

Wild About Gardens Awards

2019

Do gardens matter
as wildlife
habitats?

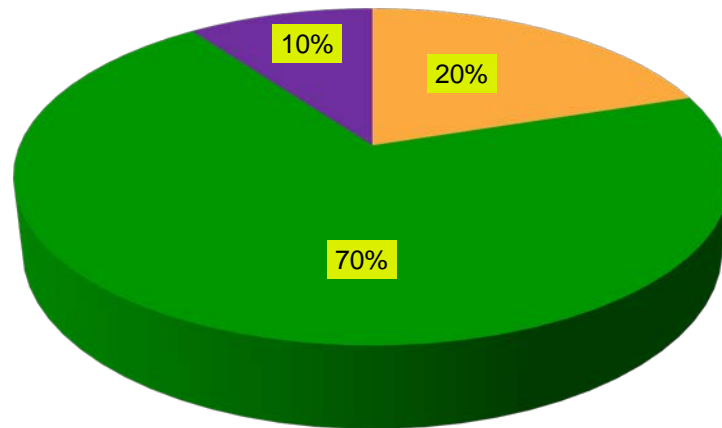


Land use

Land area	Acres
UK total	60 million
Natural 'waste' land	12 million
Agricultural land	42 million
Urban land	6 million

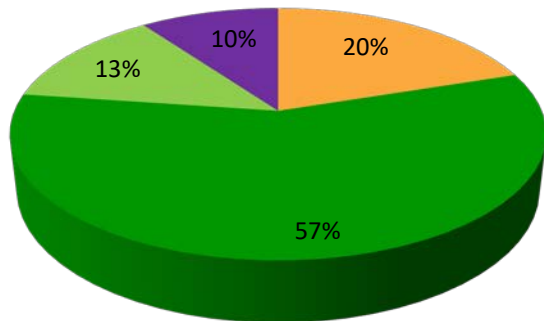
How is land used in the UK?

■ Natural Waste Land ■ Agricultural Land ■ Urban



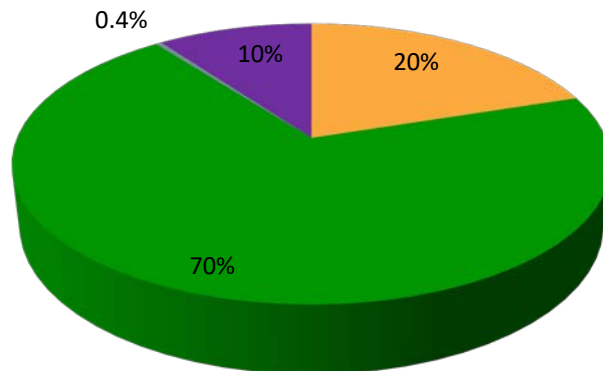
1940

■ Natural Waste Land
 ■ Agricultural Land
 ■ Wildflower meadows
 ■ Urban



2015

■ Natural Waste Land
 ■ Agricultural Land
 ■ Wildflower meadows
 ■ Urban



Wildflower meadows

1940 7.73 million acres = 12.8% (18.4% of agri land)

2015 230,000 acres = 0.4% (0.5% of agri land)

And what happened to the agricultural land?



1940

2015



And 50% of our ponds disappeared in the last century

The result?



Insects

- Reduced by **75%** (and that's just the last 25 years)

Birds

- Many species reduced by **50 to 95 %** in last 40 years
- Some have ceased breeding here and many only occasional visitors



Pondlife

- **80%** of the remaining ponds are in a poor state with a dramatic impact on freshwater flora and fauna



Which is where we come in



The importance of gardens



1,797,654 acres (727,485 hectares) of domestic gardens
3% of UK landmass



In RBWM, 3,000 acres (1,200 hectares) of domestic gardens
10% of the Borough's land area

We need to make
gardens more
wildlife friendly



Introducing

Wild Maidenhead's

Wild About Gardens Awards

2019

What are the aims of WAGA?

