



# Plants for wildlife-friendly gardens



working today  
for nature tomorrow

# Plants for wildlife-friendly gardens

This leaflet gives an indication of garden plants which provide good habitats for wildlife. Plants that occur naturally in England generally provide the best conditions for wildlife in gardens but many cultivated varieties are good too.

## Trees and shrubs

### Large trees

Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*  
Beech *Fagus sylvatica*  
Elm *Ulmus procera*  
Oaks *Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*  
Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*  
White willow *Salix alba*  
Wild cherry *Prunus avium*

### Medium/small trees

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*  
Aspen *Populus tremula*  
Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*  
Field maple *Acer campestre*  
Holly *Ilex aquifolium*  
Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*  
Silver birch *Betula pendula*  
Yew *Taxus baccata*

A combination of shrubs and climbers can make attractive native hedges of great benefit for wildlife, as well as providing an attractive boundary. Beech and holly also make good hedges.

### Native shrubs

Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*  
Dog wood *Cornus sanguinea*  
Elder *Sambucus nigra*  
Guelder rose  
*Viburnum opulus*  
Hawthorn  
*Crataegus monogyna*  
Hazel *Corylus avellana*

Dog rose.  
Peter Wakely/English Nature 607

## Climbers

Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*  
Dog rose *Rosa canina*  
Field rose *Rosa arvensis*  
Ivy *Hedera helix*  
Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*  
Wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*

## Margins/pond edges

For a good wildlife-friendly pond and natural look, make shallow sloping edges (to help animals get in and out) and add plants to provide cover and interest.

Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*  
Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*  
Bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*  
Flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*  
Greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*  
Lesser reedmace *Typha angustifolia*  
Lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*  
Water mint *Mentha aquatica*  
Water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*



Bogbean. Peter Wakely/English Nature 836

## Warning

A number of plants can take over your pond and are damaging to our native plants in ponds lakes and rivers. Watch out for and avoid the following: water fern, parrot's feather, floating pennywort, Australian swamp stonecrop. If you already have these, get rid of them by composting or burning. Don't throw them out as it might spread the problem. See our *Warning - Invasive Alien Pond Plants* leaflet for more detail.

Please remember, always buy from a reputable supplier (information available from English Nature Enquiry Service, 01733 455101). Never take plants from the wild - it is illegal to uproot any wild plant. See also our leaflet on wildlife-friendly gardening.

## Ponds and marshes

Water is important for wildlife, even a small area can attract birds, insects and other animals and creates a nice feature. The following list indicates plants which provide suitable habitats for wetland wildlife.

### Plants for marshy areas

Also suitable for pond edges.

Bugle *Ajuga reptans*  
Hemp agrimony  
*Eupatorium cannabinum*  
Marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*  
Marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris*  
Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*  
Purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*  
Ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*  
Water avens *Geum rivale*  
Water forget-me-not  
*Myosotis scorpioides*  
Water mint  
*Mentha aquatica*  
Water violet  
*Hottonia palustris*  
Yellow flag  
*Iris pseudacorus*



Marsh marigold.  
Paul Glendell/English Nature  
25,293

## Plants for the pond

### Submerged plants

These provide oxygen and cover for secretive pond life.

Curled pondweed *Potamogeton crispus*  
Hornwort *Ceratophyllum demersum*  
Other pondweeds *Potamogeton spp.*  
Mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris*  
Spiked water milfoil  
*Myriophyllum spicatum*  
Water starwort *Callitriche spp.*

### Floating plants

These provide some shade and interest; you need a balance of floating and submerged plants to ensure some light gets to underwater areas.

Amphibious bistort  
*Persicaria amphibia*  
Broad-leaved pondweed  
*Potamogeton natans*  
Duckweeds *Lemna spp.*  
Fringed waterlily  
*Nymphoides peltata*  
Frogbit  
*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*  
Water crowfoot  
*Ranunculus aquatilis*  
White waterlily  
*Nymphaea alba*  
Yellow waterlily  
*Nuphar lutea*

## Plants for under trees or shady areas

Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*  
Betony *Stachys officinalis*  
Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*  
Bugle *Ajuga reptans*  
Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*  
Ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*  
Lily of the valley *Convallaria majalis*  
Lords-and ladies/cuckoopint  
*Arum maculatum*  
Nettle-leaved bellflower  
*Campanula trachelium*  
Primrose *Primula vulgaris*  
Sweet violet *Viola odorata*  
Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*  
Wood avens *Geum urbanum*

