



Making Way for Nature

in our gardens, allotments, orchards and community spaces





Community-grown wildflowers near Forfar Academy – © C A G Lloyd

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The Tayside BeeWild Initiative

The Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan, published in 2002 and again in 2016, focuses action on threatened habitats and species, both urban and rural. The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership is actively taking forward 70+ projects which are each contributing to national targets. Many of these projects involve local communities.



BeeWild is one such initiative. It is exploring ways to safeguard our local pollinators – the bumblebees, butterflies, solitary bees and honey bees, beetles, moths and hoverflies which all play a part in pollinating our fruit, vegetables and crops.

Small changes in how we manage greenspace and gardens (of all sizes) can really help:

- Reducing the use of chemical sprays, especially insecticides and weed killers, will help retain food plants and prey species for many pollinators. It is especially important not to spray open flowers.
- Planting a large range of garden flowers can encourage less specialist bumblebees and solitary bees to collect nectar and pollen from a variety of plants.
- Many pollinators can be active over much of the year (especially in mild winters), so having pollinator-friendly plants in flower through most seasons really helps.
- As the loss of traditional flower-rich meadows has contributed to the decline of some of our more specialist bumblebees and solitary bees, new wildflower plantings can help - but to be really effective, they should be part of a wider "wildlife corridor".
- If we can't provide habitat for pollinators to nest and breed in (such as over-wintering hollow plant stems, dead wood and tussocky grass), we can still help by installing bug hotels, bumblebee hibernation boxes or insect homes.

For the price of a few seeds, everyone can enjoy watching sunflowers grow and blossom – you can even plant them in a pot or window box. Different varieties flower at different times so sunflowers can be enjoyed from June until October. Schools, community groups and care homes can keep a 'Sunflower Diary' to add measurements, sketches, photos and observations as to which bees and hoverflies visit the flowers. The seed head can then be saved to feed the birds (on or detached from the plant) and the hollow stems can be used in making a natural bee hotel.



© C A G Lloyd



© C A G Lloyd – Rudbeckia is a good late-season food plant for butterflies, bees and hoverflies; leave the seedheads on for birds.

Introduction

Since the publication of the first edition of this booklet, more and more community groups are taking an active role in managing their local greenspace: allotments are becoming commonplace and there is a huge resurgence of interest in safeguarding our traditional orchards and planting new community orchards. Care homes, eco-congregations, schools and businesses all want to improve their surroundings.

Community greenspace is extremely important. It contributes to our mental well-being and helps us keep fit, as well as providing local food and opportunities to create high-quality produce. It has long been known that hospital patients who have a view of nature from their window are discharged earlier. Workers with a view of trees have lower stress levels. People's memories improve if they can sit or walk in nature – good for both school children and those coping with dementia.

More and more species, many of them once common, are threatened with extinction and more and more habitats are degraded. Britain, for instance, has lost 97% of its flower-rich meadows. We are rapidly losing our garden birds and bumblebees and butterflies are in serious decline.

Many of us just don't know how to make a difference. But there are over a million hectares of gardens in the UK – and that's before we add allotments, community gardens or orchards. Suddenly there is a great deal we can all do to preserve 'the web of life'. It doesn't matter if we just have a window box or a small patio. We can easily provide biodiversity havens in our patch and contribute to the network of wildlife corridors around us.

We do not know the consequences of losing our all-important wildlife except that it will massively diminish the quality of life for all of us. Most of our food is pollinated by insects – in the UK alone this is worth £430m. Scotland's natural environment is one of its key assets – to the tune of £17.2bn per year. By gardening with wildlife in mind, we can benefit as much as the other species we share the Earth with.

This booklet brings together some of the best ideas to enhance our community spaces, but it will, hopefully, prove useful to anyone wishing to improve their own garden, the car parking area around their workplace, the local church and its surroundings, the nearby day care centre or nursing home.



The allotment at Cultybraggan, Perthshire – © C A G Lloyd

What is Biodiversity?

It simply means “the variety of all living things”: it includes the tiniest insects and the largest trees – and us.

Healthy Eating, Healthy Exercise and Local Food

Working in a community garden or orchard, allotment or any greenspace, can be enjoyed alone or with families or friends. There is the mental stimulation of planning next year's crop, deciding what to grow and making it possible with physical work.

We can save money growing our own fruit and vegetables, but more important, perhaps, is knowing exactly what we are eating. We can take control of our own health, helping to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers. Our food miles reduce and we become part of the local food movement. Children involved in growing vegetables and picking fruit are much more likely to eat it and accept healthy eating habits early on. And we can help beneficial pollinators en route with growing companion plants (such as French marigolds) in with the crop.

Community Spaces – Gardens, Orchards and Allotments

As gardeners we quickly learn that we are just one of many species in the natural world of a garden. This biodiverse habitat teems with life throughout the seasons and is a partnership from which we all benefit when we follow good gardening practices.

Remember:

No matter what you grow, the garden, orchard or allotment is still a habitat for wildlife and you don't need to have a wilderness to attract it. 'Wild corners' can be helpful in attracting beneficial insects, but if they are inappropriate, you can still make a real difference by observing what is around you and considering how your usual gardening activities affect wildlife. Some of the neatest gardens and allotments are exceptionally rich in wildlife because of the type of plants grown and the way they are managed.

Ten Top Tips to Safeguard Wildlife

1. Site nestboxes and bat boxes in quiet areas, sheltered from extremes of weather and away from cats and other predators. Clean out each winter.
2. Avoid using chemicals - they kill beneficial insects and can endanger hedgehogs and birds.
3. Grow nectar-rich flowers in early spring to help queen bumblebees, then plant nectar-bearing summer plants for the rest of the colony.
4. Pollen and nectar-rich plants are needed by other insects, including butterflies.
5. Dense shrubs and hedges help conceal small birds and fledglings from predators, so don't cut or trim during nesting time.



