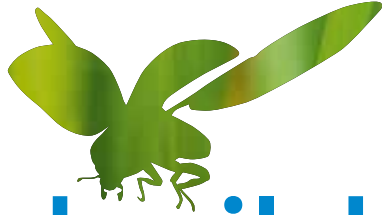




giving
nature
a home



Your starter guide to giving nature a home where you live



If you build it, they will come

Homes are where we eat, where we sleep, and where we bring up our families. Our wildlife has the same basic needs.

Wildlife and natural places are under increasing pressure and are being lost and damaged. Let's make our gardens somewhere that nature is safe. Somewhere it can thrive.

Here are 10 steps to giving nature a home where you live. Whatever time you have and whatever size space, you'll find that each activity is simple and enjoyable for you and the whole family.

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Let's make nature
feel welcome

A hedgehog is curled up on a grassy patch in a garden. The background is filled with autumn foliage, including green and yellow leaves on trees and bushes. The overall scene is soft and natural.

Ten steps to a wildlife-friendly garden

Step 1: grow flowering plants

Giving nature a home starts with plants. Grow as many flowering plants as you can fit in your garden. Plenty of flowers throughout the year help provide nectar, pollen and shelter for bugs, which provide food for birds and beasts. Visit [rspb.org.uk/homes](https://www.rspb.org.uk/homes) for more advice.



Helps all garden wildlife

Step 2: invest in a tree or shrub

Trees, shrubs and climbers may take a few years before they mature, but they will eventually become places for wildlife to shelter, breed and feed. If you've got a balcony or small garden, you can still encourage wildlife with a mix of pot-grown shrubs, climbers and dwarf trees. What you plant really depends on the amount of space you have, but if they produce flowers and fruit or berries, you can't go far wrong. A few wildlife favourites are crab apple, rowan, hawthorn, privet, dog rose, ivy and honeysuckle.

Helps birds and bugs

Step 3: give your mower a rest

If you have a lawn, it can be a great place for wildlife to live – especially if you let it grow. When it is time to cut your lawn, raise the height of your mower blades. This may make it better for bugs, which provide vital food for other animals. If you have space, a patch of longer grass over summer and winter might house and shelter all sorts of wildlife. You may even attract some butterflies, moths and grasshoppers that need long grass to complete their life cycles.

Helps birds, bugs and beasts

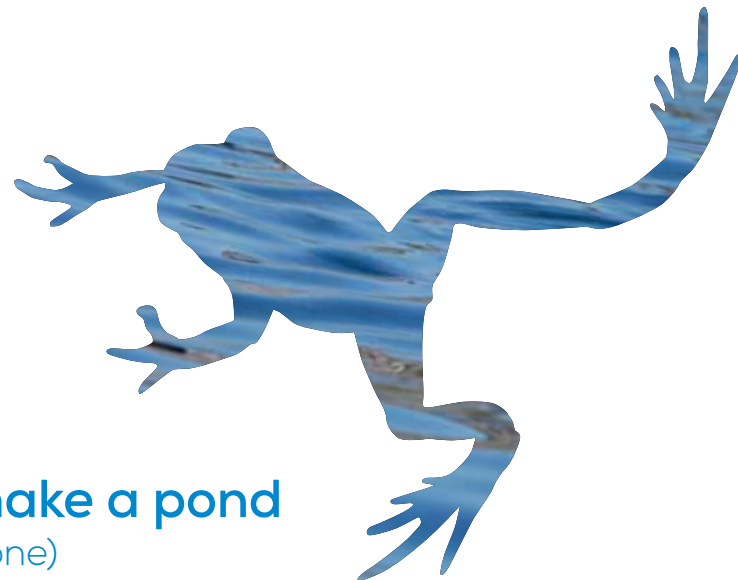
Step 4: make dead wood piles

Dead and rotting wood provides a home where fungi, mosses and lichens can grow. As it decays, a pile of wood becomes a bug hotel for a variety of bugs. So whenever you prune, add the cut branches to the pile. If you have a balcony, fill a well-drained bucket with soil and wood chippings to attract bugs. To make it even better, you could add a couple of small rotting branches and put it next to flowers.

Helps bugs, which help garden wildlife



More water in your garden
means more wildlife.



Step 5: make a pond (even a mini one)

Adding a pond to your garden is one of the best ways to give nature a home. Even a small pond could attract dragonflies, frogs, pond-skaters and newts, as well as giving wildlife a place to drink and bathe.

It's best to line a big pond with heavy-duty polythene or butyl rubber. Create shallow edges to allow birds to bathe, hedgehogs to climb out, and frogs to spawn. And create a deep area, at least 45 cm (18 inches) in the middle – this deep area won't freeze, so wildlife can spend the winter in there safely.

