

# Encouraging animals to visit your wildlife garden

A range of activities to encourage animals to visit your wildlife garden. This can be done in a concrete playground with minimal resources.

It is important for children to understand that all animals are important and need to be cared for. There is a loss of habitats in the world and children can learn that they can provide places for animals to live, even if they are in the most urban of settings. Animals provide numerous learning opportunities for young children, giving them the chance to learn about the living world first hand rather than through books or on a computer.

## Attracting animals

### Bird feeders

Below are a few ideas of how to make simple bird feeders:

- Cheerio necklace

Resources: pipe cleaners, cheerios, string

Children thread cheerios onto a pipe cleaner and bend it into a shape. They will discover that the cheerios will slip off the end; can they work out how to solve this problem? Tie string around the necklace and hang it onto a tree.

- Seed pictures

Resources: flat piece of wood or strong cardboard, vegetable fat, bird seed

Children draw a picture onto a flat piece of wood or strong cardboard, and then paint over it using vegetable fat. They could use a paint brush or their finger. Sprinkle bird seed over the top. Ideally you would drill/cut a hole into the edges of the wood/cardboard so it can be hung outside.

- Seeded apples

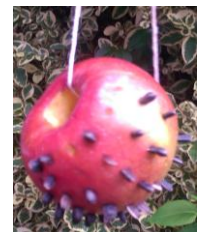
Resources: apples, bird seed, string, apple corer

Core an apple, and children stick bird feed into the apple. String it and hang outside.

- Hanging pots

Resources: yogurt pots with small hole in the bottom, string, bird seed, vegetable fat, mixing bowl and spoon

Thread string through the hole at the bottom of the yogurt pot (cut the hole using a compass). Mix together seed and vegetable fat. Put it in the yogurt pot and leave to set in a fridge. Hang upside down.



## Attracting other animals

- Butterfly feeders

Resources: paper plates, crayons, mashed banana, string, hole punch

Children decorate a paper plate with bright colours. Put four holes at the sides and string it up. Put mashed banana or sugar solution in the middle to attract butterflies.



- Spider web frame

Resources: small sticks, large sticks, string or garden wire

Make a diamond shape with four small sticks and tie the ends together with string or garden wire. Attach it to the long stick and put it into the ground. Put it near a few plants and wait for spiders to spin their webs.



- Wormery

Resources: plastic sheets, compost, sand, soil

Put sand between the plastic sheets, followed by layers of soil and compost finished with a layer of leaves on the top. Add a few worms and leave. Children could count how many worms they can see and add leaves to the tub as the original ones get broken down.

- Attracting invertebrates on the ground

Resources:

Make a bug hotel (see other sheet) or put down a few logs/ pieces of carpet/polystyrene blocks and animals will visit it.



- Lacewing and ladybird hotel

Resources: bamboo tubes, cup, string

Put ~10 bamboo tubes into a cup and tie string around both ends of the tubes to secure them. Attach some string to hang it in a sheltered place.

Alternatively, place pine cones in netting and hang in the area.

## Build a pond

**Resources:** tyre or large water tray, waterproof lining, pond plants, stones, wood, rain water

Line a large tyre or tray with waterproof lining and place rocks or wood around the outside so that wildlife can climb out. Arrange plants around the outside of the pond (choose ones that grow in shallow water) and fill with rain water (as there won't be any chemicals in it).

Leave the pond and over time, wildlife will be attracted to the pond as it establishes itself.

Children could keep a diary to record what they have seen. Use tea strainers to collect animals and put into a magnifying pot of water.

Depending on the location of the pond, a wire net maybe required for safety.



## Growing plants

- **Small planters**

**Resources:** wellies, tyres or planters, compost, seeds or grow bags

Put compost into wellies, tyres or planters and plant seeds. Give children responsibility for watering the plants.

The following plants are easy to grow and will attract insects:

Buddleia

Lavender

Mint

Rosemary