- Encourage us all to see the benefit of making space for wildlife in our gardens (and in our lives)
 - Especially to get future generations aware and interested
- Encourage the butterflies, bees and the many other pollinators, essential to food production
- Bring back the corridors that animals need to move in the landscape



Entering for an award

- Private gardens are eligible in 2019 – closing date **31 July 2019**
- Bronze, Silver or Gold awards – certificate and recognition
- Review the criteria - see www.wildmaidenhead.org.uk/waga



Wild About Gardens Awards Scheme

[Back](#)

Putting wildlife at the heart of our communities - a new scheme for Wild Maidenhead

Let's do more for wildlife in our gardens and make the extra effort to provide our flora and fauna with a rich and diverse home.

This is the idea behind our new **Wild About Gardens Awards** scheme. Our aim is to help people value the contribution of wildlife in their gardens – and to do that across our whole community. It's for all ages and we are especially keen to encourage our younger residents to take interest in the natural world around them.

The scheme, initiated by Wild Maidenhead, was piloted in Cookham in 2018. Because resources are currently limited, the scheme is only open to private gardens. It's planned to extend the scheme in future years to other local areas, and also to open the scheme to categories such as balconies, community gardens and business grounds.

'Wild About Gardens' is not a competition: it is a certification scheme based on the self-assessment check list. You might be surprised to know that 24 different garden features help wildlife and many can easily be added to help your garden qualify.

Please mention **Wild About Gardens Awards** to your local friends and encourage them to enter.

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER YOUR GARDEN](#)



A) Food features in your garden

TICK ALL THAT APPLY (* = compulsory to attain Gold)

- ☐ Bird feeding station (sited away from any nesting boxes)
- ☐ *Nectar-rich flowers
- ☐ Fruit trees or berry-bearing shrubs
- ☐ Some perennials left uncut until spring
- ☐ Vegetable patch/container
- ☐ Herb garden or growing herbs

B) Shelter features in your garden

TICK ALL THAT APPLY (* = compulsory to attain Gold)

- ☐ *Either: dead wood pile OR log pile OR stone pile OR area at least 1 sq metre left undisturbed
- ☐ Climbing plants on wall/trellis (eg. Ivy, Honeysuckle, Clematis)
- ☐ Mixed native hedge (eg. Oak, Hazel, Hawthorn, Blackthorn)
- ☐ Mature tree(s)
- ☐ Some lawn left to grow long
- ☐ Wild flower patch
- ☐ Bird, bat or hedgehog box
- ☐ Insect hotel





C) Water management features in your garden

TICK ALL THAT APPLY (* = compulsory to attain Gold)

- ☐ Wildlife pond of any size incl bucket or bowl – best without fish
- ☐ Bog / permanently wet area
- ☐ Drought-resistant plants
- ☐ *Bird bath

D) Management of your garden

TICK ALL THAT APPLY (* = compulsory to attain Gold)

- ☐ *No use of pesticide or toxic slug pellets
- ☐ *Avoid chemical weed killers
- ☐ Compost bin, heap or wormery
- ☐ Rain butt to save water
- ☐ *Use of peat-free compost
- ☐ Hedgehog access/transit through garden boundaries

If you qualify for Gold, would you be willing to let local people visit your wildlife garden by arrangement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Possibly



Entering for an award

- Go around your garden
- See which wildlife-friendly features you already have
- Add more before entering?
- Fill in form online (*hard-copy forms available for residents without internet access – email wildmaidenhead@gmail.com to request or collect from libraries/parish offices*)
- Some gardens from each category will be visited by arrangement

Helping wildlife in your garden

- 24 ways to help – ‘The Criteria’
 - Food features
 - Shelter features
 - Water features
 - Garden management
- Good resource: www.wildlifetrusts.org/gardening
- Wildlife Trust leaflet

The Criteria

Section A: Food features

- Bird feeding station
- *Nectar-rich flowers
- Fruit trees or berry-bearing shrubs
- Some perennials left uncut until spring
- Vegetable patch
- Herb garden

* = mandatory for Gold Award

The Criteria

Food features - bird feeding station

- Must be sited away from any nesting boxes
- Must be refilled and kept clean to avoid spread of viruses



The Criteria

Food features - *nectar-rich flowers

- Early spring sources are key
– consider dandelions, crocuses, for example
- Stubbing and Braywick HEATH nurseries will have special displays in May



