Garden for Life is helping everyone grow closer to nature by exploring, enjoying and caring for biodiversity in gardens throughout Scotland.

Supporters of the project include: British Dragonfly Society; British Trust for Ornithology Scotland; Buglife; Bumblebee Conservation Trust; Butterfly Conservation Scotland; Central Scotland Green Network Trust; Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens; Fragile; Gardening Scotland Rural Projects; Greenspace Scotland; Grounds for Learning; Horticultural Trades Association; Keep Scotland Beautiful; National Trust for Scotland; Plantlife Scotland; Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; Royal Horticultural Society; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland; Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society; Scottish Government Biodiversity Team; Scottish Natural Heritage; Scottish Wild Harvests Association; Scottish Wildlife Trust; Soil Association; Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society; Telfis.

Where can I find out more?

You’ll find lots more information on the websites of the Garden for Life members. Go to Garden for Life’s own website, www.gardenforlife.org.uk, for all the up-to-date addresses.

The RHS website and online plantfinder at www.rhs.org.uk/gardening are also invaluable. If you don’t have access to a computer remember that most libraries have a wealth of gardening books you can refer to!

Illustrations by Vicki Gausden. Text by Sue Walker; updated in 2016 by Plantlife Scotland. Photography © Lorne Gill/SNH, John Fergusson, George Logan/SNH.

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Life’s for sharing

You don’t have to live in the countryside to enjoy sharing your garden with wildlife.

Wildlife – birds, butterflies, bees, and many other animals – need all our gardens more than ever before, because their natural habitats are disappearing. They don’t care if our gardens are tidy or messy, huge or tiny, so long as they can find food or shelter there.

So even if you only have a window box you can tempt all kinds of beautiful and fascinating creatures to come calling. And the best thing is – it’s easy.

Here are just a few suggestions for plants that will help attract wildlife to your garden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Latin name</th>
<th>Flower/fruit season</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hellebore</td>
<td>Helleborus niger</td>
<td>Winter - early spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lungwort</td>
<td>Pulmonaria officinalis</td>
<td>Early spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocus</td>
<td>Crocus spp</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Crataegus monogyna</td>
<td>Spring/ summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan</td>
<td>Sorbus aucuparia</td>
<td>Late spring &amp; autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red campion</td>
<td>Silene dioica</td>
<td>Early summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clustered</td>
<td>Centaurea crispifolia</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bellflower</td>
<td>Campanula portenschneideriana</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornflower</td>
<td>Centaurea sph</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyme</td>
<td>Thymus polytrichus</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog rose</td>
<td>Rosa canina</td>
<td>Summer - autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaelmas</td>
<td>Aster novi-belgii</td>
<td>Late summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daisy</td>
<td>Aster alpinus</td>
<td>Late summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedum</td>
<td>Sedum spectabile</td>
<td>Early autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Hedera helix</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ivy</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The more the merrier

No matter what size of garden you have, variety is the key if you want lots of wild visitors. Aim for as many different kinds of plants as you can fit in the space you have: ones that flower at different times of the year; ones with different shaped flowers; bushes with autumn berries; grass that isn’t too short; mixed hedges rather than fences; and if there’s room, a few trees too.

The illustration inside this leaflet will give you some inspiration, but remember: whatever you can do, however small, will make a big difference!

Think twice

If you enjoy bringing wildlife into your garden it’s worth giving some thought to the other things you bring in, and how they might affect wildlife elsewhere. For instance some of the stone, gravel or timber that’s sold for garden use has been taken from wild places all over the world – rainforests, or limestone pavements, for instance – often destroying the natural habitats of the wildlife there. Do check the provenance of anything you buy. Avoid peat, buy peat-free compost, or better still make your own compost. Peatlands are one of the world’s most threatened habitats, as well as playing a vital role in locking up carbon, which helps to counteract the effects of climate change. And use natural alternatives to chemicals, such as companion planting, if you can, or you may kill the wildlife you’re trying to protect!

Keep happy and healthy

It’s true – gardening makes you healthier, and happier. It relieves stress, gets you out in the fresh air, gives you some gentle exercise, and if you grow your own fruit and vegetables it can bring healthy rewards to your diet too. If you garden with wildlife in mind you can enrich the experience even more by bringing life, colour and birdsong into your garden.
A hedge of any kind gives birds a place to perch or nest. If it has flowers and berries to feed insects and birds it's even better.

Weed by hand rather than using chemicals if you can. It's healthier for you and the wildlife.

Choose your building materials carefully. Ask suppliers where things come from so that they know people care.

Children need fresh air and exercise to stay fit, healthy, and happy. Get them outside to relax, have fun, and enjoy the amazing wildlife you've brought into the garden.

Feed the birds! If you only have a window box buy a feeder that sticks to the glass! Remember to keep your feeders clean.

Plant pots of flowers or herbs if you don't have enough ground. They're just as tempting to bees, butterflies, and hoverflies.

A pond of any size, even if it's made from an old washing up bowl, will soon be home to all kinds of animals - frogs, dragonflies, or diving beetles for instance - that you wouldn't otherwise bring to your garden.

Lift the lawnmower blades 1cm to help invertebrates survive in the grass, then sit back and enjoy the starlings hunting for them.

Climbers offer shelter for birds and invertebrates as well as making your garden look full and lush.

If you have room grow a few trees. Many support hundreds of species of invertebrates, as well as giving you a great place to mount nest boxes, and tempting a wider range of birds into the garden.

Log pits can make great hibernating places for wildlife - as long as you don't disturb them too often.

Make your own compost. You'll save money, waste, wildlife and the environment!

Even Scottish gardens need watering sometimes! Using rain water is better for the garden and the environment than tap water, so find space for a water butt if you can.

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