

## ALLOTMENTS FOR WILDLIFE

**WILDLIFE GARDENING** can be part of any garden – even one that is used for growing produce. By encouraging a diverse population of insects and other wildlife, plants grown for eating can benefit from the natural control of pests by garden predators.



### RESPONSIBLE CULTIVATION



- A good supply of compost helps keep the soil rich in organic matter, assisting plant growth and encouraging beneficial soil invertebrates.
- Consider installing a water butt. With increasing demands on water resources, it is important to make the most of any opportunity to capture natural rainwater for watering plants.
- Commercially bought plants are usually grown in peat. By growing plants from seed in trays using peat-free composts, you can avoid contributing to the destruction of peat-bog habitats. Alternatively, delay sowing until later in the spring when plants can be sown directly into the vegetable plot.

### CONTROLLING PESTS NATURALLY



- ★ Cultivating flowers that have a flat array of petals (such as daisies) encourages hoverflies, which control aphids and also help to pollinate plants.
- Use non-toxic controls instead of pesticides. For example, beer traps and porridge oats help protect tender plants from slugs.



★ denotes priority action

For more ideas please visit:

[www.rspb.org.uk/hfw/advice/12](http://www.rspb.org.uk/hfw/advice/12)



- Erecting bug-boxes will help to attract ladybirds and lacewings. These species are effective predators of less welcome insects, such as aphids.
- Providing areas of dead wood and good ground cover creates a favourable habitat for ground beetles, which will feed on pest species of insect.

## COMPANION PLANTING

- A densely planted mix of aromatic, nectar-rich and crop species provides a pleasing display and may confuse unwelcome insects, while attracting those that assist with pollination or controlling unwanted species. This is known as 'companion planting'.
- Companion planting works in a number of ways. Some insects feed on more than one type of plant. Planting a 'sacrificial' plant nearby can divert the attention of the unwanted insect away from the crop.
- Dense planting may also confuse pest insects looking for a specific food plant. Insects randomly sample a plant for suitability. If they don't land consistently on the right plant, they give up and look elsewhere.



## HELPING WILDLIFE TO SURVIVE



- ★ A good crop of vegetables may often exceed demand. When there is a surplus, allow a proportion of the crop to go to seed. This provides an important source of food for birds, particularly late in the season.
- Where weeding is necessary, it should be carried out sparingly to reduce soil disturbance and minimise moisture loss.
- Grow clover in grass adjacent to your vegetable plots. Clovers are of great value to bees as a source of nectar. By attracting bees in this way, you not only benefit them, but also encourage them to pollinate plants for you.



Front: illustration by Chris Shields (RSPB); photos by John Day (RSPB) and Nick Droy (RSPB). Back: photos by Richard Bashford (RSPB), Simon Edwin (iStockphoto.com), John O'Sullivan (RSPB) and Darren Moorcroft (RSPB).  
Regd charity England & Wales no 207076, Scotland no SC037654 380-0087-07-08