The Criteria

Food features - fruit trees or berry-bearing shrubs

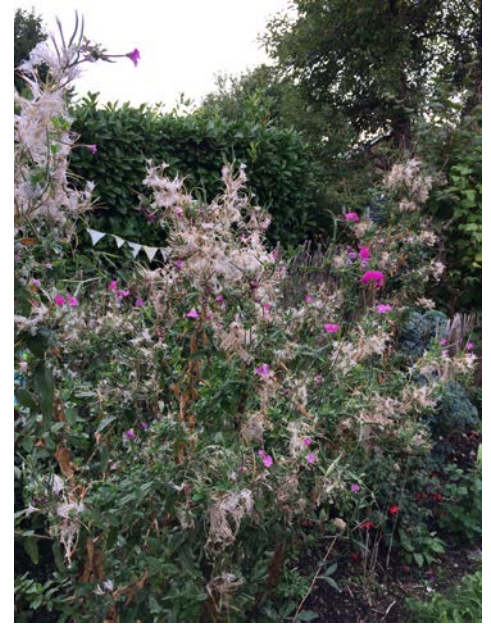
Lists are available from
www.gardenersworld.com/plants/top-10-plants-for-birds/
and
[www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife-natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/features/birds-and-berries](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/features/birds-and-berries)



The Criteria

Food features - some perennials left uncut until spring

- These are used by insects for overwintering shelter
- They provide valuable food for birds and other animals through the winter



The Criteria

Food features - vegetable patch or container

- Wildlife encourages natural pest control
- Encouraging birds and a range of predatory insects will help keep down numbers of more unwelcome pests and help produce a better, bigger crop



The Criteria

Food features - herb garden or growing herbs

- Herbs attract pollinators like bees and butterflies into your garden
- Information at www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-create-herb-garden-wildlife



The Criteria

Section B: Shelter features

- *Either: dead wood pile OR log pile OR area at least 1 sq metre left undisturbed
- Climbing plants on wall or trellis
- Mixed native hedge
- Mature trees
- Some lawn left to grow
- Mini wildflower meadow
- Bird/bat/hedgehog box
- Insect hotel

* = mandatory for Gold Award

The Criteria

Shelter features - *Either: dead wood pile OR log pile OR area at least 1 sq metre left undisturbed

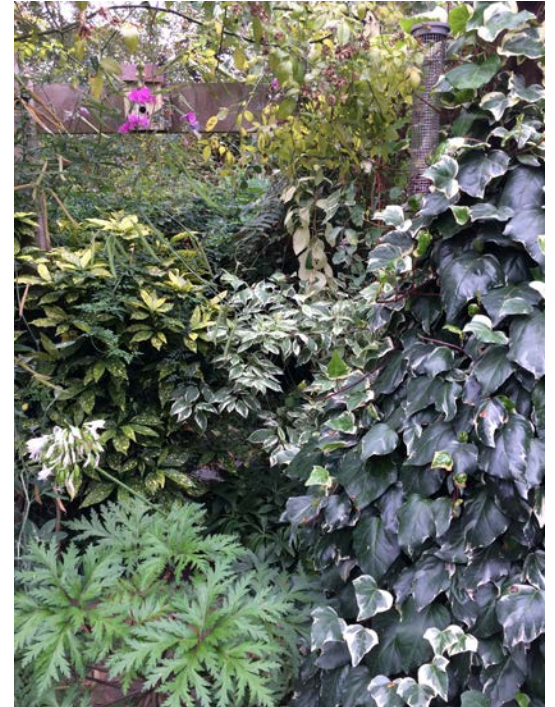
- Dead wood great value to insects, fungi, mosses and lichens
- Dead wood particularly good for stag beetles, including stumps left in ground
- Log piles give shelter, eg to insects, mammals and amphibians



The Criteria

Shelter features - Climbing plants on wall or trellis

- Climbers provide great cover and food for birds, insects and mammals
- Set trellises 10cm from the wall or fence to allow ample room for nests



The Criteria

Shelter features - Mixed native hedge

- Shelter for birds and insects
- Use native, mixed varieties



The Criteria

Shelter features - Mature tree(s)

- Habitat for birds, mammals and insects – nesting, shade, shelter
- Leaves and fruits are a rich larder
- A mature oak tree will support over 280 different species of insects