6. Move bonfire material to a fresh site before setting alight so that hedgehogs, frogs or toads escape incineration.
7. Undisturbed places provide somewhere for wildlife to hide in the summer and shelter in the winter.
8. Carefully check undergrowth before strimming to ensure hedgehogs, toads and frogs are not present.
9. A bowl containing pebbles and half filled with water allows butterflies, birds, amphibians and mammals safe access to water.
10. A sink 'pond' or tub is safe for all the family, but still provides water for wildlife. Different depths filled with rocks and plants will prevent birds from drowning.

Community Gardens

Community gardens can be an important focus for community activity, as well as providing an oasis for quiet walks or meeting friends. Such a garden can help create a green corridor between private gardens and other landscape features such as hedges and treelines, rivers and burns, greenspace and allotments. These vital 'natural bridges' help many mammals (in particular bats, hedgehogs, and red squirrels) and invertebrates move from garden to garden and out into the surrounding countryside.

There is a lot of information available about setting up and running a community garden. The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens has a Scottish Community Garden Starter Pack which covers the complex issues of negotiating for a site and then developing a community garden. There is advice on legal obligations, fundraising and employing staff. Further details are available from www.farmgarden.org.uk.

Grow Your Own Scotland also has a wealth of information available via www.growyourownsotland.info.

Think in seasons! Are you providing pollinating opportunities for beneficial insects such as bumblebees, hoverflies and butterflies? Plan your garden or allotment so that there are flowers from February through to November. It will look great for everyone using the garden - and be of huge value to wildlife.



Companion Planting – © C A G Lloyd



Meigle Community Garden "Pow Wow" – © Sue Cole



View from the pond at Coalyards, Glenfarg – © C A G Lloyd

Allotments For All Ages

The main purpose of an allotment is to provide land for growing fruit and vegetables, but Scottish planning policy now recognises that allotments are particularly important elements of greenspace networks in increasingly built-up urban areas.

It is not just individuals who benefit from working an allotment. Gardening is highly therapeutic and many groups on allotments have health and well-being as key objectives. Allotments can also support lifelong learning opportunities - university students use allotments as a study resource as part of their art, planning and environmental courses. Allotment sites are used by trainees aged between 15 and 18 years who are not in education or employment. The emphasis is on developing vocational and personal skills in addition to improving the young people's health. Eco Schools take allotment plots to hone their Citizenship skills as well as environmental awareness.

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society is the key organisation to contact – its website provides template constitutions and sample leases, case studies and links explaining the law relating to allotments.

Many allotments have communal areas for meeting as a group, enjoying barbecues, etc. This space can often host a pond, an orchard area or a mini wildflower meadow - perfect for wildlife.



Photograph © C A G Lloyd



Photograph © C A G Lloyd



Photograph © C A G Lloyd

Top Tips for Gardens and Allotments

Add compost: In spring earthworm activity is increased when organic matter such as composted vegetation or farmyard manure is worked into the soil. This keeps it open and aerated and retains moisture near to the roots of summer crops.

Rotate vegetable crops: This helps to prevent the build-up of crop specific, soil-based problems, but also helps maintain the nutrient balance across the whole cultivated area.

Grow a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs: The early flowers of gooseberries and currants offer nectar to emerging bees and other insects. Later in the season the flowers of vegetables and herbs provide nectar. Different flowers attract different insects and pollination depends on their visits.

Companion planting: Certain plants grown together help reduce attack by pests and disease. For example, onions or leeks grown with carrots help deter the carrot fly. French marigolds grown with tomatoes make whitefly infestation less likely. Pollination can also be improved by planting flowering herbs among the vegetables: sage with carrots or brassicas, borage with tomatoes (or amongst fruit trees). The benefit to us is that it looks attractive too.

Grow some native flowers and berried bushes: Plants native to Scotland tend to cope well in our climate and soil conditions, producing flowers, berries and seeds. Many 'exotic' plants are, however, just as good for wildlife so they do not need to be dismissed. The simpler the flower, the easier it is for bees and hoverflies to access them: bear this in mind if choosing many double-flowered 'exotics'. More than 70% of our birds depend on insects which in turn, depend on plants, so our choices are important.



Provide water: A regular supply of water can be provided in a shallow dish, but make sure flat stones are added to help birds perch near the water. If appropriate, include a water dish on the ground for hedgehogs, but keep this hidden from pets. Ponds or water features such as a water sink or barrel, flowforms or bog gardens can be a welcome feature in many community gardens and allotments.

In the autumn provide food and shelter for wildlife: Leave seed heads and foliage on herbaceous perennial plants, tidying them away only in the spring - many beneficial insects hibernate in plant stems. A pile of fallen leaves, twigs and other vegetation in a corner of the garden will help give shelter to frogs, toads, hedgehogs and field-mice.

Garden or allotment buildings - if suitable, enhance with bird feeders, bird or bat boxes, or consider a "green roof" of sedum, mosses or wildflowers.

