

PLANTING FOR WILDLIFE

ALL ABOUT

Wicklow has a wealth of gardens which can be hugely valuable for wildlife. Planting for birds and pollinating insects helps them to thrive, ensuring that they have nesting material, shelter and food sources throughout the year from early spring to summer, autumn and winter.

MANAGING for WILDLIFE

Create space for Wildflowers

Every garden can be a haven for hungry pollinating insects such as wild bees, bumblebees and hoverflies. Our pollinating insects provide essential ecosystem services and need wildflowers to survive. It is easy to create a flower rich meadow by leaving the grass to grow longer in some areas e.g. cut every six weeks. It is really important to remove clippings after each cut. Wildflowers grow best in infertile soil. Removing the clippings helps reduce soil fertility so that wildflowers can compete with grasses. Leaving a border of wild flowers will also benefit butterflies by providing the essential foodplants for caterpillars.

Encourage birds

Once you have wildlife friendly plants in your garden, you can encourage birds to take up residence. Feeding wild birds is a rewarding exercise, and all garden birds will eat some harmful garden insects as well as the food you may provide. Bird food should be put out in small quantities, replenish daily if necessary. Keep feeders clean and out of direct sun. You can feed birds all year round, once you use a mesh feeder for peanuts which if otherwise eaten whole might choke young birds. A nestbox is a fascinating window into the lives of our garden birds. Place in some cover, usually about 2 to 3 metres up a wall, fence or tree, out of direct afternoon sun. North or east facing is best.

Enjoy Wildlife watching and share your sightings

Making your garden a haven for wildlife isn't just good for biodiversity, it is good for us. Nature provides an endless source of joy and wonder and inviting more wildlife to share your garden space enhances our connection with the natural world around us. Ireland's biodiversity is unique and precious, providing a

range of ecosystem services including pollination, flood mitigation, human health and well being. An understanding of biodiversity distribution throughout Ireland and tracking changes to this is an essential part of conservation. Now it is easier than ever to contribute to our scientific baseline by submitting your sightings to www.biodiversityireland.ie

Out with Pesticides

Put that spray away!
You can't have bees and other beneficial insects if you spray. Let the birds do the job for you! Blue Tits, Flycatchers and Robins, as well as most songbirds, will feed themselves and their hungry young on insect prey from the garden.



For more information



Gardening for Biodiversity

Gardening for Biodiversity publication from Juanita Browne, illustrated by Barry Reynolds. Contact your Local Authority Heritage Officer for a copy, contact wicklowheritage@wicklowcoco.ie



All Ireland Pollinator Plan visit www.pollinators.ie publications, advice and to record your pollinator friendly actions.

Content provided by Oran O'Sullivan of www.irishgardenbirds.ie in association with Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer Wicklow County Council.

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Visit www.wicklow.ie and heritage.wicklowheritage.org for more on Wicklow's natural and cultural heritage.

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Herbaceous Plants for any garden

Top 25

Shady areas
anemone, aquilegia, dicentra, digitalis, erythronium, geranium, hellebore, pulmonaria, trillium.

Dry areas
bergingia, echinops, echinacea, kniphofia, sedum, stachys, verberna.

Damp areas
helenium, astrantia, astilbe, euphorbia, heuchera, hosta, achillea, ligularia, rudbeckia.

If you are planting for wildlife, flowering and fruiting shrubs are a very important part of the planting scheme. A choice that encourages insect visitors is best. The amount of space you can provide will ultimately dictate your choice of plants; again, native berry-bearing shrubs are better for wildlife than some of the exotics, which are usually developed purely for gardeners' delight and show. However, there are non-natives such as dogwood (*Cornus*), cotoneasters (*C. cornubia* is best) and Firethorn (*Pyracantha*), which serve birds and gardeners well.

Most of the native planting options will require a space of 3-5m square for mature plants, but respond well to pruning. Even a small garden could accommodate a single specimen shrub or tree as a focal point. The best natives (for all-round interest and value) are Hawthorn (as a standard tree or hedge), Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Spindle Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) or (S. racemosa) if space is at a premium. All provide flowers for insects and good autumn leaf colour and a show of berries for birds, and favour dampish conditions.

