

Biodiversity Guidance for Householders

We can all play our part in helping nature to recover and thrive. Small measures we can all adopt in our houses and gardens will help contribute to this recovery. Not only will this help mitigate against the impact of climate change, but it will significantly enhance the residential environment for the benefit of wildlife.



Birds

Birds require features where they can safely feed and breed.

Swift Bricks can be included in the fabric of new buildings and sit flush with the external wall surface. Positioned at a minimum height of 3 metres, they have an opening from the outside that leads to a self-contained chamber and, therefore, pose no risk from bats or birds entering the inside of the building. Swift Bricks also allow access for Starlings, Blue Tits and House Sparrows.

Bird boxes come in a variety of shapes and sizes designed for different species of bird. It is better to go for a long-lasting box made from woodcrete or hardwood rather than a softwood box. This will also limit damage from grey squirrels and woodpeckers. Boxes should generally be hung at two to four metres above the ground, ideally on north to east facing walls or trees. Make sure that the box does not lie within reach of cats.

Food and Water is also important. Plant species which attract insects or are berry rich are important to help birds feed their chicks. Bird feeders are also useful and readily available. A bird bath/water source can also be provided, preferably one which can be easily washed out and can be set well above ground level.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehog runs can be created by making a simple hole in the bottom of fences between gardens; a hole 13cm x 13cm (5" x 5") will allow access for hedgehogs but not most pets. Several gardens are needed for one hedgehog territory so talk to the neighbours.



Areas of long grass, shrubs and piles of dead leaves enhance feeding and wintering opportunities. Minimising insecticides and slug pellets will also make a big difference.

Amphibians

Frogs, toads and newts will benefit from the creation of a pond. Ponds don't have to be large or deep, but they provide a rich habitat for a wide range of plants and animals. Frogs, toads, and newts spend most of the year feeding on slugs and other invertebrates away from the pond in habitats such as lawns and flowerbeds. You will also need to provide logs or stones for over-wintering.

Bats

Bats require roosting opportunities during the summer months which can be provided by long lasting woodcrete or hardwood bat boxes or a permanent bat roost within walls or roof spaces. Permanent bat roosts should be positioned at soffit level and not above windows, doors or main access paths/drives. All roosting provision should face from the south to the west to gain the maximum from the afternoon sun so that bats are warm when they emerge from the roost at sunset.

An alternative is to position bat boxes on mature trees with a clear flight path approach. It is better to hang the boxes using coach bolts at a height of three to four metres. Bands around the tree should be avoided as they will need adjusting annually.

Bug and Bee Hotels

Insects, spiders, and invertebrates are in decline. They are all critical for supporting life on the planet and the way our gardens are managed can make a significant difference to biodiversity conservation.



A mini-beast hotel can have many benefits in your garden. Not only do they attract and sustain beneficial insects such as pollinating bees, spiders, ladybirds and more as they can help keep away the types of bugs that would destroy your plants.

A mini-beast hotel or bee hotel can be provided but it doesn't have to be a high-end product. It just needs to be in the right location as some like cool, damp conditions and

others (such as solitary bees) prefer the sun, made of suitable materials and, in the case of pollinators, close to a food source.

Planting Native Species and Flower-Rich Lawns

Long grass in a sunny location can provide a range of opportunities for insects. Cutting a third every year will ensure that the grass does not scrub over whilst retaining overwintering food for caterpillars.

Flower rich lawns contain a variety of plants which could arrive naturally or could be the result of a wildflower mix. The cutting regime is generally less frequent than a conventional lawn. How often depends on the desired result but most flowers are “cut and come again”. Avoid ‘weed and feed’ type products.

Hedgerows are all generally better for wildlife than fences. They provide structures for breeding and over wintering birds and a range of other wildlife. The best hedgerows are made of native species such as hawthorn, field maple, holly, hazel, guelder rose and dog rose.



Tree planting provides better habitat structures for wildlife. Things to consider include:

- What the height and spread of the tree will be when mature.
- How much shade it will create for you and your neighbours.
- Risk to building foundations for you and your neighbours.
- Use of suitable native species

Volunteering

In addition, Derby has a successful network of community groups. You could consider volunteering for your local parks, green spaces or 'Friends of' group. Further information can be found on the [Derby Parks](#) webpage.