The Criteria

Shelter features - Some lawn left to grow long

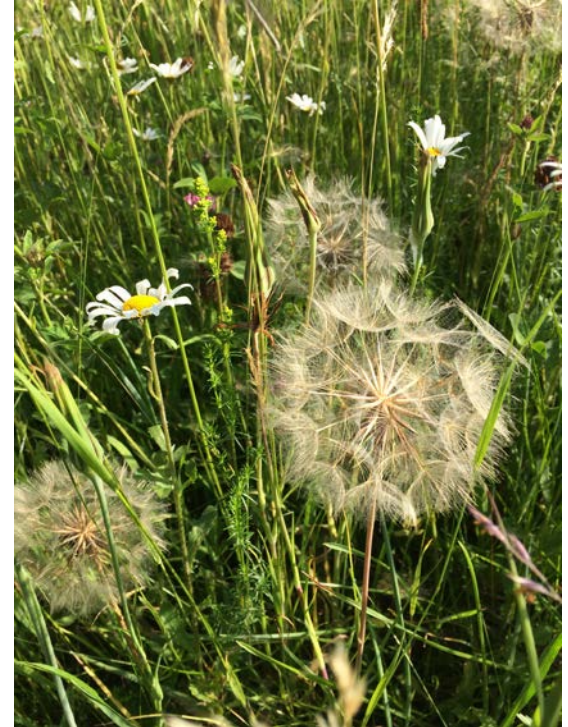
- Lawns provide seed for birds, eg annual meadow grass, plantain, buttercup and dandelion
- Longer grass provides shelter and egg-laying opportunities for the insects on which birds and other wildlife feed



The Criteria

Shelter features - Wildflower patch

- Natural food for hedgehogs, frogs, toads, newts, lizards, snakes, bees, insects, spiders, dragonflies, damselflies, bats, butterflies, moths, small mammals, birds
- Difficult to establish. Get advice here: www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/startawildflowermeadow/#1x6KDq6pcpib0lOc.99



The Criteria

Shelter features - Bird/bat/hedgehog box

- Bird boxes – need to know how each type should be sited
- Bat boxes - 12 to 20 feet off ground in sunny location, east or south facing
- Hedgehog houses - putting in place soon means it will be ready for autumn house-hunting
- www.bnbg.org.uk for all the above



The Criteria

Shelter features - Insect hotel

- Could shelter hedgehogs, toads, solitary bees, bumblebees, ladybirds, woodlice
- Bug hotels can be built at any time of year, but in autumn, more natural materials such as straw, dry grass and hollow plant stems available



The Criteria

Section C: Water features

- Wildlife pond of any size incl bucket or bowl
- Bog/permanently wet area
- Drought-resistant plants
- *Bird bath

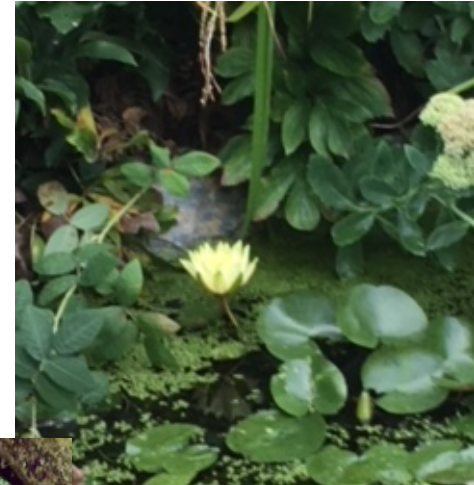
* = mandatory for Gold Award

The Criteria

Water features - Wildlife pond/bucket pond (best without fish)

- 2m by 2m and 60cm deep pond is perfect
- Sunny site
- Ramps to allow wildlife access and escape
- Pond advice and good leaflet:

www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk
(not our website!)



The Criteria

Water features - Bog/permanently wet area

- Good habitat for frog, toads, dragonflies, damselflies, bees and butterflies
- Good resources:

www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/wildlife-gardening/how-to-make-a-bog-garden-for-wildlife and

www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/how-to-make-a-bog-garden

