

ADVICE AND INFORMATION

THE WILDLIFE TRUST

01636 670 011 www.wildlifetrusts.org

The Wildlife Trust have produced a series of fact sheets providing guidance of how to create wildlife friendly gardens, including a 'butterfly gardening' and 'bumblebee' fact sheet.

BUGLIFE— THE INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION TRUST

01733 201 210 www.buglife.org.uk

Buglife aim to halt the extinction of invertebrate species and to achieve sustainable populations of invertebrates. They can provide detailed information and factsheets on the identification and conservation of invertebrates.

BUMBLEBEE CONSERVATION TRUST

www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

01929 400 210 www.butterfly-conservation.org

A series of detailed fact sheets providing detailed advice about creating and maintaining butterfly habitat can be downloaded from the website as well as a wealth of further information.

BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY

www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

FROGLIFE

www.froglife.org

RECOMMENDED READING

Gardening for Wildlife. George Pilkington (2002) ISBN 1 873727 12 7

Practical Conservation BTCV. ISBN 0 946752 26 5

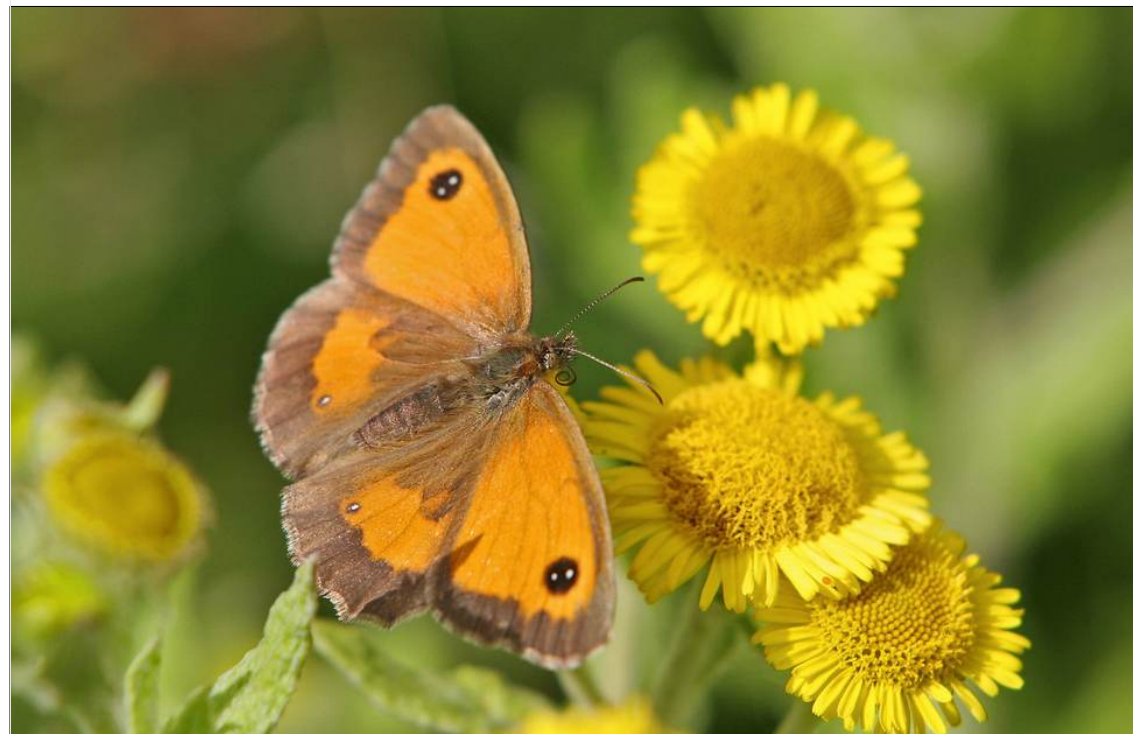
Provides guidance on creating habitats for birds and insects as well as information about how to design and manage various wildlife habitats. Particularly useful for school grounds improvement works.

MORE FROM THE MERSEY FOREST

For more free guides, call The Mersey Forest Team on 01925 816 217 or visit www.merseyforest.org.uk to find out more and get involved.

