

Useful habitat links

Ponds

- We have a guide on [how to create a wildlife pond](#) on the Scottish Wildlife Trust website.
- The Wildlife Trusts have several pages on how to create your own wildlife pond on. [This guide](#) goes through how to make a wildlife pond and includes some suggestions of wildlife friendly pond plants. If you have a smaller area, there is also a great guide for [making a mini-pond](#).
- The Freshwater Habitats Trust have a fantastic document on [creating your own wildlife pond](#). It includes a troubleshooting section to help identify and fix issues with your own pond.
- The Freshwater Habitats Trust also have a [pond toolkit](#) with fact sheets about the different stages of pond creation and management. The pond management factsheet is particularly useful. You can find the main pond creation toolkit page.
- The RSPB have lots of good information on wildlife ponds on [their website](#). They also have [guidance on herons and fish ponds](#).



Woodlands

- [The Wildlife Trusts](#) have a great overview of woodland management. It covers some of the basic processes and is a good place to start.
- [NatureScot](#) have a full list of trees and scrubs that are native to Scotland.
- [The Royal Forestry Society](#) have lots of useful information including woodland plant ID tips as well as in-depth information on woodland management.
- [The Tree Council](#) have a detailed step-by-step guide to tree planting. It covers all the steps including considering picking a site, choosing a species and tree care after planting.
- [The Royal Horticultural Society](#) (better known as the RHS) have a handy guide on dealing with establishment issues in new trees and shrubs.
- [The Woodland Trust](#) have a very hefty guide on woodland creation. This is a very detailed guide including case studies. It's very comprehensive and is almost a book in its own right at 330 pages! Be aware that this is a big PDF file!
- [Worcestershire Orchards](#) is a project in England celebrating and supporting their local orchards. They have an article about grazing with livestock like cattle and sheep. The article includes some useful information on how to protect newly planted saplings.
- Microcosmic is an online shop that sells of sorts of nature themed goodies. They currently have a free download of their [brilliant tree leaf ID poster](#).

Where to get free trees from?

These links are a few places that offer free trees. Be aware that some offer a fixed number of trees which may be too many for your site. Make sure you check what's on offer before accepting hundreds of trees if you only need one or two!

- [The Woodland Trust](#) offer free trees to community groups twice a year. Delivery periods are in March and November. Applications close two months before delivery or earlier depending on stock availability. You need to provide a grid reference for the land you plan to plant on and proof of permission from the landowner.
- [EFORESTS](#) work with other Wildlife Trusts across the UK to supply free trees. The trees are funded by their clients that want trees planted on their behalf to reach environmental goals. They deliver trees between October to March. They prefer projects that are on publicly accessible land. It's worth noting that they prioritise projects that are planting more than 150 trees.

- [The Conservation Volunteers](#) (often called TCV) also provide free trees. Trees provided by TCV must be planted on publicly accessible land. They deliver year-round. They deliver packs of 50 trees of a mix of species.

Where to get grants to buy trees from?

- [The People's Trust for Endangered Species](#) (PTES) provide grants to buy fruit trees to create community orchards. The grant opens in the autumn. They also provide a list of tree providers to use the grant with.
- [Reforestation Scotland](#) provide grants for small tree planting schemes in Scotland. You have to be a member of Reforestation Scotland to apply. The grants are up to £250 per applicant. To apply you will need to know project costs, location and dates of planting. You also need to know what species you need and have a plan for protecting the trees from grazing.
- [The Tree Council](#) provide grants for community groups to plant trees, hedges and orchards. Grants are between £200 and £2000. They prioritise projects that involve young people. Applications open in the summer. You must have a bank account registered with your community group to apply.



Wildflower meadows

- The Wildlife Trusts have a short guide on [growing a mini wildflower meadow](#). The guide is ideal for smaller spaces or gardens and is a good place to start.
- [Plantlife](#) have a fantastic website. It has a wildflower species database as well as lots of great planting tips. They also have a brilliant site dedicated to wildflower meadows. [The Meadows' Hub](#) is a fantastic place for guidance on creating and managing meadows of all sizes.
- This video is a compilation of presentations by Butterfly Conservation. The session is on [meadow creation and management for butterflies and moths](#). The workshops were delivered in Irvine, Glasgow and Edinburgh as part of their Helping Hands for Butterflies Project.
- Buglife have a useful hub on [making a community meadow](#). Down the right-hand side of the webpage they have links to useful documents with information such as: creating and managing meadows, funding your meadow and the wildlife you might attract to your meadow.
- The RSPB have a useful step by step on [how to create a wildflower meadow](#). The guide includes suggestions of good species to look out for in seed mixes.