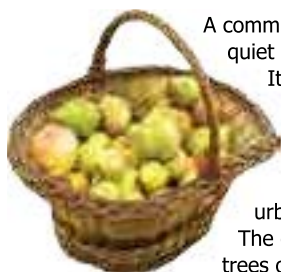
Green or 'living' roofs can be large or small
© James Farrell

Starting up a Community or School Orchard

In the past, Tayside has been well-known for its orchards. Many of these were within walled gardens or as commercial plantings for jam making. The Carse of Gowrie orchards started life nearly 800 years ago as part of the great medieval 'grange' farms managed by local abbeys. Many Scottish varieties are from this area, including the Bloody Ploughman, Tower of Glamis and Lady of Wemyss. New community and school orchards are being enthusiastically planted and tended. Developers and housing associations are beginning to consider the planting of fruit trees in either the front or back gardens of new-builds. Local Authority parks are safeguarding existing trees or considering planting new orchard areas or fruit tree avenues.



The start of the Apple Arch at Alyth Primary School
© Alison Bowman



A community orchard can provide a focus for community activity, provide a quiet retreat for relaxation, or an attractive place for walking or picnicking.

It creates a distinctive green space and can provide a source of fresh fruit for local people. It also helps to safeguard the local varieties of fruit - not just apples, but also pears and plums for which Tayside is well-known. As in a community garden, community orchards can help to link private gardens and parks to create a vital green corridor through an urban area. This benefits the movement of wildlife – mammals, birds and insects. The orchard itself can be a biodiversity hotspot, especially if there are knarled old trees or standing deadwood. Many windblown trees still continue to bear fruit and are extremely important to retain for their biodiversity value. It is important to have as wide an age range of fruit trees as possible – old and new – as this helps safeguard beneficial insects.

Managed without the use of chemicals, the orchard can be a refuge, very rich in wildlife: from mammals and birds to insects and plants. In school orchards the children can help plant them, tend them and then finally collect the harvest and celebrate Apple Day with longest peel competitions, artwork, cooking the produce or helping to prune the new fruit trees. The orchard can also be used for scientific studies, including researching old varieties, measuring growth rates, mapping local orchards, photography and drawing.

Advice Notes are available from www.centralcoreorchardnetwork.co.uk.

The booklet 'Traditional Orchards in Tayside – a Guide to Wildlife and Management' can be downloaded from www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk.

Applethreeman is the local one stop shop for advice, training and supply of fruit trees - www.plantsandapples.co.uk. Suppliers elsewhere in the UK are shown in the "Further Information" section.

An orchard does not have to be a square plot: linear orchards can be just as good – an avenue of fruit trees along a path in a community garden or school grounds, for instance. If the site is relatively small, an apple arch can be planted or the trees can be pleached or cordoned against a wall or trellis. There are "step over" fruit trees suitable for making a low hedge. You can also use tall-grown fruit trees as a live boundary - trimmed to form a narrow wall of fruit trees at the back of a garden or school.



Top Tips for Orchards

Wild corners: equally relevant in allotments and community gardens, uncut grass strips or difficult-to-use corners can be left to provide shelter and food for over-wintering insects, birds and mammals. They will also provide a hunting ground for kestrels and barn owls. Native hogweed and other umbellifers such as cow parsley, are especially good for attracting beneficial insects.

Boundary walls or hedges will give welcome shelter, not just to the fruit trees planted within, but to the rich biodiversity that inhabits them - from lichens, mosses and liverworts on walls to nesting birds, mammals and bumblebees in the hedges.

Trim hedges once every two years - and then only in late January or February. This will provide food for the birds during much of the winter.

Wildflower meadow areas grown beneath orchards will greatly increase the invertebrate numbers (especially bees) to help pollinate the fruit. Managed carefully, the meadow area can be of great visual interest, helping create a special "contemplation" or "festival" zone during the spring and summer months.

Veteran trees: planting new trees, either in an existing orchard, or a relatively new one, will provide important habitat in the next few decades as the trees age. Many orchard insects rely on decaying wood using splits in the bark, rot holes or hollow trunks in dead trees or veteran trees. Most old trees are still good fruiterers - even if they are windblown and on their side. Holes in old trees are vital as roosting sites for bats, or nesting places for a variety of birds (including woodpeckers).



Pear orchard on the Carse of Gowrie
© C A G Lloyd



© C A G Lloyd



© C A G Lloyd

Sustainable Gardening

Soil

The key to successful gardening is healthy soil. Sustaining the goodness in the soil is vitally important for healthy plants, vegetables and fruit. This can either be done using artificial fertilizers and finite natural resources such as peat or by using products and processes which are natural. If we garden in harmony with the natural processes already happening on our plot, biodiversity will benefit as well as protecting our health and the health of our environment.

Compost

Composting is part of the natural cycle of growth and decay. Numerous microscopic organisms of both vegetable and animal origin break down the vegetable matter and release nutrients into the soil in a form which plants can use. In turn, the plants provide food for the insects which then become food for the birds. We disturb this cycle by removing part of the natural ecosystem. If we continue to remove and not replace plant material, the soil becomes unproductive because it is deficient in essential nutrients.

Artificial fertilizers do not support the growth and the activity of the beneficial micro-life in the soil, nor do they improve the soil structure. They do, however, deplete the world's fossil resources.

Information on how to make your own garden compost can be found here: try www.homecomposting.org.uk or www.rhs.org.uk or just search for 'compost'.

Organic fertilizers

Natural fertilizers such as bone meal, blood and fish meal can be used to improve the nutrients in the soil. So can home-made liquid comfrey, seaweed 'tea' and other green fertilizers. Further information can be downloaded via www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com.

Farmyard manure

Farmyard manure is a good source of nitrogen, but garden compost, because of its more varied micro-organisms produces a much wider variety of nutrients.

Green manure

Green manures are ideal whenever a patch of land is going to be free of crops for six weeks or more, and they are particularly useful to vegetable gardeners and allotment holders. Although many green manures can be sown all year round, they are ideal when sown in the autumn to over-winter, when vegetable plots are generally empty. For more information visit www.bbc.co.uk/gardening and www.rhs.org.uk.