CREATING WILDLIFE HIBERNATION AND NESTING SITES

The Mersey Forest guide



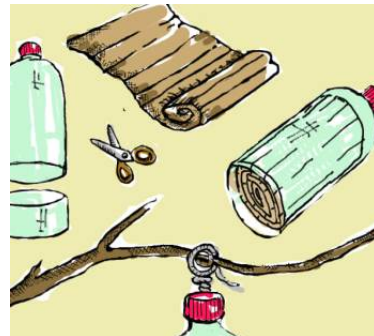
INTRODUCTION

Many invertebrates and amphibians are declining in numbers in the wider countryside. By providing homes and nesting sites for them we can contribute to their conservation.

LACEWINGS

Lacewings are fantastic at helping to reduce garden pests such as aphids. To increase the winter survival of lacewing and control pests in the spring months you can create a simple lacewing home by rolling up a piece of corrugated cardboard and putting it in a waterproof container, (e.g. drinks bottle) with the cardboard accessible at the lower end where it is out of the rain.

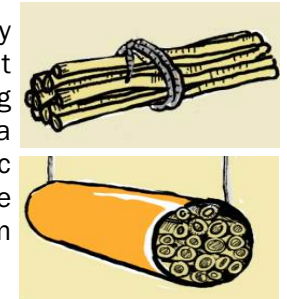
Cut the bottom off the bottle but leave the lid secured to prevent rain getting in the top of the bottle. Cut a strip of corrugated cardboard slightly shorter than the length of the bottle ensuring you cut across the corrugations so that the hollows run the length of the bottle. Tightly roll the cardboard and pack it into the bottle and hang the bottle from a tree in an upward position.



SOLITARY BEES

The majority of bees live a solitary life in single nests rather than the hives of bees that we imagine. These solitary bees are essential in helping to pollinate a wide variety of British plants.

You can make nesting sites for solitary bees by cutting old canes or pieces of hollow plant stems into 100-200mm lengths and packing them into open ended containers such as a plastic drain-pipe or a section from a plastic drinks bottle. Alternatively you could simply tie a bundle of canes together and position them where they are out of the rain.



Holes drilled into blocks of wood can also form suitable nesting sites. Holes of 5-8mm diameter are particularly good for solitary bees but a variety of hole diameters will also create habitat for other species such as ladybirds and dragonfly. Make sure the holes are drilled upwards into the wood so that they don't fill with rain water.

Solitary bees like warmth, so place your bee nest in a sunny south facing site, ideally close to scented plants to attract them to the site. Don't forget to plant lots of flowering plants to help attract bees to your site.

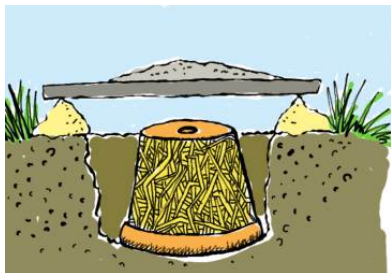
BUMBLEBEES

The beautiful hardworking bumblebee is an incredibly important pollinator but is decreasing in alarming number due to loss of habitat amongst other factors.



You can help increase bumblebee habitat by planting flowering plants and helping to provide places for them to nest and hibernate.

Each spring after coming out from hibernation, queen bumblebees search for a site to start a new colony. They typically select a dry warm cavity such as an abandoned mouse nest.



You can make bumblebee nests using wooden boxes, pottery flower pots or other containers and fill the container with soft bedding material such as short lengths of unravelling soft string. The container must be water tight for the larvae to survive. The nest box should be placed in a shaded location, on, or just under the ground where there is no risk of flooding.

'Buglife' and the 'Bumblebee Conservation Trust' are one of many organisations that provide detailed information about creating bee habitats and nesting sites. See the reference section at the end of this leaflet for contact details.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are not only beautiful to look at, they are also important pollinators and their presence indicates that the habitat is of good ecological value. Many species of butterflies are becoming rare due to the loss of their habitat. By providing them with food and shelter you can help to stop their decline.



Hibernating butterflies or larvae will take shelter in all sorts of habitat including leaf litter, loose bark or tree cavities – anywhere providing there is a surface that they can grip on to. Log piles provide ideal sites for butterflies to perch, roost and hibernate.