Wildlife gardens

- The Wildlife Trusts have an [overview of wildlife gardening](#). It includes links to a range of activities that can help wildlife in your garden. When you are gardening for wildlife, it's important to avoid using chemicals. Pesticides and weed killers can harm and kill wildlife indiscriminately. The Wildlife Trusts have a [useful guide on how to go organic](#). The guide includes solutions for some problems that are often tackled with chemicals.
- [The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust](#) (WWT) have a great guide on how to make a rain garden. Rain gardens are a brilliant way of dealing with long periods of dry weather. They are beneficial to people and wildlife and make the most of rainwater. The WWT also has a handy guide on [making a mini drainpipe wetland](#).
- The RHS have lots of helpful resources. There are [lots aimed at schools and teachers](#) which can also be useful for community projects. This one has some useful tips on [creating a wildlife garden in dry conditions](#).
- Seed bombs are great fun to make for children and adults! They are also a good way of getting some wildflower seeds into an area. There is a handy guide to making them on the [Scottish Wildlife Trust website](#).

- Kew Gardens have paired up with Grow Wild to [send free packs of wildflower seeds](#) around the UK. Applications usually open in February so keep an eye on the website for more information.
- If you'd prefer to buy ready-made seed bombs there are lots of options available. One of our favourites are from [Seedball](#). While home-made seed bombs can be lots of fun, Seedball are a great option too. There are seed mixes to suit a variety of areas and species. There is also lots of support and advice available on the website too.



Wildflower planters are a useful of adding plants to an area. If you are working on a patch that has lots of concrete or want to be able to move plants around, wildflower planters are a great option!

There are lots of different types of planters out there. From shop-bought, ready-made options to DIY planters using old materials. Here are a few guides that are useful if you are making your own planters.

- [The Wildlife Trusts](#) has a few different examples of things that make great planters as well as suggestions on wildlife friendly plants.
- [The RSPB](#) also have some great advice on their website. It covers planters, hanging baskets and plant pots too.
- Pallets are a popular choice for making into planters. You can often find them for free from builder's yards or other construction outlets. Stihl, a company known for their power tools, have put together [a guide on making a pallet planter](#).
- Another popular option is old tyres. They can make great planters without too much work. Tyres can also be stacked to add make them a bit higher too. Well-known garage, Kwik Fit have put together [a guide on turning old tyres into planters](#).



Sustainable gardening

Learning about the following techniques create more biodiversity, higher yields, and most importantly, less work for the gardener. You can see this in practice at [The Wash House Garden](#) in Glasgow.

No-till/no-dig

Digging and tilling contributes to the oxidation of the soil's organic materials. This deprives plants of nutrients and encourages pioneer species. By leaving the roots in the ground, more nutrients are left in the soil. This is called [no-dig gardening](#). No-dig gardening helps to reduce the need for fertilisers. Think of the happy worms munching on the old roots!

Covered soil and mulching

Mulch is anything you [put over the surface of the soil](#). It can be organic, like wood chips, or inorganic, like landscape fabric. Spreading mulch over the top of the soil protects it from drying out. This reduces the need to water the area regularly in drier times. It also keeps organic matter in the soil by preventing surface run-off.

Green manures, cover crops

[Green manures or cover crops](#) are different plants, usually annuals, which are used at various times of the year. It's especially beneficial to use them when there's no other crop in the ground, as cover crops fill the space which prevents unwanted plants from growing. They also contribute to soil health and biodiversity and help to attract pollinators.

[Different green manures](#) contribute to soil health in various ways. You can also combine no-dig gardening with green manures and let nature take its course.

Perennials

[Perennial plants](#) like fruit trees and herbs live for many years and can be harvested year after year. Using plants like this saves time on planting. It also increases the harvest each year. However, this can mean there is little or no harvest in the first few years of growing perennial plants.



Diversity and companion planting

It's important to make sure your garden has a good range of biodiversity. By having just one variety of fruit or species of plant, pests like viruses or some insects will be able to cause a lot of issues. Having a range of species will mean that any issues are localised and should eventually disappear on their own. To help with pests and diseases, you can use a trick called [companion planting](#). Some plants support each other by keeping pests away, attracting predators like ladybirds or beetles or improving the soil conditions. Some plants also help by providing shade or physical support and can even improve the flavour of their neighbours! There are [useful guides available](#) that tell you some useful traits of various plant species.

Forest gardens

[A forest garden replicates the natural habitat](#) that is found in a forest or woodland. In a woodland, there are various layers of plant types. Normally trees are the tallest while down on the forest floor there are wildflowers. By replicating these layers, a forest garden supports higher levels of biodiversity and needs very little management.

Empower the edges!

You might have noticed that there is higher biodiversity at areas where different habitats meet. A good example of this is the shores of bodies of water, or where a woodland meets a meadow. The larger this meeting area is, the larger the space for higher biodiversity. In your garden you can take advantage of this by [increasing edge habitats](#) which will help to create more biodiversity.

Microclimates

Areas of a garden can be affected by the weather in different ways. Some areas might be more exposed or they might be more sheltered. Areas can be impacted by wind, frost, moisture, and sunlight. The exposure depends on buildings in the area, location of other plants, the angle of the sunshine and wind direction. By observing the site, you'll be able to spot these microclimates and can place plants according to their preferences. You can also create different [microclimates to enhance the diversity](#) of habitats in your garden.