Foxglove. Peter Wakely/English Nature 18,879



Honeysuckle flower. Derek Ratcliffe/English Nature 14,736

## Exotic shrubs for nectar, pollen or fruits

Serviceberry *Amelanchier canadensis*  
Butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*  
Japanese quince *Chaenomeles japonica*  
Creeping cotoneaster  
*Cotoneaster frigidus*  
Variegated cotoneaster  
*Cotoneaster horizontalis*  
Mahonia *Mahonia spp.*  
Mock orange *Philadelphus spp.*  
Firethorn *Pyracantha coccinea*  
Lilac *Syringa vulgaris*  
Bodant viburnum *Viburnum bodnantense*  
Laurustinus *Viburnum tinus*



Meadow cranesbill. Peter Roworth/English Nature 22,902

## Wildflowers

### Native wildflowers for borders

Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*  
 Betony *Stachys officinalis*  
 Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*  
 Chicory *Cichorium intybus*  
 Chives *Allium schoenoprasum*  
 Common poppy *Papaver rhoeas*  
 Corncockle *Agrostemma githago*  
 Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*  
 Corn marigold *Chrysanthemum segetum*  
 Cowslip *Primula veris*  
 Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*  
 Dame's-violet *Hesperis matronalis*  
 Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*  
 Devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*  
 Field scabious *Knautia arvensis*  
 Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*  
 Germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*  
 Goldenrod *Solidago virgaurea*  
 Great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*  
 Greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*

Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*  
 Herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*  
 Lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*  
 Marjoram *Origanum vulgare*  
 Meadow cranesbill *Geranium pratense*  
 Common mallow *Malva sylvestris*  
 Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*  
 Primrose *Primula vulgaris*  
 Red campion *Silene dioica*  
 Red deadnettle *Lamium purpureum*  
 Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*  
 Spiked speedwell *Veronica spicata*  
 Tansy *Tanacetum vulgare*  
 Teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*  
 Toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*  
 White campion *Silene alba*  
 White dead-nettle *Lamium album*  
 Wild thyme *Thymus drucei*  
 Yellow loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*

Wild thyme. Peter Wakely/English Nature 18,825



### Cultivated plants for borders

Grecian windflower *Anemone blada*  
 Angelica *Angelica archangelica*  
 Aubretia *Aubretia deltoidea*  
 California poppy  
*Eschscholtzia californica*  
 Candytuft *Iberis sempervirens*  
 Christmas rose *Helleborus niger*  
 Cosmos *Cosmos bipinnatus*  
 Evening primrose  
*Oenothera biennis*  
 Fleabane *Erigeron spp.*  
 Forget-me-not *Myosotis spp.*  
 French marigold *Tagetes spp.*  
 Globe thistle *Echinops ritro*  
 Grape hyacinth *Muscari botryodes*  
 Hollyhock *Althaea rosea*  
 Honesty *Lunaria rediviva*  
 Ice plant *Sedum spectabile*  
 Lenten rose *Helleborus orientalis*  
 Tree mallow *Lavatera spp.*  
 Michaelmas daisy *Aster spp.*  
 Mint *Mentha rotundifolia*  
 Perennial cornflower  
*Centaurea montana*  
 Perennial sunflower  
*Helianthus decapetalus*  
 Phlox *Phlox paniculata*  
 Poached-egg plant  
*Limnanthes douglasii*  
 Red valerian *Centranthus ruber*  
 Snapdragon *Antirrhinum majus*  
 Spring crocus  
*Crocus chrysanthus and hybrids*  
 Sweet alyssum *Lobularia maritima*  
 Sweet bergamot *Monarda didyma*  
 Sweet William *Dianthus barbatus*  
 Tobacco plant *Nicotiana affinis*  
 Wallflower *Cheiranthus cheiri*  
 White arabis (single) *Arabis alpina*  
 Winter aconite *Eranthis hyemalis*  
 Yellow alyssum *Alyssum saxatile*



Teasel, with frost. Peter Wakely/English Nature 15,620



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Top left: Cowslips.

Paul Glendell/English Nature 25,309

Bottom left: Rowan berries.

Peter Roworth/English Nature 22,875

Main: Tending flower beds.

Paul Glendell/English Nature 25,301



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