

**E** Do you use chemical pest controls?  
e.g. slug pellets, weedkillers. Yes  No

**F** Have you seen any of the following in your garden?  
(Please tick all that apply)

Bat  Hedgehog  Bullfinch  Swift   
Great Crested Newt  Stag Beetle

We'd be interested to see the photos of the wildlife  
you have spotted in your garden. Please send  
images to [biodiversity@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:biodiversity@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

**G** Your comments

.....  
.....

**H** About you

Accurate information about where and when wildlife  
information is collected is really important. We collect  
your address to allow us to map the information you  
provide us and also to compare information from  
one year to the next.

House/Flat no.....

Street name\* .....

Town\* .....

County\* .....

Postcode\* .....

Locality.....

Email .....

\*Required field

Thank you for completing our survey. Please cut out  
this section and return to us at the address shown  
to the right.

The information you provide will be passed on to the Thames Valley  
Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) for the purpose of informing  
biodiversity projects, site management and ecological planning advice.  
Please note, we will not disclose your name to TVERC or any information  
about you to other outside organisations or third parties without your  
written consent or unless there is a legal requirement to do so.



## Useful information

### Websites:

Garden Organic: [www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre:  
[www.tverc.org](http://www.tverc.org)

Nest Box Challenge: [www.bto.org/nbc/index.htm](http://www.bto.org/nbc/index.htm)

Wildlife Gardener: [www.wildlifegardener.co.uk](http://www.wildlifegardener.co.uk)

### Conservation volunteering

Are you interested in helping to safeguard and  
enhance your local environment? Why not visit our  
website to find out how you can get involved.

[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/countrysideconservation](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/countrysideconservation)

### Wildlife surveyors wanted!

Are you enthusiastic about nature? Do you want to  
learn more? The Parks & Countryside Service is  
looking for people to help carry out surveys for  
birds, reptiles, mammals and many more at sites  
across the borough. For more information. Visit our  
website [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wildlife](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wildlife)

### Contact

Biodiversity Officer

Bracknell Forest Council

Time Square

Market Street

Bracknell

Berkshire RG12 1JD

Email: [biodiversity@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:biodiversity@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01344 352000 (switchboard)

**Copies of this leaflet may be obtained in  
large print, Braille, on audio tape or in  
other languages. To obtain a copy in an  
alternative format, please telephone  
01344 352000.**



# Discover Gardening for wildlife



Your guide to creating a wildlife friendly garden

# Introduction

Bracknell Forest Borough has a rich and diverse landscape, containing a wide range of habitats that support a variety of plants and animals.

## Did you know?

If all the gardens in the UK were wildlife friendly they would amount to an area more than double that of all the National Nature Reserves put together! [www.wildaboutgardens.org](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org)

One of the best ways to help conserve local wildlife is to make your garden more wildlife friendly. This leaflet offers advice on some easy ways for you to help make this happen.

## Simple ways to make your garden more wildlife friendly

### Go Organic!

Chemicals can kill beneficial insects and have the potential to kill your garden birds. Avoid using peat based compost as this destroys natural habitats elsewhere. Create your own compost heap to provide you with organic compost for free.

### Go Native!

Instead of cultivated plants, try to use native species as these will attract more wildlife. Visit the Wildlife Gardener website for advice on which plants to choose to attract wildlife to your garden.

### Variety is the Spice of Life!

By designing your garden to include a wide range of plants and habitats, you will provide food and conditions for a greater diversity of wildlife.

### Leave Untidy Areas!

You don't have to put up with nettles everywhere but even a small patch left untouched in the corner of your garden can provide a haven for wildlife.

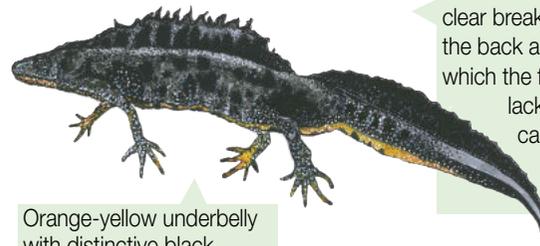
### Make a Record!

Make a note of the wildlife that you see in your garden and pass this information onto the Parks & Countryside Service either using the form overleaf or via the online garden wildlife survey form. This information can be used to help inform the future conservation of local wildlife.

# Garden wildlife survey: a guide to identifying four key species

## Great crested newt

Black warty skin and a row of white spots running along the side of the head and body.



Orange-yellow underbelly with distinctive black blotches.

Male great crested newts have a jagged crest, running along their back (with a clear break between the back and tail) which the females lack. Adults can grow up to 17cm in length.

### How can I encourage great crested newts in my garden?

Make a wildlife pond with plenty of aquatic vegetation. Avoid keeping fish as they can eat newt tadpoles. Surround the pond with habitats such as undisturbed grassland, hedges, trees and scrub.