Specific plants can be selected to provide nectar to support adult butterflies and plants that provide appropriate food sources for caterpillars.

Detailed guidance on creating butterfly habitat can be found under 'habitat advice' on the Butterfly Conservation website: <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/>

HEDGEHOGS

Hedgehogs are often referred to as 'the gardeners friend' as they help to get rid of garden pests such as slugs beetles and caterpillars.



You can help look after hedgehogs by not using toxic substances like slug pellets or pesticides and providing places for them to nest and hibernate over winter.

Hedgehogs need a warm, dry place to over-winter, feed and breed in. You can make this environment simply by creating a pile of wood or garden refuse in a sheltered area, or building a purpose made box in which they can hibernate.

The 'British Hedgehog Preservation Society' can provide detailed advice of how to create a purpose built hedgehog box. (see the reference list at the end of this leaflet)

AMPHIBIANS

Our native amphibians (including species of newts, frogs and toads) are important predators, eating a wide variety of pest insects and are also important prey for other species. Habitat loss has had an extremely detrimental affect on amphibian populations.

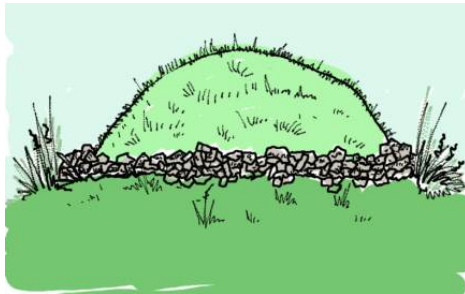


Hibernacula are underground chambers that amphibians and reptiles use through winter to protect them from the cold. You can help to create hibernacula from piles of rubble, rock, logs and earth banks (with plenty of mammal burrows and ground fissures) which all make good hibernation and refuge sites.

Amphibians require humidity and an artificial hibernacula should ideally be located near to water, but in sheltered habitat (e.g. in long grass or woodland edge vegetation).

HOW TO BUILD A HIBERNACULA

To build the hibernacula, create a mound containing a mixture of topsoil, rubble, and rough cut logs. Dimensions of the hibernacula should generally be above 2m length x 1m width x 1m height.



Lay bricks, stones, paving slabs or large pieces of concrete over the mound which will create gaps and allow amphibians to access the centre of the mound. A thin layer of soil and brash, can be layed over the top of this, as long as it does not block the hibernacula access points.

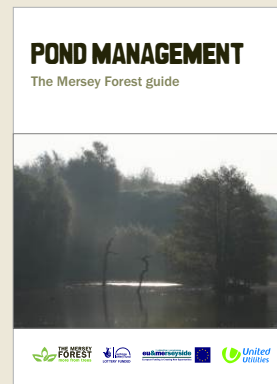
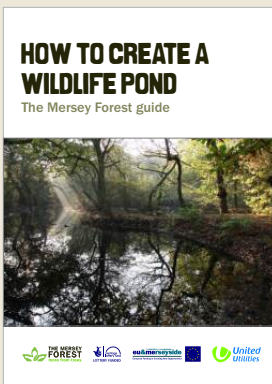
★KEY TIPS:

- ★ Hibernaculas must be free-draining.
- ★ Hibernaculas should be located in sheltered areas which are neither too dry nor prone to winter flooding or freezing (eg in frost hollows).
- ★ Encourage growth of vegetation on the north side of the mound to provide extra shelter.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR HIBERNACULA

To maintain the hibernacula, prevent vegetation from encroaching onto the south facing side of the mound. Periodic thinning of vegetation on the hibernacula will help prevent a thick root matt developing, which makes it hard for reptiles and insects to burrow into the surface. Sparse vegetation cover on the south facing side of the hibernacula will also give the animals a suitable location to bask.





MORE 'HOW TO' GUIDES

If you found this guide useful you may be interested in further guides in The Mersey Forest's 'How to' series.

ONLINE

Online pdf versions can be found at www.merseyforest.org.uk which can be read on-screen, downloaded to your computer or printed off.

HARD COPY

The guides are also available as printed booklets, free to members of the public and community groups in Merseyside and North Cheshire.

To request copies of one or more of the guides, please contact The Mersey Forest Team and let us know which guides you would like.

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