Rock dust

Pioneered by the SEER Centre Trust near Pitlochry, rock dust contains a very wide range of slow release minerals and trace elements. Organically approved, the dust increases microbial activity, reduces odour and improves fertility in compost - www.seercentre.org.uk.

Peat

Using peat-free alternative products such as coir will help protect Scotland's fast disappearing peat bogs which have taken thousands of years to create. Download the 'Garden Without Peat' leaflet from SNH's Garden for Life series www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/845511/peat.pdf

Mulching

Adding a protective layer of compost, bark chips or coir helps retain moisture in the soil and suppresses weed growth down. As the mulch rots down it also helps to add nutrients to the soil.



The Living Soil

Earthworms are a key species of the soil. Besides the minerals in the soil they require organic matter in the form of decaying vegetation. The casts they produce breakdown to provide nutrients for the roots of plants. Earthworms create a vast network of tunnels that help air and water circulate throughout the soil, benefiting plant roots and other soil living organisms.

Unfortunately the New Zealand flatworm is widely distributed throughout Scotland and kills our native earthworm. This not only affects the health of the soil, but is detrimental to animals such as moles and badgers that eat earthworms. To take part in a survey (or find out more about the NZ Flatworm) check: www.opalexplornature.org/nzflatworm

Other beneficial soil living organisms include moles, millipedes, centipedes, woodlice and ground beetles which all improve the soil. Their burrowing, feeding activities and waste products aid the incorporation of organic matter, help soil drainage, aeration and prevent soil compaction.

Organic matter is deposited all the time from fallen leaves, dead and living plant material, remains of dead animals and animal waste. We can add farmyard manure or rotted down compost. This helps to improve the structure of the soil as it breaks up heavy clay and increases the moisture retentive properties of sandy soil.

Soil micro-organisms include tiny fungi, bacteria, protozoa, very small insects, larvae and worms. These are all involved in the process of decomposition of organic matter. This is a complex process with many stages which is extremely beneficial to the soil and the ecosystem as a whole.



Top Tips for Wildflower Planting

- 1 Use single-flowered cultivars so that insects can reach the nectar more easily.
- 2 Grow night-scented plants to enjoy yourself and attract moths (and bats).
- 3 Plant for each season – bees and butterflies need a long season of nectar-rich plants.
- 4 Plants in pots are just as good as herbaceous borders – herbs by the kitchen door, for instance.
- 5 Use local-origin seeds or pot-grown native plants.



Boundary Biodiversity

Some of the richest wildlife areas can be found around boundaries. A few simple actions can increase biodiversity, improve security and enhance the view at the same time.

Hedges

A thick hedge around the garden, orchard or allotment is invaluable as it can deter unwelcome intruders, lessen traffic noise and provide food for insects, birds, mammals - and us. It is an effective windbreak, a shelter belt and a superb wildlife habitat. A hedge can also act as a green corridor which allows wildlife to move from place to place in relative safety. (See Table 1)

A good native hedge should be planted in a staggered double row 30cm wide with 25cm between plants. Hawthorn attracts over 200 species of insect which in turn are important food sources for birds, bats and mammals. A mix of hawthorn and blackthorn as the main hedging plants is ideal and they can be interspersed with other species such as holly, hazel and dog-rose to give a variety of flowers, nuts and berries throughout the seasons. This will provide a variety of attractive, nectar producing flowers in the spring, nest sites during the summer and essential winter food.

A new hedge should be pruned hard in its first two years so that there is thick growth at the base. It takes about four years for a hedge to mature, after which a trim every other year will ensure a selection of flowers and berries. Faster growing plants such as dog roses and brambles (where appropriate), can be used to fill gaps. Small trees: crab apple, rowan, bird cherry or hazel, increase the diversity of the plant species and provide additional food for the wildlife. Standard trees can provide song posts for some of the more territorial birds.

If a particularly strong barrier is required, the hedge can be laid - cutting the branches almost through and interweaving them. Planting thornier species can also help make an impenetrable hedge.

Alternatively, attractive "soft hedges" can be grown which are wildlife-orientated: lavender, pyracanthus, box, or rosemary. These often look best as low hedges grown to delineate certain areas of the allotment or garden.

Fences, pergolas, summer houses, gateways and arches - even sheds can be used as frames for attractive climbing plants such as clematis, roses, honeysuckle and ivy - all good for wildlife. As a year-round wildlife plant, ivy cannot be bettered as it provides winter berries for birds, very early nectar for bumblebees, nesting for sparrows and hibernation areas for bats. Existing features can be enhanced to look good and assist wildlife. Vegetables such as runner beans or French beans can be grown on pergolas and arches, and hanging baskets can be filled with Tom Thumb tomatoes, chillies, herbs and nasturtiums.

Stone or brick walls can host a wide variety of lichens and mosses, and provide a home to mason bees. Where appropriate, small plants can be allowed to gain a foothold to add visual attractiveness and give another dimension to the garden wildlife. Un-mortared stone walls can provide insect food for wrens, robins and other birds as well as important hibernation places for lizards and toads.

An undisturbed log pile against the boundary gives a home to toads, spiders, millipedes, centipedes and ground beetles and will often be used by birds such as wrens, searching for food.



Wild areas - in many allotment and garden areas there are small pieces of ground - under trees, compost heap corners, wet or stony patches - that can be left alone as they provide excellent refuges for amphibians, reptiles, bumblebees and butterflies. Alternatively, a planted wildflower strip, either in a communal area, or along one side of an allotment can add bright summer colour and attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies. This can be replicated in a community garden or orchard too. Don't forget to provide a quiet corner for hedgehogs: keep a space under the shed, install a hedgehog hibernation box where it won't be disturbed, or pile autumn leaves up in a corner.

