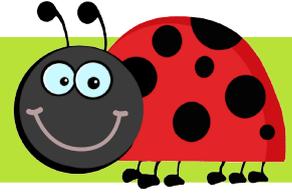


Make Your Garden Insect Friendly!



Everyone can do something to encourage insects into their garden. Not all of the suggestions given below will be possible in every garden; some are clearly only feasible if you have a larger plot. However, many of these suggestions will be possible, even with the tiniest of gardens. Appropriate food plants in containers will help attract insects into the garden and small piles of broken pots can help provide shelter.

* If you have a garden that is large enough for you to have a small patch of 'waste ground', allow native wild plants to grow. Nettles in your garden will support a number of butterfly and moth species, but should be in full sun to attract butterflies.

* Nettles also support a range of herbivorous insects that are attacked by predators, such as ladybirds and hoverflies. Your nettle patch can be used to provide a reservoir for natural enemies of pests in the rest of your garden. You can cut it back to prevent it from taking over the patch and put the cuttings into your compost bin.



* Allow a section of your lawn to grow into a small meadow. Even a very small section can be effective. Different grass species interspersed with wild flowers such as ox-eye daisies can look beautiful and will attract more insects into the garden. If you buy wild plants or seeds, do make sure that they originate from the UK.

* Try to have some form of hedgerow made from native plants such as the hawthorn or hazel under-planted with native woodland plants such as the bluebell (*Endymion non-scriptus*) and wood anemone (*Anemone nemerosa*).

* Avoid planting hybrid cultivars, especially those with double flowers, which are often sterile, and therefore useless to nectar and pollen feeders.

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'Make Your Garden Insect Friendly' continued...

* Don't trim your shrubs until later on in the summer. If you allow some of the fallen leaves and cuttings to remain in a section of the garden, you will provide useful shelter. Make small piles from broken crocks and stones to provide shelter for ground beetles and other nocturnal insects.

* Compost your rubbish rather than dispose of it. This will cut down on your garden waste, provide you with free compost and create a habitat for a variety of insects.



* Avoid using chemicals if another control method will do. Be aware that you may also be killing the natural predators that feed on the pests, such as ladybirds, ground beetles, hoverflies and parasitoid wasps. If you must control pests, look into buying biological alternatives such as parasitoids, ladybirds, nematodes or microbial pesticides, which can be purchased from garden centres.

* Try to live with pest insects and not automatically kill them. As long as they are not totally ruining your plant or crop, their presence may have no real impact.

* Encourage pest controllers such as hedgehogs, slowworms, frogs, toads and spiders into your garden by providing suitable habitats. You can purchase toad and hedgehog houses in many garden centres or make your own.

* If you don't want to plant wild flowers, traditional cottage garden plants such as lavender, buddleia, wallflowers and cornflower are ideal for nectar and pollen eating insects such as bees and butterflies.



* Dig a pond! Ponds attract dragonflies and damselflies (the Odonata) as well as other aquatic insects. They will also bring in frogs. Try and plant around the pond to provide perching points and have floating vegetation at the sides for the Odonata to lay eggs. If you really want to encourage aquatic insects and other pond life, you may want to consider having a fish-free pond. Fish will eat the eggs of frogs and many of the larvae of aquatic insects.



Thank you to Amanda Callaghan, Mark Fellowes and the Royal Entomological Society for sharing this informative activity.
For more information on British Insects please go to www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk