



Contact



Compassion



**Cheshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# Transforming your space for people and nature

If you have an outdoor space that you have permission to transform for people and nature, there are lots of resources available to help you plan this task. Very simply it could be putting a seating area under an existing tree as a quiet space to sit and reflect or it might be a large-scale transformation with growing beds, a pond, and an outdoor classroom. We've pulled together some ideas and guides to help you whatever you have in mind.



## Understanding the space

Knowing what you'd like to get from the space for your group is essential to transforming a space sustainably. Most outdoor spaces will need some maintenance, whether that's watering in the hotter months, regular tidying up, or annual gardening tasks and this is more sustainable if members of your group feel that they have some ownership and a say in the transformation. Our [Help people connect with a space for nature](#) guide can help get you started.



Consider running a listening exercise with the users of the space – how do they currently use the space and what would they like to see moving forward. This could be a conversation, an ideas box, a plan of the space on a board with sticky notes, or a formal planning meeting. Whatever works for you and the group.



Consider the aspect of the space, where are the sunny or shady spots throughout the year.



Consider what wildlife you'd like to attract and what's feasible within the environment you are in. Are you urban, suburban or rural. Spend some time in the space observing what visit it already.

# Ideas on what to do with the space



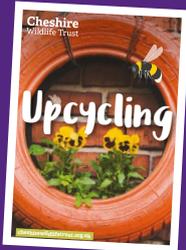
Cheshire Wildlife Trust has a range of guides, advice and activity packs that can help you plan and develop your space but some of the key ones are linked below for you:



**10 Ways to Transform a Small Space**



**Transforming spaces - a seasonal guide on what to grow**



**Upcycling Guide**



**Creating a wilder place to work**



**Creating a space for wellbeing**



# Helping nature to thrive

No matter how small, every nature friendly action you make helps to create a better place for the wildlife that surrounds us and helps us to maintain our essential connection with nature. For ideas on how you can create wildlife friendly environments take a look at some of our guides:



**Wildflower activity pack**



**Get creative for hedgehogs**



**Stars of the night, working together to make a batty neighbourhood**



**Wild bee action pack**



**Go wild for worms**



**Big or small, ponds for all**



**Grow a secret garden for butterflies**



**Bring back our beetles**

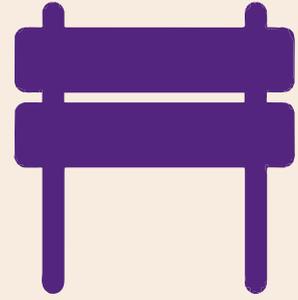


If you have a large space with existing habitats take a look at our advice for managing existing woodland or hedgerows for wildlife.



# Creating signage

Good signage can help people connect both to the space and to the wildlife within it. Research now suggests that traditional species identification boards, known as interpretation boards, do not necessarily help us to connect with nature. Instead, try suggesting the emotions people might feel, or prompt reflection on the beauty or meaning they may find or suggest the senses they can use to explore the space.



Traditional



Nature connection

## Designing a nature trail

Nature trails don't need to just be a series of species to spot along the way, instead create an experience for all the senses. Encourage people to pause and engage in these activities along the way:

- Add a place to sit quietly and listen to the trees rustling in the wind or the bees buzzing over a flower patch.
- Include some story prompts about the space or the people who helped create the space.
- Create a piece of group nature inspired art or sculpture and a spot to contemplate it or even contribute to it like a nature pledge tree or a memory plaque.
- If you are growing food add signs with ideas for simple tasty recipes that use the fresh produce or if you have plenty to spare create tasting stations where herbs or produce can be picked and tried.
- Design a treasure hunt around the space.



Download more activity ideas at: [cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-connection-toolkits](https://cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-connection-toolkits)



 **Top tip:**

See our guide to creating a safe outdoor hub for more information including; portable handwashing ideas, seating options and fire safety kits.



 **Top tip:**

Take photos of anything growing well in your space at the moment. Use an app like Picture This to identify the plant and learn a little more about it, it might give you some clues as to what else would grow well in that space.