Pond And Water Features

Making a pond is one of the most effective things you can do to improve an allotment or garden's biodiversity; the results can often be seen in a very short time.

Ponds not only provide breeding places for frogs, toads, dragonflies and newts, but also provide drinking places for other wildlife such as birds, field-mice and squirrels. Even a small pond or water feature will be used, especially if there is another pond nearby.

Building a pond:

- Choose a sunny, sheltered spot. Include some border planting to give light shade for some of the day.
- Avoid over-hanging trees: leaves rotting in the water reduces the amount of oxygen in the pond and can kill some of its wildlife.
- Make one area of the pond fairly deep to allow aquatic wildlife to hide and survive extremes of temperature.
- One side should slope up to ground level so that frogs, toads – and hedgehogs - can easily get out of the pond. Alternatively, gently step the base to provide different depths for a variety of plants.
- The shallowest step could be separated from the main pond by a water-permeable barrier, filled with soil and planted as a bog garden.

Planting a pond:

- Plant enough vegetation to give cover for amphibians and give escape routes for dragonflies and damselflies.
- Leave enough open space for birds to come down and drink.
- Add oxygenating plants to deter algae – use plants such as water buttercup or one of the native pondweeds.
- Avoid rampant growers - planting in pots controls the growth of plants in small ponds.
- Choose a selection of plants: different types will encourage different wildlife.

Other water features

If a pond is not appropriate, but there is still a damp area that cannot be used for anything else, consider making a bog garden. After a lot of rainfall, bog gardens will often resemble ponds, but they will dry out and make very attractive features if planted with wet-loving plant species such as purple loosestrife, ragged robin, flag iris. Bog plants often prefer lots of organic matter, rather than pond plants which prefer a low-nutrient environment, so ponds and bog gardens provide very different habitats.

If neither a pond nor bog garden is suitable, or if there are young children or elderly people on site, water can still be a feature: consider sink or half-barrel ponds, a pebble pond – or even a "flowform" water sculpture. Ponds in raised beds are also a good option.



The flowform at Glenfarg - a sculptural water feature
© C A G Lloyd

Top Tips for Ponds & Water Features

- 1 Ornamental fish eat tadpoles and insect larvae and can make the water murky. In most cases it is best to avoid using them in 'wildlife ponds'.
- 2 Top water levels up in dry weather: rain collected in a water butt is ideal. Never use tap water.
- 3 Clean the pond in the autumn to avoid disturbing any hibernating wildlife; leave vegetation or silt at the side of the pond for at least a day to allow any trapped pond life to escape back into the water.
- 4 Avoid using fertilisers nearby as run-off can pollute the water.
- 5 Use native pond plants and avoid introducing non-native invasive plants.



Caution - ponds should not be accessible to small children

Other Things to Think About

Water

Save water: collect rainwater in water butts from shed or greenhouse roofs and use a watering can to water only the plant roots where it is needed.

Timber

Use local wood from sustainably managed plantations. British-grown hardwoods and spruce, pine and larch from other European countries are available in many stores, but check it is 'FCS standard'.

Reuse timber wherever possible and consider treating the wood with one of the natural wood preservatives containing vegetable oils and tree resin. Untreated wood will not last as long, but will help safeguard lichens and mosses.

Feed the birds

Food shortages can occur throughout the year so if you start to feed birds, it is best not to stop. A well-managed wildlife garden will provide most of the needs of adults and young birds, but you could supplement with high protein foods in the summer (ensuring your choice does not harm young chicks). Further advice is available from www.rspb.org.uk and www.bto.org.uk.

Pesticide alternatives

Find out about the life cycle of pests or diseases so that preventative action can be timed: for example, use a barrier to deter a pest, put out a slug trap, pick off caterpillars by hand or prune diseased and damaged stems. Consider 'companion planting' to safeguard against pests.



Toad by a pond – © D Muir







Wonderful pond life – © D Muir

Table 1 - Boundary Biodiversity





Hedging Plants	Flowers & Fruit	Benefits
Blackthorn (sloe) Prunus spinosa	Flowers March to April. Sloes in autumn.	Pretty blossom in spring. Jam and sloe gin.
Worcesterberry Ribes divaricatum	Flowers in March. Fruits July to August. Hybrid with gooseberry and blackcurrant parents.	Jam and stewed fruit.
Holly Ilex aquifolium	Evergreen. Flowers April to May. Berries (poisonous) in autumn.	Christmas decorations.
Cotoneaster Rosaceae family (there are 200 species)	Flowers late spring with many berries in autumn.	Visual interest in winter and spring.
Hawthorn Crataegus monogyna	Flowers May to June and haws in autumn.	Pretty blossom in spring. Jelly.
Guelder Rose Viburnum opulus	Flowers June to July. Fronds of red berries in autumn.	Visual interest in autumn.
Firethorn Pyracantha (many species)	Evergreen. Flowers early summer followed by berries in autumn.	
Sweet Briar Rosa rubiginosa	Flowers June to July. Rosehips in autumn.	Rose hip syrup (for Vitamin C)
Honeysuckle Lonicera periclymenum	Flowers June to September with berries in autumn.	Fragrant flowers.
Dog Rose Rosa Canina	Flowers midsummer; large hips in autumn.	
Ramanas Rose Rosa Rugosa	Flowers all summer and autumn; large fruits in autumn.	Can be invasive, so needs careful management.
Hornbeam Carpinus betulus	Nuts in the autumn.	
Winter Honeysuckle Lonicera Purpusii	Winter-flowering.	Visual interest in winter and early spring.
Bramble Rubus spp.	Flowers July to September. Fruit August / September.	Pies, jam and jelly.
Buddleia Buddleia davidii and Buddleia globosa	Flowers summer to autumn.	Can be invasive, so needs careful management.
Hazel Coryllus avallana	Catkins in early spring. Nuts in Autumn	Good shelter. Visual interest in early spring.
Box Buxus sempervirens	Evergreen	When unclipped, fragrant flowers in the spring.





