



Why it is important: Well managed and biodiverse urban wildlife habitats are essential for a healthy planet, and for our health and well-being.

Action on wildlife areas will also be attractive to volunteers who may not be involved in other areas of a group's activities.

Urban wildlife areas are also attractive to schools which can be encouraged to use them as outdoor classrooms.

Practical Advice

- Make contact with, and involve your Local Biodiversity Action Partnership (link below). The majority of Scotland is covered by LBAPs, most have officer support and will provide guidance on the 'who, how and what' of biodiversity. There are almost certainly experts on your doorstep who will be able to provide advice and guidance.
- Management, Management, Management! An active and implemented management plan is vital for an urban wildlife habitat, not only for the wildlife who inhabit the site, but also the people who use it. In an urban area, many wildlife areas fall into disrepair due to poor maintenance and rapidly become unsightly. If embarking on creating or taking over a site, make sure the right management is guaranteed before making a start.
- An urban wildlife habitat is much more than an area of cornfield annuals. Admittedly they are good for pollinators whilst they are flowering, but a perennial meadow is much better. A perennial meadow amongst a mix of habitats, for example scrub, hedgerows, woodland edge etc, is even more biodiverse.
- Invasive weeds can be a problem on urban wildlife sites. Even though some of these species are native to the UK, over-dominance can ruin a site for both people and wildlife. Docks, Creeping Thistle and Rosebay Willowherb, whilst they are of some benefit to certain species, should be kept in check to enable other less dominant species to flourish. This is also true for areas of open water and dominance by some emergent species, and woodlands for some tree species such as Sycamore.

- Urban wildlife areas are very visible. They can also sit uncomfortably within the urban fabric. However, they are still important to the species which inhabit them and provide an invaluable educational asset. Arguably they may also need more management than those in the countryside. Picture framing (cutting grass frequently / more intense management) popular areas of a site e.g. car parks, paths and seating areas, will heighten the visual amenity of the area. Make sure that any signage, seating and fencing is in good repair.
- If planting in new or existing sites, make sure the species are native to the local area. Variety is key – more habitats mean more species.
- Know your site. A list of species on the site and which use the site is important. Bug hotels are a popular feature of many wildlife areas. But is it working? How many species are found there? Is a regular survey done of the site?
- Tell people about your site and why you are doing it/why it's important.

Useful Links & Further Information:

www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-and-cop15/local-biodiversity-partnerships

[Garden for Life Forum downloadable guides](#)

www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/wildlife

www.plantlife.org.uk/scotland