

Cheshire
Wildlife Trust



Transforming Spaces

Find out what to plant to help wildlife throughout the year



cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

What flowers, when?

Choose from some of the wildlife-friendly plants below.

Check the seed packet for planting times.



What flowers when?2

Tips on what to plant

Caring for your space throughout the seasons:

Winter4

Create a plan
Sow your seeds
Choose trees, hedges and shrubs

Spring5

Go wild for wildflowers
Grow your own herbs
Harden off seedlings
To weed or not to weed

Summer6

Keep things alive
Tie things back
Deadhead to get better results

Autumn7

Maintain your space
Build homes for wildlife
Plant spring bulbs

Glossary8

Cut through the jargon

Winter

- Blackthorn
- Christmas Rose
- Cyclamen
- Daphne
- Mahonia
- Snowdrop
- Winter Aconites
- Winter Clematis
- Winter Heather
- Winter Honeysuckle

Spring

- Apple Tree
- Bluebell
- Crocus
- Dandelion
- Grape Hyacinth
- Heather
- Hellebore
- Lungwort
- Mahonia
- Primrose
- Snowdrop

Summer

- Borage
- Calendula
- Dahlia
- English Lavender
- Foxgloves
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Nasturtium
- Sage
- Scabious
- Summer Honeysuckle
- Sunflowers
- Verbena Bonariensis

Autumn

- Aster
- Cosmos
- Dahlia
- Echinacea
- Helenium
- Ivy
- Japanese Anemone
- Rudbekia
- Salvia
- Sedum
- Verbena Bonariensis

TOP TIP

Pick ones that flower at different times of the year to help bees all year!

Winter (December, January, February)

Make a plan

Winter is perfect for creating a plan for your space. Scope out the area then cozy up where it's nice and warm with a cup of tea and a pad and pencil. Work out what you'll be planting and when.



Sow your seeds

Now is a good time to sow your seeds indoors or in a greenhouse. You can sow seeds in so many different pots, including egg boxes, toilet roll tubes, and plastic takeaway containers - just make sure they have holes for drainage.



Trees, hedges and shrubs

Deciduous trees and shrubs lose their leaves and go dormant for winter, so this will be the best time to plant them. Avoid putting them into the ground or big pots when bad weather is forecasted or the ground is frozen. Planting on a mild winters day is the ideal time to help them get started in their new home.

Why not create a community orchard?

It's a great way to bring neighbours together and, as a group you can hold fun events and share the fruits of your labour!

The best trees for wildlife: crab apple, birch, holly, rowan

The best hedges for wildlife: Hawthorn, blackthorn, beech, buckthorn

The best shrubs for wildlife: Ivy, lavender, buddleia



Spring (March, April, May)

Wildflowers

Sow mid spring or early autumn

Native wildflower mixes will attract a wide range of wildlife. You can plant wildflower seed directly into the ground. Check the seed pack for more specific guides.



Grow your own herbs

Make the space sensory with different herbs, such as mint, sage, rosemary and lavender. Pollinators also love herb gardens so this patch will attract all sorts of bees, hoverflies and butterflies. You can buy herb plants from a garden centre, a supermarket, or plant them from seed. Buying an established plant will mean you get more from the plant this year.

Harden off seedlings

It is important that you don't put your seedlings straight into the ground from a nice warm house. They will go into shock and likely die. Hardening off seedlings involves placing your seed trays outside during the day, and bringing them in at night, to get used to the temperature change. You could also create a mini 'greenhouse' and put them in there for a week or two before planting in the ground.

To weed or not to weed

Weeds can be great for wildlife so, if you don't mind them, leave them for the bees. That said, if you really don't like them, make sure you weed by hand rather than using weed killers which can harm other wildlife.



Summer (June, July, August)

Plant maintenance

As the weather heats up, you will notice your plants begin to grow, flower, and fruit. Make sure you keep on top of your space at this time to ensure you and the wildlife can get the most out of it.

Tie back 'leggy' or long plants

Certain plants such as sunflowers may begin to need a bit of extra support over the summer as they get tall. Tie them to a cane stuck well into the ground. If you have chosen to plant climbers such as sweet peas, morning glory or honeysuckle, you will need to keep an eye on how well they are growing. If needs be, tie them up to support their growth. You can even do this with courgettes and squash.



Deadheading

Flowers such as sweet peas require regular picking in order to produce more flowers. Certain annual plants such as calendula and nasturtium produce a large number of seeds per head. If you do not remove the head before it drops the seeds, you may find your space becomes overrun next year from the dropped seeds!



Watering your plants

You will need to make sure your plants are watered regularly during hot weather. It is best to water first thing in the morning or in the evening, not during the heat of the day as the water will evaporate before reaching the plant. Always try to water your plants using collected rain water.

Autumn (September, October, November)

Plant maintenance

Continue harvesting and deadheading your plants into the autumn. Growth will slow down and flowers will begin to wilt and die. Certain plants will require pruning, especially fruiting bushes, shrubs, hedges and trees. Research what each plant needs.

Now is also the time to pull up any old plants that won't grow next year. You could then cover the ground with cardboard and mulch ready for the spring.



Homes for wildlife

As the plants die back, it is important to create hiding spaces for wildlife. This may include creating log piles, installing hedgehog houses and other homes for wildlife to hibernate. You can also choose to leave the fallen leaves from any trees and hedges. This not only creates homes for insects and other wildlife, but also breaks down into the soil adding nutrients for next year.

Plant spring bulbs

Plant spring flowering bulbs now as they require a cold period in the ground before flowering in the spring. Use the below information as a guide to when you could plant each bulb. There are various different species of each bulb so make sure you get the best one for wildlife by using the scientific names we've included.

September: Daffodils (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), Crocus (*Crocus vernus*)

October: Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), English Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)

November: Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)



Glossary

Annual – a plant that typically only flowers or fruits for one year then dies. Some annual flowers will create and drop seeds naturally around the plant, reducing the need to replant. Other plants will require you to harvest the seeds and re-sow them the following year.

Bi-annual – Similar to an annual plant but has a 2 year life span. Typically, biannual plants will flower on the second year.

Perennial – A plant that remains alive year after year as long as you maintain it well. Sometimes perennial plants require some looking after over the winter, sometimes they retract into the soil and re-emerge in the spring.

Hardy – A plant that can deal with colder weather. The hardiness of a plant is often detailed on the seed packet or information slip in the pot.

Tender – A plant that doesn't like colder weather. The hardiness of a plant is often detailed on the seed packet or information slip in the pot.

Prick out seedlings – The process of taking newly sprouted seedlings and moving them to a bigger pot. Plants are ready to be pricked out once the 'Real leaves' have grown. These are usually the second leaves you will see. The first being 'seed leaves' which just help the seedling emerge from the seed.

Thin out seedlings – Sometimes seeds can only be sown by sprinkling a large amount over the soil. When the seeds begin to grow they will get crowded. Thinning out is the process of removing the weakest looking seedlings to allow more room for the strong ones to grow.

Cold-frame – a mini greenhouse often used as a transition point between a seed sown indoors and being planted in the ground. Helps the seed become acclimatised to a colder temperature without the harshness. Check out our upcycling guide for some easy DIY cold frame ideas.

Harden off – The process of getting a plant used to colder temperatures outside after sowing the seeds indoors. Often done in a cold frame.

Bare-root – Some plants, often trees and shrubs that you buy online will be advertised as 'bare root' this means it has been dug up and the roots are exposed. They are ready to plant in the ground straight away.

Vigorous root-stock – often used to describe trees. Plants with a vigorous root stock grow more efficiently and faster.