Table 2 - Biodiversity Benefits

Beneficial Creatures	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
<p>Bats</p> 	<p>Males and females come out of hibernation and need to feed well to get into good condition.</p> <p>April- May: females gather in warm places to give birth. Planting a variety of night scented flowers, trees and shrubs and creating ponds helps provide insect food and shelter for bats.</p>	<p>Females give birth to just one baby in mid summer: the young are fed milk.</p> <p>The males do not help to raise the young. By July young bats are learning to fly.</p> <p>Adult bats feed on insects – craneflies, aphids, moths and midges.</p>	<p>Most bats search out a cooler roost for Autumn, but some will use the same roost all year around.</p> <p>Bats concentrate on feeding and resting to build up fat for hibernation.</p>	<p>Bats hibernate - they need cool, moist, undisturbed places, safe from predators. They will wake up occasionally to stretch their wings, drink or move site.</p>
<p>Hedgehogs</p> 	<p>Hibernation ends and breeding begins. The young are born in a specially built nest by the female.</p>	<p>Hedgehogs sleep all day. An adult male can travel 3km in one night. They feed after dark on a diet of slugs, snails, beetles and worms.</p>	<p>A hibernation nest is built of piles of grass or leaves beneath a hedgerow.</p>	<p>Hedgehogs hibernate and emerge as the days warm up. If the winter is mild they will need plenty of food to survive.</p>
<p>Blue Tits</p> 	<p>7-12 eggs are laid in late spring. On average a pair of adults rear two broods each year.</p> <p>All birds keep pests at bay all year round in their search for food.</p>	<p>Fewer eggs are laid in summer. Adults visit the nest to feed their young hundreds of times in one day.</p> <p>Blue tits feed on insects and larvae (especially caterpillars).</p>	<p>Berries, fruits and seeds are eaten.</p> <p>Plant hedging which contains native species - hawthorn, holly and dog rose; they provide both shelter and food.</p>	<p>Blue tits shelter in tree cavities in the winter.</p> <p>Grubs in tree bark offers essential fat-rich food. They also need berries and grass seeds to survive.</p>
<p>Frogs and Toads</p> 	<p>Frogs and toads eat almost any live prey they can find including insects, slugs and snails.</p>	<p>Provide a small pond, bog garden or damp grassland. Remember to add a few rocks or logs in different areas, or leave a wall unmortared to provide resting or hibernation areas.</p>		<p>Frogs and toads hibernate in the bottom of ponds. If you carry out work to a pond in the winter, do not do it all at once and leave the silt to one side for a few days to allow wildlife to escape.</p>

<p>Bumblebees</p> 	<p>The mated queen bee emerges from hibernation and feeds on nectar and pollen from spring flowers. She begins to lay her eggs and worker bees hatch three weeks later.</p> <p>Bumblebees are much better pollinators than honey bees.</p>	<p>Eggs continue to hatch and bees feed from nectar and pollen rich flowers throughout the summer.</p> <p>Plant a variety of native wildflowers as well as cultivated varieties to flower over as long a season as possible.</p>	<p>The mated young queen bee searches for a hibernation place, e.g. a pile of leaves, tussocky grass, or an undisturbed hedge bottom.</p>	<p>The old drones, worker bees and queens die at the first frost. Only the young queen survives to hibernate over the winter.</p>
<p>Butterflies and Moths</p> 	<p>Overwintering adults emerge from hibernation and lay eggs. Species that over-winter as eggs, caterpillars or pupae emerge later and start feeding on fresh new leaves.</p> <p>Butterflies pollinate a wide variety of plants as they feed on the nectar of flowers.</p>	<p>A time of breeding and dispersal. Some species (including those that over-winter as adults) may start a second generation, but most species have one generation a year.</p> <p>Grow plants with purple, violet, orange or yellow flowers such as buddleia, hebe and most herbs (remember that buddleia is a non-native species that can become invasive). Nettles are the only plant the caterpillar of the small tortoiseshell butterfly will eat.</p>	<p>Adults feed up (often on over-ripe fruit) before searching for somewhere to hibernate. Most caterpillars go into hibernation in early autumn before plants start to die back.</p>	<p>Adults over-winter in sheds or deep in vegetation. Many caterpillars spend the winter in dense vegetation or under the soil.</p> <p>Retain patches of dense vegetation.</p>
<p>Ground Beetles</p>	<p>Slugs, snails, cutworms, flatworms and root maggots are devoured by these busy creatures.</p>	<p>Ladybirds and their larvae feed on large quantities of aphids, mealy bugs, whiteflies, mites and scale insects throughout the summer.</p>	<p>Provide them with shelter under a pile of logs or stones in a corner.</p>	<p>Adults over-winter in bark litter or tree stumps.</p>
<p>Ladybirds</p> 	<p>The adult emerges from hibernation and lays her eggs in aphid colonies. The ladybird larvae feed on aphids.</p> <p>Adults are useful pollinators. Larvae devour aphids, mites, mealy bugs, thrips and other small pests.</p>	<p>Grow plants such as yarrow, poached egg plant, marguerite and French marigold; herbs such as lavender, thyme and rosemary.</p>	<p>They seek out places in which to hibernate for the winter.</p>	<p>Retain standing or lying dead wood.</p>
			<p>Plant yarrow, goldenrod and asters.</p>	