If you have a balcony or small garden, you can still help wildlife by making a mini pond. Get a plant tub or washing up bowl, then add gravel or small rocks to the bottom. Pile rocks on one side to help any animals climb in and out. And finally, add in native oxygenating plants, such as hornwort. Although it will freeze easily and will attract fewer bugs than a big pond, a mini pond will still help wildlife.

For more detailed advice, visit [rspb.org.uk/homes](https://www.rspb.org.uk/homes)

[Helps all wildlife](#)

Step 6: feed garden birds

Put out a variety of food all year and you'll give the birds in your garden a boost, helping them survive hard times. Buy good quality feeders and keep them clean to prevent the spread of disease. Ideal foods are: sunflower hearts, seed mixes, suet pellets, porridge oats and apples. Birds need water too, so leave fresh water in a shallow dish.

Helps birds

Step 7: build a wildlife shelter

A well-planted and cared-for garden offers lots of places for nature to feed, shelter and breed. But to a bird, bat or hedgehog looking for a place to raise its young, an artificial home can be a valuable alternative to a natural shelter. You can build shelters or you can buy a variety of wildlife boxes (visit rspbshop.co.uk for suggestions) and then put them out at any time of year.

Helps birds, bugs and beasts



Step 8: create nature corridors

Your garden is part of a bigger home for wildlife. Hedges and shrubby borders, and gaps beneath fences and gates, link gardens together, creating nature highways and corridors. This allows all sorts of creatures, such as hedgehogs and toads, to move between your garden and those of your neighbours and raises the quality of the whole street for wildlife.

Helps all garden wildlife

Step 9: be green when you garden

Here are three tips for gardening in an environmentally friendly way:

- Avoid using peat. The peat you find in garden centres has been taken from some of Europe's most valuable places for wildlife. By using peat-free alternatives, you help protect these precious places from destruction.
- Avoid pesticides. If you have an insect pest in your garden, consider using a natural method to deal with it, rather than pesticides. Chemical pesticides can harm the plants and animals that benefit your garden. You'll find more detailed information at rspb.org.uk/homes
- Get a water butt. Captured rainwater is much better for watering your garden and topping up your pond than tap water.


Helps all nature

Step 10: tell us what you have done

Share how you're giving nature a home and encourage others to do the same. Let's create the biggest home building project in the country – all for nature. Sign in at rspb.org.uk/homes, upload your photos on Facebook or Instagram or tweet us using **#homesfornature**

 RSPBLoveNature

 @natures_voice

 rspb_love_nature





Help the RSPB build homes on a large scale

Everywhere you look, wildlife is missing from the places it once lived. Of the 6,000 British species assessed recently, more than 1 in 10 are threatened with extinction in the UK. But together with our members and supporters we're making a difference.

Whether we're bringing nature back to a garden, forest, reedbed or heathland, the basic principles are the same: nature needs somewhere to shelter, breed and feed. With decades of practice, dedication and passion we're giving nature a home right across the country. Here's how we do it:

We protect important places

We look after more than 200 nature reserves. These are some of the best places for wildlife in the UK, from heathland to woodland, and reedbeds to farmland – all kept in ideal condition for threatened plants, insects, birds, beasts, reptiles and amphibians.

We work with partners

We work with landowners, farmers, businesses and other environmental organisations to make more space for nature across the UK – in farms, parks, cities and communities. More nature creates better health and wellbeing for everyone.

We campaign for nature

Decisions made by government about the way our landscapes and seas are managed have an enormous impact on the wildlife that lives there. We campaign to protect species from damaging developments, and to create the conditions they need to flourish.

We inspire the young

We help young people get close to nature: in and out of the classroom, and on our nature reserves. We give them the first-hand experiences that lead to a lifelong love of nature, because future generations must love birds and other wildlife if they are to protect them.

Support the RSPB in making homes for nature



Take another step for nature:

Visit

rspb.org.uk/homes

Here you'll find lots more wildlife gardening advice tailored specifically to your own garden.

Give

a donation at
rspb.org.uk/donate

Your gift today, whatever you can afford, will create a world richer in wildlife tomorrow. Thank you.


Share

your experiences at
rspb.org.uk/homes

Visit the site for more information, to see what others are doing, to chat, enter competitions and more.

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the RSPB at
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It's the best way to give nature a home across the whole of the UK today.

Buy

something for your garden at
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Everything you need to give nature a home in your garden. All profits go directly to helping us give nature a home.

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The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654. 460-1620-12-13

Working together to give nature a home.

