



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

10 ways to transform a small space

cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Plant a tree

Five simple steps

Due to its size, a tree might be the last thing you would consider planting in a small space. However, trees are a great way to attract wildlife into your garden. With a little research, you can find the right tree to fit perfectly into your space.

We recommend dwarf fruit trees such as crab apple, cherry, pear or UK natives such as rowan, hazel, or hawthorn.

Did you know:

Six native trees will absorb and store about a tonne of carbon dioxide over their lifetimes.

- 1 Soak the roots in a bucket of water before planting. Exposed roots dry easily causing the tree to die.
- 2 Dig a hole or find a big pot. It should be at least double the width of the root ball. Trees over 1.5 m tall (or spindly or exposed trees) will need a little support from a cane or stake.
- 3 When planting your tree, you will notice a soil 'tide mark' on the stem showing how deep it was planted when it was originally grown. Make sure this mark lines up with the top of the hole in the ground or pot.
- 4 Pot it by spreading the soil mix carefully around the roots and compact the soil around the tree. Water generously.
- 5 Don't forget about your tree! The first weeks and couple of years after planting are especially important. Make sure you research the best way to care for your tree.



For more detailed information check out our actions page: cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-plant-tree

Make a mini pond



Five simple steps

One of the best ways to help nature in your space is to provide a source of water; it doesn't have to be anything big or fancy!

Ponds are ideal and these can come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the space you have available. Here are some top tips for creating a mini pond using whatever container you may have available.

- 1 Find a suitable leak-free container, such as an old sink with the plughole plugged, a washing up bowl or a bucket.
- 2 Put a layer of gravel in the bottom and build up the edges with rocks and stones so that animals can get in and out.
- 3 Run water in very gently to avoid stirring the gravel and making the water murky. Use rainwater if possible. If not, let tap water stand for a few days to allow any chemicals to evaporate before filling your pond.
- 4 Plant-up after a few days when the pond has had chance to settle. 20% of your pond is meant to be covered to reduce the spread of unwanted pond weed. Visit our website to find our recommended pond plants: cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-build-pond
- 5 Maintain the water levels using rainwater to reduce the chance of algae. You may need to keep on top of floating weeds by removing them with a stick and leaving them at the side of the pond to give any creatures the chance to get back into the water.



Plant Vertically



Have you tried looking at your small space from a different angle? If you have little room, start planting upwards!

Why not try planters made of guttering, or attach pots to your wall? The most popular choice for vertical gardening is the use of upcycled wooden pallets! If you are choosing to use a pallet, find out if the wood has been treated, as this will change how you can plant it up. Edible plants should not be planted directly into treated or painted pallets as the chemicals can find their way into your food.

Five simple steps

- 1 Make sure your pallet is clean and safe - sand down any sharp edges and check for protruding nails or splinters.
- 2 Paint it with bright colours if you like! Seal the wood with varnish and let everything dry before moving on. Only paint and varnish the pallet if you are going to plant up using pots instead of planting directly into the structure.
- 3 Here you can choose whether you line the inside of the pallet gaps with some form of breathable planter lining or attach pots to the pallet using twine, nails or whatever you fancy.
- 4 Fill your pots or gaps with a peat-free compost, making sure there is ample drainage out the bottom.
- 5 Insert plants of your choice, making sure to water and care for them as appropriate.



Eleanor Mort



Eve Taylor



Plant Containers

Five simple ideas

You don't need to spend loads of money at a garden centre - anything that holds soil can become a planter!

There are three rules:

1. Make sure the depth is right for your plants.
2. Punch some drainage holes in the bottom.
3. Fill with peat-free compost.

- 1 **Wildflower pot**
You may not have the soil to create a wildflower patch in your space, but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying the colourful pop that they can bring to your garden. Find out how to make a wildflower pot on our website cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-create-container-garden-wildlife

- 2 **Bulb lasagne**
Spring bulbs are a wonderful way to bring a splash of colour to your garden after winter. You can get creative planting layers of bulbs in a pot, choose bulbs that flower at different times, meaning you have a flower display that lasts for months.

- 3 **Edible plants**
Some food plants thrive better in pots such as certain varieties of tomato and chilli.

- 4 **Herb garden**
Herbs are great, not only for wildlife but also for yourself. These pots can be taken in through the winter to continue their care.

- 5 **Mini greenhouses**
For a lot of us, greenhouses are out of our budget and take up lots of space. There are so many ways to create the warm, humid environment of a greenhouse using everyday objects such as umbrellas, plastic containers, and water bottles.