Table 3 - Flowers For Wildlife

WINTER		
Snowdrop		An excellent nectar source for insects (especially bees) coming out of hibernation early
Snowflakes		An attractive alternative to snowdrops (a nice mixture is snowdrop, snowflake and winter aconite)
Winter Aconite		An important pollen source for the first insects of the year, especially bees
Crocus		Often attacked by sparrows and starlings who leave them ragged. Good source of nectar and pollen for bees
Heather		An excellent nectar source for insects (especially bees) coming out of hibernation early
Winter Jasmine (and Jasmine)		An excellent nectar source for insects
SPRING		
Daffodils (most non native)		Not very wildlife orientated; the more natural, smaller varieties of narcissus are better. The value lies in leaving the grass surrounding the plants long for an extended period. The more natural narcissus looks good in window boxes or tubs.
Grape Hyacinth		Very easy to grow; good for window box planting. Attracts butterflies (especially tortoiseshells) and bees - superb early nectar source.
Squill		A pretty bright blue easily-grown ground-hugging plant useful as a pollen source for early insects (excellent under trees or in the border)
Tulips		If allowed to fully open out the flowers are a good pollen source for bees and bumblebees. [Best type - Water Lily Tulip]
Honesty, Aubretia, Columbine, Foxglove and forget-me-not		Butterflies and bumblebees
Spring plants suitable for planting into grass - cowslip (only buy as plant plugs); self-heal, lady's smock, cat's ear, salad burnet, red campion (all native plants)		All excellent for butterflies, hoverflies and bumblebees.
Shaded or slightly wooded areas - Primrose, bugle, lungwort, red campion, sweet violet, common dog violet (native)		All extremely good for butterflies and bumblebees
Damp ground – flag iris, purple loosestrife, water mint, meadowsweet (native)		Excellent for dragonflies, toads and newts (they use the leaves for egg-laying)

LATE SPRING/SUMMER	
Herbs - Chives, sweet cicely, angelica, borage, marjoram, rosemary, mint (all varieties), hyssop, fennel, thyme	Flowers are greatly visited by hoverflies, bees and butterflies
Snakehead fritillary (native to UK, but not to Scotland)	Good naturalised in an urban grass situation. Nectar source for butterflies and other insects.
Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) 	Never plant the Spanish Bluebell or any of the hybridised varieties (which tend to be pink, white or pale blue). Be very careful where you source the native bluebell corms/seed (further information available from Plantlife – www.plantlife.org.uk). Excellent for bees and butterflies.
Wild Garlic (for a naturalised wooded area where the pungent smell is acceptable!)	Good for a range of insects, including bees.
Crown Imperial lily 	Provides nectar for blue tits, blackcaps, bees and bumblebees (a 'sculptural plant' - good in pots). All lilies are poisonous to cats so do not grow if there are pets nearby.
Flowering onions (<i>Allium giganteum</i>)	Great for butterflies, bees and other insects – looks great grown in the herbaceous border
Sunflower	Birds and bees
Shrubs: Rosemary; Flowering Currant; Ceonothus, Buddleia	Moths and butterflies, bumblebees. Buddleia can be invasive so site carefully
Japanese anemone; Lambs Lugs; Scabious; Eryngium; Heathers (summer flowering varieties); Rock Rose; Penstemon; Verbena Bonariensis	Moths and butterflies, bumblebees 
Moth-attractive plants – privet, crab apple, Tobacco plant, evening primrose, red valerian, sweet rocket, jasmine, honeysuckle, night-scented stock, phlox, soapwort.	Moths and butterflies, bumblebees, and bats
Dry ground - forget-me-not, aubrietia, harebell, devil's bit scabious, coltsfoot, ox eye daisy, corn cockle, cornflower, corn marigold, poppy	Bumblebees 
Damp ground - ragged robin, butterbur, lesser celandine	Dragonflies, moths, butterflies, bumblebees

Create a mini-meadow with a packet of seeds:

- (1) In the spring or autumn, choose an area of bare soil with no weeds, away from the wet or shade (the poorer the soil, the better) and remove the top 6-7cm of soil to reduce the soil's fertility. Rake it into a smooth surface and sow your seeds. Water it.
- (2) Or – sow the seeds into pots and grow on a windowsill or in a greenhouse. Plant out as soon as they are a good size into the mini meadow area you have prepared (as above).

AUTUMN

Wood Anemone



An open-woodland plant, excellent as a nectar plant for bees and other insects (do not plant the double-flowered varieties - most insects can't use them)

Michaelmas daisy, Ice plant, Lavender, Candytuft, Hebe, Red valerian, Knapweed, Caryopteris

Bees and butterflies

Ivy



Bumblebees in spring, birds and bats (nesting/roosting) in summer; birds and bats (feeding/hibernating) in winter

Plums, pears, apples, crab apples

Late food for butterflies, moths and birds. Blossom is excellent in the spring for pollinating insects.