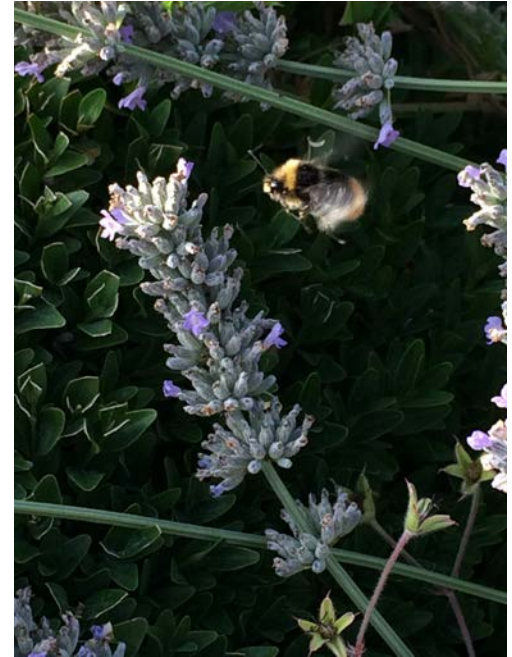


The Criteria

Water features - Drought-resistant plants

Ten star plants for dry wildlife gardens:

1. Butterfly bush (*Buddleia* 'Black Knight')
2. Ice plant (*Sedum spectabile*)
3. Tulip (*Tulipa* 'Yokahama')
4. Sea holly (*Eryngium marilimum*)
5. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)
6. Hebe (*Hebe* 'Autumn Glory')
7. Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)
8. Rock rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*)
9. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
10. Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)



The Criteria

Water features – *Bird bath

- Keep topped up with clean water
- Stoner in the middle helps birds to use it for drinking/bathing
- Situate it near cover
- Break ice in winter
- More advice: www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/maketheperfectbirdbath



The Criteria

Section D: Garden management features

- *No use of pesticides or toxic slug pellets
- *Avoid chemical weedkillers
- Compost bin, heap or wormery
- Rain butt to save water
- *Use of peat-free compost
- Hedgehog access/transit through garden boundaries

* = mandatory for Gold Award

The Criteria

Garden management features – *No use of pesticides or toxic slug pellets

- Pesticides harm wildlife
- Try to find ways of gardening without them
- Many alternatives to toxic slug pellets
- More advice: www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/animal-deterrents/organic-pest-control/non-toxic-slug-control/



The Criteria

Garden management features – *Avoid chemical weedkillers

- The World Health Organisation lists glyphosate as probably carcinogenic.
- Numerous other independent research studies have looked into the chemical's negative impacts, including disruption to soil and aquatic life
- www.gardenorganic.org.uk/glyphosate-debate



The Criteria

Garden management features – Compost bin, heap or wormery

- Worms and fungi feed on rotting vegetable matter
- Insect predators feed on the slugs, insects and other invertebrates attracted to the heap
- Birds visit to seek out insects and seeds. Some animals, such as smooth newts, shelter there during the day
- Read more at www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/compost-heaps



The Criteria

Garden management features – Rain butt to save water

- Better for watering garden plants
- Good for ponds and bird baths
- Helps reduce water consumption



The Criteria

Garden management features – *Use of peat-free compost

- Peat renews at c 1mm per year, so is non-renewable resource
- Peat bogs store carbon and carbon is released when peat is taken away
- Peat bog flora and fauna include snipe, skylark, butterflies and dragonflies
- Although some peat is used as fuel, the vast majority of it is used by gardeners
- Peat-free compost brands include Bulrush, J Arthur Bowers, Dalefoot, Scotts, SylvaGrow and Westland



The Criteria

Garden management features – Hedgehog access/transit through garden boundaries

- Hedgehogs have to travel around 2km a night to find food
- They need easy transit between gardens
- CD-sized hole in fence, hence, keep gate slightly ajar



Entering for an award

- Three tiers of awards:
 - Bronze – FOUR or more wildlife garden features, at least one from EACH category
 - Silver – EIGHT or more wildlife garden features, at least two from EACH category
 - Gold – TWELVE or more wildlife garden features, at least three from EACH category and MUST INCLUDE ALL of the following features...

Entering for an award

Gold mandatory features:

- *Nectar-rich flowers
- *Either: dead wood pile OR log pile OR area at least 1 sq metre left undisturbed
- *Bird bath
- *No use of pesticides or toxic slug pellets
- *Avoid chemical weedkillers
- *Use of peat-free compost

Wild About Gardens Awards

2019

Closing date – 31 July 2019

Enter at www.wildmaidenhead.org.uk/waga

Download a copy of this presentation from that page