## Stag beetle

Reddish-brown wing cases and shiny black head.



Males have large, reddish-brown antlers, while females have pincers. Adults can grow up to 4cm in length.

### How can I encourage stag beetles in my garden?

Stag beetles like undisturbed, rotting dead-wood, so try making a log pile in a shaded part of your garden. Alternatively, make holes in an ordinary plastic bucket and fill it with 1/4 soil and 3/4 wood chips. Dig a hole in an undisturbed area of your garden and bury the bucket with the top at ground level.

## Bullfinch

Grey back, white rump and black cap.



Breast and cheeks are bright pink (males) or a dull pinkish-brown colour (females).

### How can I encourage bullfinches in my garden?

Plant native trees and shrubs which will provide shelter and produce seeds, berries and buds that provide food. Avoid using pesticides as these kill insects that bullfinches also feed on.

## Swift

Swifts are summer visitors to the UK. They typically nest in roof-spaces, under tiles, or in the eaves of buildings.

Dull sooty-brown colour with a pale chin. When viewed from below against the sky they can appear almost black.



Long, scythe-shaped wings and short, forked tail.

### How can I encourage swifts in my garden?

The majority of modern houses do not provide suitable crevices for swifts to nest in, so the best way to encourage them is to install a swift box.

# Go wild in your garden

**Creating a wildlife garden is an excellent way to help conserve your local wildlife. Helping your wildlife may be rewarding in more ways than you might think...**

## Put up a bird box and take the nestbox challenge

①

Try some of the more unusual bird box designs to attract a greater variety of species. You could also consider putting up a bat box or make a home for bees by hanging up a bunch of cut bamboo or a piece of wood with holes drilled in it.

**Benefits:** Taking part in the nest-box challenge can be fun and educational for adults and children alike. Birds are also excellent pest predators, especially whilst feeding hungry chicks!

## Use a compost heap

②

Compost heaps provide an ideal habitat for many insects who break down the green waste. These insects are also a food source for birds and other wildlife. Be sure to check your compost heap for sleeping wildlife (such as hedgehogs and toads) before using the compost.

**Benefits:** A compost heap will not only provide you with organic compost for free but will also help you to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in your bin.

## Create a wildflower meadow or flowering lawn

③

You can buy wildflower seeds from a native seed supplier or garden centre. Alternatively you can convert part of your lawn by only cutting it once a year in autumn.

**Benefits:** Wildflower meadows not only look attractive but also attract pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies.

## Make a log pile for stag beetles

④

By placing your logs in an undisturbed area of your garden you may attract stag beetles to the warm, damp conditions. Use a mixture of wood types, avoid treated wood and leave the bark on.