Hazel, Teazel



Mammals and birds

Autumn Crocus

A useful late pollen and nectar source for bees and bumblebees



Peacock butterfly and bees on late-flowering Michaelmas Daisies – © C A G Lloyd

Further Information

Allotments

Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society - secretary@sags.org.uk; www.scottishallotments.org/

Community Food & Health (Scotland) – Tel: 0141 414 2890;
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

The National Allotment Society www.nsalg.org.uk

Angus

Contact: Parks, Gardens & Open Spaces Tel: 03452 777 778

There are council allotments in Montrose, Arbroath, Monifieth and Carnoustie

There are private allotments in Brechin, Forfar and Kirriemuir

Perth & Kinross

Perth & Kinross Council does not manage any allotment sites but supports the formation of community allotment associations - check www.pkc.gov.uk/growingspaces

Orchards

Common Ground: www.commonground.org.uk

Orchard Network: www.orchardnetwork.org.uk

Central Core Orchard Network: www.centralcoreorchardnetwork.co.uk

Appletreeman, Perthshire. Tel: 07749 987213 www.plantsandapples.co.uk

R V Roger Nurseries, Yorkshire. Tel: 01751 472226 www.rvroger.co.uk

Brogdale National Fruit Collection: www.brogdalecollections.org



An allotment with a view – © C A G Lloyd



Getting ready for a January wassail – © C A G Lloyd

Further Information

General Gardening

Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society: www.rchs.co.uk

Soil Association: www.soilassociation.org

Royal Horticultural Society: www.rhs.org.uk

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh: www.rbge.org.uk

Garden Organic (Henry Doubleday Research Association) - practical gardening advice, including a section for schools: Tel. 0247 630 3517; www.gardenorganic.org.uk

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens: www.farmgarden.org.uk
Tel. 0131 623 7058

Community Recycling Network: www.crns.org.uk

Trellis: Network of Scottish projects, information & advice on therapeutic gardening –
Tel: 01738 624348; www.trellisscotland.org.uk

Perthshire Organic Gardeners: www.spanglefish.com/perthshireorganicgardeners

Really Wild Flowers: www.ReallyWildFlowers.co.uk

Local Wildflower Plant Sources (all offer mail order):

- Scotia Seeds (Angus): www.scotiaseeds.co.uk; Tel: 01356 626425
- Plants with Purpose: www.plantsandapples.co.uk; Tel: 01738 787278
- Celtica Wildflowers: www.perthshirewildlife.co.uk; Tel: 07984 975 095



Fruit tree in winter – © C A G Lloyd



A 'contemplation zone' – © C A G Lloyd

Further Information

Volunteer Organisations

TCV in Scotland (The Conservation Volunteers): Supports groups taking practical action in their local community, volunteering, training, access to insurance scheme for community groups;
Tel: 01786 479697; www.tcv.org.uk

Senscot: Social Enterprise Networks (Scotland) offers support, collective action and market development to social enterprises across Scotland. www.senscot.net

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO): Supports, promotes and connects organisations from across the third sector in Scotland – www.scvo.org.uk

Community Green Gyms:
www.tcv.org.uk/scotland/feel-good/green-gyms/community-green-gyms

Keep Scotland Beautiful: provides advice, support and training to community projects
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org

Ecoschools: promotes participation in developing a whole school and community approach
Tel: 01786 471333;
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/eco-schools

Trellis Scotland: offers training workshops and an information service for a network of 300+ therapeutic gardening projects in Scotland – Tel: 01738 624348; www.trellisscotland.org.uk

EcoCongregation: helps local churches of all kinds engage in local conservation issues with their local community – www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Local Conservation Volunteers: there is a wide variety of groups throughout Tayside who can help with tasks or welcome new members – Scottish Wildlife Trust, Angus Alive (Countryside Rangers), Perth & Kinross Council Conservation Volunteers, RSPB and National Trust for Scotland.

Wildlife Organisations

Bat Conservation Trust: www.bats.org.uk

BRISC (Biological Recording in Scotland): www.bris.org.uk

BTO Scotland (British Trust for Ornithology): Tel: 01786 466560;
www.bto.org/national-offices/scotland

Buglife Scotland: Tel: 01786 447504; www.buglife.org.uk

Bumblebee Conservation Trust: www.bumblebeeconservation.org

Butterfly Conservation Scotland: Tel: 01786 447753;
www.butterfly-conservation.org/842/scotland.html

Froglife: Tel 01733 602102; www.froglife.org

Plantlife Scotland: Tel: 01786 478509; www.plantlife.org.uk

The Natural History Museum Postcode Plant Database: www.nhm.ac.uk/science/projects/fff

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: www.rspb.org

Scottish Wildlife Trust: www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk

Publications

- 'Living Roofs', Natural England: http://wlgf.org/linked/ne30living_roofs_1_.pdf
- 'RSPB Gardening for Wildlife'
- 'No Nettles Required', Ken Thompson
- 'Orchards - A Guide to Local Conservation', Common Ground
- 'Community Orchards Handbook' (Common Ground)
- 'How to Make a Wildlife Garden', Chris Baines
- 'The Wild Garden', Lucy Huntington
- 'Natural Gardening in Small Spaces', Noel Kingsbury
- 'Plants and Planting Plans for a Bee Garden', Maureen Little
- 'Attracting Wildlife to your Garden', John A Burton
- 'Chris Packham's Wild Side of Town'
- 'Making Garden Meadows', Jenny Steel
- 'Wildlife Ponds', Jenny Steel
- 'Wildflower Gardening', Jenny Steel
- 'The BTO Nestbox Guide'
- 'The Ultimate Birdfeeder Handbook', John A Burton & Steve Young
- 'The Therapeutic Garden', Donald Norfolk
- 'Community Gardens - Place for People and Wildlife', Scottish Natural Heritage
- 'Scottish Community Garden Starter Pack', Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
- 'Guide to Garden Wildlife', Richard Lewington
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00425276.pdf>
- Wildlife Gardening Forum Gateway: www.wlgf.org



Honey bee on Allium – © C A G Lloyd

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Coalyards Community Garden, Glenfarg – © C A G Lloyd

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BIODIVERSITY

THE VARIETY OF LIFE

TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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