it spreads using runners.	April to July
Wood anemone	The wood anemone is a pretty, white spring flower that grows in the dappled shade of ancient woodlands.	March to May
Columbine	The bonnet-shaped, violet-blue flowers of Columbine can be spotted in damp areas in woodlands and in fens.	May to June
Primrose	A hardy, white spring plant that favours woodland clearings, hedgerows and grassland habitats.	December to May
Tufted vetch	A scrambling plant with violet flowers. It is a member of the pea family and can be seen along woodland edges, on scrubland and grassland, and at the coast.	June to September
Greater stitchwort	Also known as 'Star-of-Bethlehem' and 'wedding cakes', the greater stitchwort is a star-shaped, white flower often seen in woodlands and along hedgerows.	April to June



Common comfrey	The drooping, tubular, pink flowers of Common comfrey are a familiar sight to many gardeners. This hairy plant can be used as an organic fertiliser and a form of slug control.	May to July
Honeysuckle	A true wildlife 'hotel', Honeysuckle is a climbing plant that caters for all kinds of wildlife: it provides nectar for insects, prey for bats, nest sites for birds and food for small mammals.	February to November
Common dog violet	Our most familiar wild violet. Dog violet has pansy like purple flowers and can be spotted in a range of habitats from woodland to grassland.	April to June
Forget-me-not	A small, handsome plant with azure-blue flowers. In the wild these forget-me-not are found along woodland rides and hedgerows.	April to June

9. Companion planting

When you have a problem with a particular garden visitor the best way forward is to look for nature's own solution, a serious infestation is sometimes a sign that something is out of balance and often you can encourage or introduce natural predators into your garden. This is **THE long term and sustainable solution** and, the one to aim for.

There are more tips for a wildlife friendly solution to unwanted visitors in our **#TeamWilder Toolkit: Wildlife Actions - Management**.

One way to deal with hungry mouths is to grow some sacrificial plants near the plants that you want to protect – some lettuce, cabbage or french marigolds can be very appealing for slugs and snails.

Companion planting works in different ways. Many companion plants have a strong scent that confuses pests looking for a particular plant to lay its eggs on. Planting nectar rich flowers encourages beneficial insects like hoverflies. Hoverfly larvae will eat aphids, scale bugs and mites!

Mixing your planting up will confuse flying insects who are looking for a secure food source for their larvae, if they land several times and keep finding cabbages then they know to lay their eggs. If when they land, they find unsuitable plants, then they will try elsewhere. Planting plants that support each other nutritionally will strengthen your plants and make them less susceptible to damage from being nibbled.

Top tips!

- **Make yourself a planting plan and make sure that everything has enough room to grow.**
- **Try not to grow a monoculture, instead grow a biodiverse bed of herbs, flowers, and vegetables all together.**

Visit <https://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/home-garden/gardening/advice-tips/companion-planting-guide> for further information about companion planting.

This toolkit has been created with credit to The Wildlife Trusts.