Conger Design

Build a Bee Hotel



Unlike the familiar bumblebee and honeybee, most of our bees do not make colonies but are solitary.

The female spends most of her life searching for suitable nesting sites. Some species will nest in holes in the ground, while others will look for old beetle holes or hollow stems in which to lay their eggs. If you can provide a suitable home surrounded by flowers, this will attract solitary bees.

Five simple steps

- 1 Choose a suitable container for your bee hotel; old bird boxes, plastic bottles, plant pots and tin cans. Basically, anything hollow that you can fill with canes.
- 2 Make sure the container is clean and can be attached securely to a tree or the wall so that it will not move around in the wind.
- 3 Snip your hollow stem (bramble, reed or bamboo) into lengths to fit the container, discarding any bent or knobby ones. It's a good idea to include some big stems (cut with a fine saw), for other insects such as lacewings and ladybirds.
- 4 Lay your chosen container on a tilted surface and carefully pack it with stems. Only as you add the final few does the whole thing suddenly lock solid.
- 5 You will want to face the bee hotel to the south, in a sunny spot that is sheltered from the elements. Remember you need to clean out your bee hotel every spring. You can find out more about maintaining your bee hotel here: - bumblebeeconservation.org/bee-nest-boxes



Gillian Day



Get creative with dead wood

Five simple ideas

Putting together a log pile will create a village for all things creepy and crawly. In turn, this busy community will attract birds, hedgehogs and frogs looking to snack on a tasty morsel.

Logs are easy to find; you can get them from tree surgeons, firewood dealers and even any fallen sticks you may find nearby. Native wood is best, but anything will do.

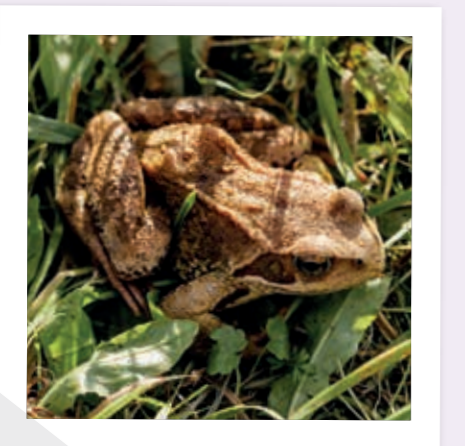
- 1 **Scattered**
Scatter your logs in a flower border or under a hedge. Like this, they are handy for keeping plants apart and mulching the soil, but you'll get more wildlife if you do create a concentrated stack.
- 2 **Neat and tidy**
Tidy stacks are often seen in coppiced woodlands. Logs are carefully piled on top of each other, often forming a pyramid.
- 3 **Higgledy piggledy**
The 'natural' way to do it, and great for architectural impact, but it doesn't create much shade.
- 4 **Organ pipes**
Sunken wood creates the most micro-climate possibilities. Placing them vertically, they need to be buried 45 - 60cm under the earth to make them stable. Making sure they are at varying heights above ground give them the dramatic organ-pipe look.
- 5 **Balcony deadwood bucket**
Set logs in the bucket, forming a square or rectangle, then fill the rest of the container with a mix of soil and hardwood chips. You can also place logs among planters, or even part bury them as a feature in other pots.



Adam Cormack

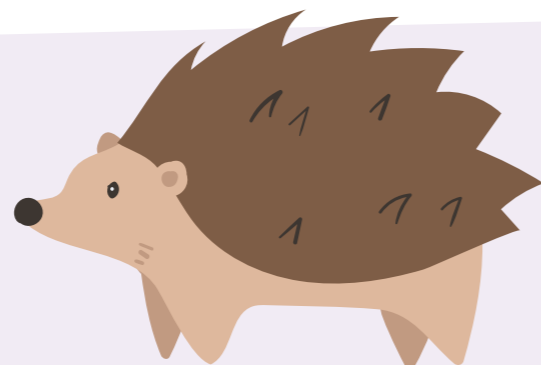
Create other homes for wildlife

Leaving your space a bit wild would provide countless natural homes for wildlife. However, if this isn't an option, you can create your own wildlife houses to support all the creatures that may visit your space and decide to stay.



