

Making your garden wildlife friendly

There are approximately 15 million gardens in the UK with some estimates putting their collective area at up to three million acres. Since 1900 Britain has lost at least 154 species of animal and 109 species of plant.

Much of this is due to the loss of habitat from housing, industrial developments and changes in farming practices.

If each of us that have a garden does just one or two little things to help the remaining wildlife then it will have a much better chance of surviving.

The UK has lost 90% of its lowland ponds so those in our gardens have a very important role to play in preserving the fascinating creatures found in them.

As a bonus the frogs and toads will eat the slugs and snails that have been munching their way through our plants.

If you are thinking of planting a tree, firstly make sure it is the right size for your garden. Secondly consider choosing a native species.

In a recent study it was found that over 284 species were associated with the Oak, 15 with the Sycamore and none with the Plane tree. This diversity is the keystone to the success of our wildlife garden.

There are a lot of us that only have a back yard or balcony and feel that there is little that we can do, but this is not so.

A bird table or a bird bath will attract lots of different species who, once they know that food or water is available will return regularly. Hang up feeders and fill them with peanuts or specialist bird food.

There are many places to obtain advice on wildlife gardening, your local library, the web, your local wildlife club. A good start for birds is the R.S.P.B, www.rspb.org.uk.

For other wildlife try the Wildlife Trust, www.wildlifetrusts.org. Most important of all, relax, do not get hung up about it, anything you do is a help. Do something, sit back and enjoy the show.