Shrubs

A native hedge provides shelter and food and is much more interesting to wildlife (and the human eye) than a boundary fence or wall. Try to resist the temptation to plant easy-grow, evergreen species such as (*Grisebina*) or (*Leylandii*); native plants are far more valuable to birds and wildlife, and there are attractive options. Hedges make an ideal boundary for all or one side of your garden. An area 2-3m by 1m is required to allow sufficient growth of value, though pruning is necessary to keep shape and provide a strong, dense growth.

One of the best deciduous natives is Hawthorn, which when established provides fruit (or haws) in autumn and flowers in spring. With its thorny stems it is also stock-proof and can be purchased very cheaply as bare-rooted 'quicks' from nurseries in late winter for immediate planting. If evergreen cover is required, Holly ticks the boxes for berries and stock-proof foliage. A mixture of the two, with one or two plants allowed to develop into small trees, will provide song posts for thrushes and perhaps nesting sites. A number of berry-bearing trees and shrubs are suitable for inclusion in a mixed hedgerow.

Hedges



Guelder rose



Willow and alder catkins



Red Admiral on ivy

Climbers

Climbers are a space-saving group of plants that are ideal for the modern garden, providing vertical cover that will soften the harsh boundaries of a new plot. Ivy is a very important food source for nectar-seeking insects in late autumn and the late winter berries are available when other food supplies are exhausted. Ivy provides cover for nesting birds. The variety (*H. ardenscens*) is slow-growing, but produces flowers and berries early on making it a good choice.

A seemingly endless range of decorative climbers such as clematis, honeysuckle, jasmine, potato plant and climbing rose all enrich the summer garden scene and are nectar providers for a wide range of insects in spring and summer. This requires partial or total support by way of a trellis or network of supporting wires. Most require sunshine for the showy foliage and shade or cool conditions for roots.

Trees

Most gardens can accommodate at least one small tree. You could start with a native Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) with white flowers in spring and red berries in early autumn. For a damp site with space, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is a top tree for birds with cones attracting Siskins, Goldfinches and Redpolls. Silver Birch (*Betula pubescens*) is a lovely tree that is pleasing to the eye and great for attracting fringes. All trees are potential nest sites for birds at some stage and a planting to the eye and great for layered, woodland look to the garden.



GARDEN WILDLIFE OF WICKLOW



Blackbird - Lon dubh



Blackbird Female
Lon dubh bainneann

Great Tit - Meantán mór



Coal Tit - Meantán dubh



Blue Tit - Meantán gorm



Robin - Spideog

Chaffinch - Rí rua



Bullfinch - Corcrán coille



Great Spotted Woodpecker - Morchnagaire breac

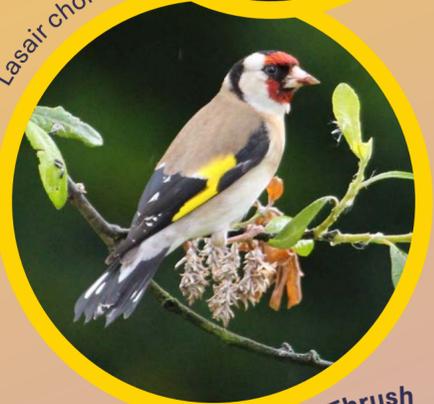


House sparrow - Gealbhan binne



Dunnock - Dunnóg

Goldfinch - Lasair choille



Pied Wagtail
Glasóg shráide



Swallow - Fáinleog



Wood Pigeon - Colm coille



Wren - Dreoilín

Song Thrush
Smólach ceoil



Raft Spider - Damhán an rafta



Forest Shieldbug - Fríd scéithe chospearg



Painted Lady - Áilleán

Mistle Thrush - Smólach mór



Silver-washed fritillary - Fritiléán



Meadow Brown - Donnóg féir



Bumblebee - Bumbóg



Tortoiseshell - Rúan beag



Red Admiral - Aimiréal dearg



Common Frog - Frog



Common Blue - Gormán coiteann



Wood Mouse - Luch féir



Hoverfly - Beach ghabhair

Red Squirrel - Iora rua



Fox cub - Sionnach



Hedgehog - Gráinneog

