



Gardening for wildlife

In the UK, gardening for wildlife came into focus some forty years ago when the Urban Wildlife Trust was established in Birmingham and the Black Country, followed shortly afterwards by the London Wildlife Trust. From the outset, it was recognised that gardens support a great variety of wildlife, as documented by Jennifer Owen in books describing studies in her Leicester garden between 1972 and 2001. Gardens afford access to nature right where people live, and thus provide most people's daily experience of wildlife. At the same time, Jane Smart and Chris Baines wrote *A guide to habitat creation* and Chris wrote *How to make a wildlife garden*. These were the first of many books on the subject and nowadays we have a plethora of books; gardening for wildlife is now a mainstream concern. There have been many research projects in gardens, notably the Sheffield BUGS survey and the RHS Plants for Bugs project. These have greatly improved our understanding of gardens as habitats for wildlife; the Wildlife Gardening Forum provides a useful overview of the latest science. This series of lectures reviews the great wildlife benefits of gardens and allotments and outlines some of the scientific findings.

References

Baines, C. & Smart, J. 1985. *A guide to habitat creation*. Greater London Council, Ecology Section.

Baines, C. 1985. *How to make a wildlife garden*. Elm Tree Books.

Biodiversity in Urban Gardens (BUGS) – understanding nature in the garden.
<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=11853>

Lewington, R. 2019. *Guide to garden wildlife (2nd edition)*. Bloomsbury Wildlife Guide.

Owen, J. 1986. *The Ecology of a Garden: The First Fifteen Years*. Cambridge University Press

Owen, J. 2010. *Wildlife of a Garden: A Thirty-Year Study*. Royal Horticultural Society
Plants for Bugs. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/plants-for-bugs>

Thomas, A. 2017 *Gardening for wildlife, second edition*. Bloomsbury.

Thompson, K. *Jennifer Owen's studies*. Wildlife Gardening Forum.

Thompson, K. 2007. *No nettles required. The reassuring truth about wildlife gardening*. Transworld Publishers Ltd.

Wildlife Gardening Forum. www.wlgef.org