Five simple ideas

- 1 Make sure you leave some dark and damp hidey holes and gaps between plant pots and containers. These are vital habitats for insects and spiders.
- 2 You may get the urge to clear your space of any fallen leaves in autumn, but hedgehogs will thank you if you pile them up in a corner instead of chucking them on the compost heap. Hedgehogs will use these leaves to make their nest for their upcoming hibernation.
- 3 Holes filled with logs and rock piles near some water provide a lovely habitat for animals such as frogs, newts and lizards. It can also turn into a cool garden feature if you are feeling creative!
- 4 Bird boxes are a great way to encourage birds to use your space. Make sure you find the right ones for the birds you know live in the area and place it at the correct height depending on the species you are attracting.
- 5 Installing a bat box will help encourage them to move into areas that have limited roosting space.



Go wild for wildflowers

Wildflowers provide important homes and food for wildlife. Insects thrive, birds feed and small animals find shelter.

Wildflowers grow in our gardens, towns, woodlands, hedgerows and road verges if they are allowed.

Large or small, balcony or back garden, your outdoor space can be a stepping stone to a wider network of wildlife havens. For more information about wildflowers, please visit our webpage: cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/grasslands/go-wild-wildflowers



Five simple steps

- 1 Control weeds ideally by digging them out or you can try and bury them at least 15-20 cm deep meaning they will likely die from lack of light and break down into compost.
- 2 Rake the soil to make a smooth, flat surface for seeds.
- 3 Don't be tempted to add manure or fertiliser as this will encourage the grass and weeds to grow faster than the wildflower seeds. Wildflower seeds thrive in bad, low nutrient soil!
- 4 Sow your seeds in autumn, giving the seeds time to settle in over winter. If you are on heavy clay soil, however, it is better to wait until spring. Even large areas can be sown by hand quite easily.
- 5 Plan a route to scatter the seeds so that every section gets an even amount of attention. Mixing the seed with garden safe sand helps a more even distribution of your tiny seeds. Rake it over lightly and water thoroughly.

Is it a weed?

The term 'weed' refers to any plant that is where it is not wanted. For wildflower patches this can be thistle and docks as they can take over the entire area, reducing diversity.

Make sure there is space for you to enjoy it too

Yes, you are creating space for wildlife, but why can't you share it? Make your space as enticing for you as it is for wildlife.

Five simple ideas

- 1 Seating area**
Use traditional garden furniture or here's a chance to think outside the box – get some log seating or a hammock – make your space a nice place to relax.
- 2 Path**
Get creative with your walks – think about how you want your path to feel under your feet, and whether you want it to take you on a journey or straight to your destination!
- 3 Bird feeders**
Not only will you be helping the birds by providing food, but the act of watching birds can be an incredibly mindful and addictive activity!
- 4 Monitor what comes to your space**
Watching and taking note of the wildlife helps you understand your space better. You will be surprised at what a small space can attract!
- 5 Make it sensory**
Use nice smelling plants, bright colours, a wind chime. Find ways to ignite all the senses.



Kyle Mellish



Brighten it up with art

Now that your space is full of ways to bring in nature, it's time to personalise it with your own artistic flare. Big or small, any way to add a bit of extra colour will help the space to look bright and cheerful throughout the seasons.

Five simple ideas

- 1 Murals**
Murals are wonderful ways to brighten up your space, making it a special place to spend your time.
- 2 Bird box decoration**
Spruce up your plain box to make it into a fancy home for our feathered friends.
- 3 Yarn bomb**
Pick up those knitting needles or get crocheting to liven up the small space with colourful characters.
- 4 Pebble painting**
This is a fun way to brighten up your space while also creating more habitats for insects that live under rocks. Decorate rocks and pebbles with designs that inspire you from the wild space.
- 5 Signage**
Let people know what's going on in your space by making some eye-catching signs. For example, a little sign to show that the pot of wildflowers is there to help the bees!



Claire Daniel-Oldfield



Claire Daniel-Oldfield

For over 60 years Cheshire Wildlife Trust has been working to bring wildlife back by creating spaces for it to thrive. On our website you'll find lots of tips and advice about how to support local wildlife and create a wildlife-friendly garden or outdoor space.

We are your region's leading conservation charity, fighting to bring wildlife back across Cheshire, Halton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington and Wirral. We protect nearly 30 wildlife havens, whilst inspiring local people to take action where they live, work and play.

As a charity that receives no government funding, we are only able to do what we do for wildlife thanks to our members and supporters.

Our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube and TikTok channels are brilliant online communities to share photos, tips and ideas.

If you have transformed a small space for nature using this guide, please take some pictures and tag us on social media **we'd love to see them!**

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