**Benefits:** Undisturbed log piles also attract hedgehogs and slow worms, both of which eat slugs.

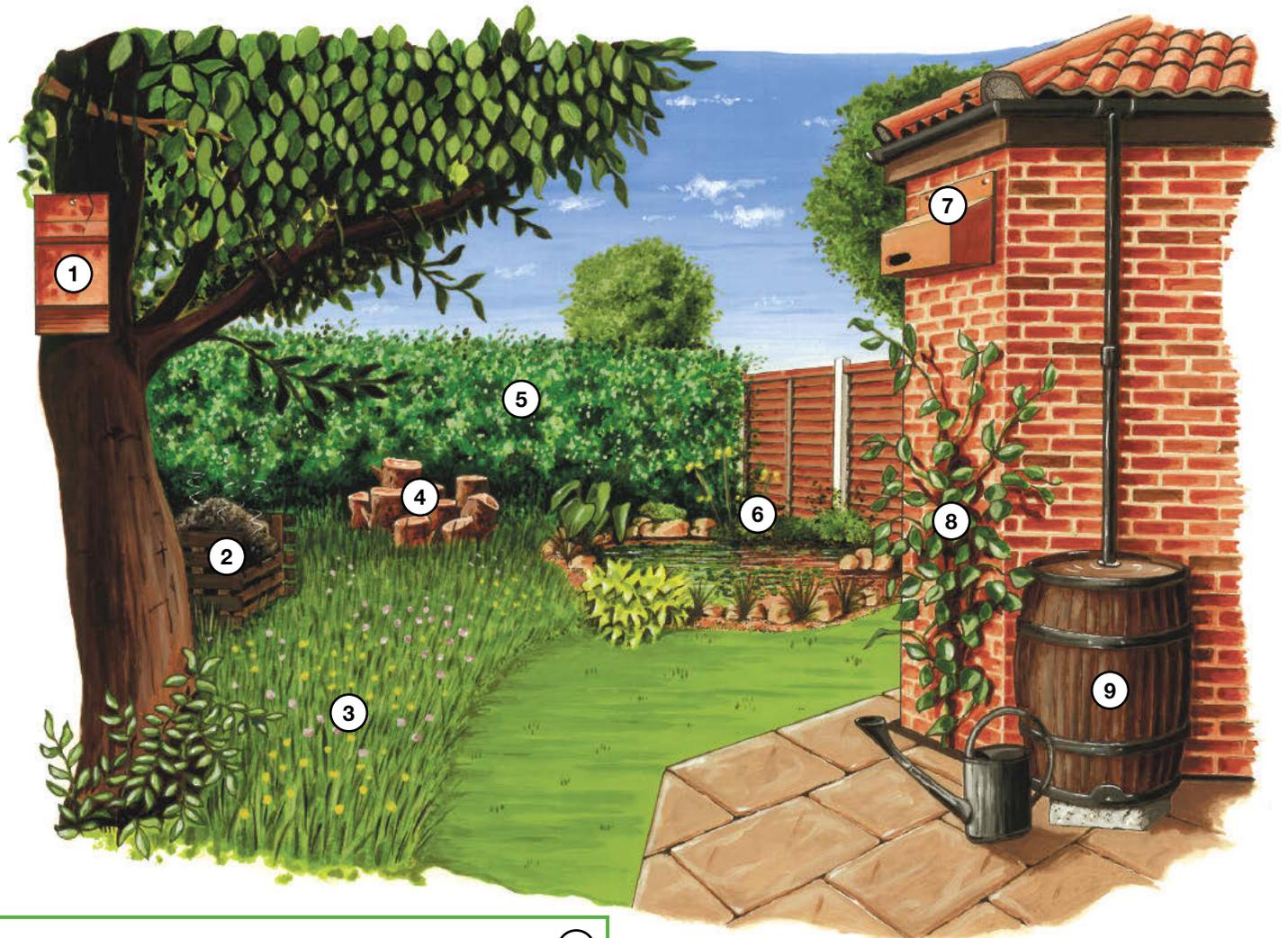


Illustration by Steve King

### Plant a native hedgerow

5

Hedgerows provide food and shelter for a variety of species including birds and small mammals such as hedgehogs, voles and shrews. Use native species such as buckthorn, wild service tree, dog rose, hazel, hawthorn and holly (which provides evergreen winter shelter for roosting birds).

**Benefits:** Hedgerows attract a wide range of wildlife including natural predators such as lacewings and ladybirds.

### Dig a wildlife pond

6

A pond of any size can support a wealth of wildlife and attract birds and mammals to your garden. Create shallow edges with a gradual slope allowing small animals to reach the water. Avoid having fish as they will eat most other life. Think about introducing some native water plants, and you could choose to create a bog garden as well.

**Benefits:** Ponds attract a wide range of wildlife, such as frogs, newts, hedgehogs and birds. Many of these species will eat common garden pests.

### Put up a swift box

7

Ideal sites are under eaves or on walls facing north to north east. Because swifts need height to take off, the box must be placed at least 5 metres above ground level.

**Benefits:** Swifts spend most of their life in the air, stopping only to breed. Installing a swift box is one of the only ways to get a close-up view of these acrobatic birds.

### Green up your walls with climbers

8

Covering a wall or fence with plants provides shelter and food for insects and birds who may even nest there. Ivy is particularly valuable as it produces fruit and flowers late in the year and will not damage walls that are in good repair.

**Benefits:** Climbing plants can help to make a plain wall structure more attractive.

### Install a water butt

9

Water butts allow you to collect the rainwater that falls on your roof.

**Benefits:** Provides a natural source of water which you can use in your garden. It will also help protect wetland habitats elsewhere and reduce flooding of urban areas.



Wild service tree.  
Illustrations by Linda Carter

Devil's bit scabious.

Ragged robin.

## Wildlife Survey Form - your garden

Please use this form to tell us about wildlife in your garden. We are particularly interested in hearing about sightings of Great Crested Newts, Bullfinches, Stag Beetles and Swifts.

For wildlife sightings anywhere else in the borough please use TVERCs online recording service: <http://sightings.tverc.org>

**A** How large is your garden approximately?

.....  
(Length x width in meters or feet)

**B** Does your garden have a pond? \* Yes  No

How large is the pond approximately?

.....  
(Length x width in meters or feet)

**C** Have you had any of the following in your garden pond? (Please tick all that apply)

- |           |                          |       |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Frogspawn | <input type="checkbox"/> | Frogs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fish      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toads     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ducks | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**D** Which of the following wildlife features do you have in your garden? (Please tick all that apply)

- |                              |                          |                     |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Compost heap                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bird bath           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hedge of native species      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bee/insect hotel    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Nectar providing flowers     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bog garden          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bat box                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ground cover plants | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Beehive                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other bird box      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Decaying wood/log pile       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bird table/feeders  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Climbing plants              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Swift box           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wildflower meadow/long grass | <input type="checkbox"/> |                     |                          |

Other (Please describe)

.....  
.....

\*Required field

