



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Biodiversity in the Community

A toolkit to encourage and inspire support
for our biodiversity

May 2024



“A great place to live, work and thrive.”





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Introduction

"We now have a few short years during which we can still make a choice. Where just enough remains of the natural world for it to recover. This starts and ends with us."

Sir David Attenborough

Despite the importance of biodiversity, 25% of the UK's mammal species are now under threat of extinction, 97% of our wildflower meadows have been lost since 1930 and 41% of species have decreased in abundance since 1970.

Westmorland and Furness Council is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and nature. The new unitary authority, which replaced Cumbria County Council, Barrow Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council on 1 April 2023, backed a motion that recognises we are facing climate and biodiversity crises and is committed to increasing biodiversity. Westmorland and Furness Council is committed to working collaboratively with town and parish councils, communities and other partner organisations in tackling these emergencies in a just and fair manner.

Westmorland and Furness Council is also the responsible authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS has mapped out the current habitats across Cumbria and identified opportunities to restore, enhance and expand habitats to improve conditions for our natural flora and fauna. The LNRS can help a variety of groups from large conservation partnerships, to farmers, local businesses and community groups to deliver a bigger, better and more joined up nature recovery network across the whole of the county. If you would like to learn more about the Cumbria LNRS and find out how you can guide its development, visit the website at www.cumbrialnrs.org.uk.

Our parks and open spaces are crucial to enhancing biodiversity across the district and there are established community groups delivering great work to enhance biodiversity and improve their communities in many of them. This toolkit aims to further enable the work of these existing groups and be a resource for any new groups of friends, volunteers or charities that wish to work on our land to improve biodiversity.

We recognise that guidance is needed on what is suitable for council-owned land and the best way to go about making improvements so the Council are aware of and can support projects. Each park needs to be looked at individually to consider all park users and uses.

This document looks at the ways we can work collaboratively with and support town and parish councils, community groups and partner organisations, and share some ideas and examples of biodiversity features.

We hope to encourage and inspire everyone to do more for biodiversity so that together we can help make a difference for our environment and communities.

Benefits

Green spaces benefit nature, humans, the wider environment and our climate. Parks and open spaces can have a positive impact as key habitats in an urban setting, which can contain a great variety of plant species and use less pesticides than nearby farmland.

Engaging the community in biodiversity projects brings other benefits through increasing access to the outdoors such as reducing isolation, increasing community cohesion and pride, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving mental health and physical health too.

Westmorland and Furness Council is committed to continue providing access to green spaces and we are keen to recognise a shift towards the need and the desire to make our green spaces more natural, more biodiverse and carbon sequestering.

How you can get involved

This toolkit is for anyone who is already doing great work to support biodiversity, would like to know more about what options are available, and what benefits they would bring for both our environment and communities.

This guidance covers public parks and open spaces in Westmorland and Furness, and town and parish council managed land. The council's parks and open spaces may already be green spaces but could benefit from additional features to support biodiversity more effectively. If you are unsure if the area you have in mind is council-owned land please contact us to confirm. We will also be happy to advise on potential areas for improvement near you.



What you can do for biodiversity

Public authorities including town and parish councils have statutory duties under the Environment Act 2021 which require us to conserve, enhance and regularly review the action we want to take for biodiversity:

<http://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>.

But going above and beyond what is required by law can further enhance and protect biodiversity, and also save money and resources and bring wider benefits to the community. There are various ways in which councils can create new habitats or enhance existing ones, and this is a good way to engage the local community and encourage them to implement wildlife-friendly measures in their own gardens. Here are some measures to consider along with lots of ideas in Appendix 1 – A-Z of biodiversity features and Appendix 2 community project Ideas:

Create a biodiversity policy

A biodiversity policy details how the council would protect, record, enhance and promote an understanding of biodiversity within the parish.

For an example see:

www.brillparishcouncil.co.uk/biodiversity-policy.

Create a parish map

Creating a parish map is a good way to involve the community in charting the local features and places that matter to them, including places of cultural, historical and wildlife interest. Features such as meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds and rivers can be included in the map which will be a useful current resource and an excellent reference point in the future.

On the Cumbria LNRS website:

www.cumbrialnrs.org.uk, there are links to the pilot habitat basemap and habitat networks which show where irreplaceable habitats currently are and where the priority for habitat creation and restoration could be. You may find that your particular council area falls into some of the key areas and could help inform the parish map.

Assess habitats and species present

Conduct an overview of the sites for which the parish council is responsible and assess the types of habitat and species found there. The assessment could include desk-based research, such as reviewing the site records held by the local environmental records centre (Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre), LNRS, and/or commissioning habitat and species surveys for sites identified as being of particular importance for wildlife.

Manage road verges for pollinators

Since the 1930s, 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows have been lost but many road verges are important homes to more than 700 species of wild plants. To help these species thrive, consider cutting verges once in late summer to allow plants to be pollinated, produce fruit and drop their seeds. In other words, try to **cut less and do it later**.

Reduce or abandon the use of pesticides and herbicides

Avoid using pesticides, herbicides, slug and snail pellets and chemical fertilisers. A good balance of pests and predators can be naturally encouraged by appropriate habitat management.

Community engagement

- Inform the local community, whether individuals or local organisations, of the biodiversity value of the local area. One way to achieve this is to have signage explaining the wildlife value of an area and why it's being managed in a particular way.
- Encourage others to consider biodiversity in their activities, for instance, encouraging allotment holders to use wildlife-friendly techniques such as growing vegetables organically and without the use of slug pellets, or asking landowners to encourage wildflowers and areas of long grass.
- Consider asking local residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity in the area, bearing in mind that not all suggestions will be either achievable or desirable within a given habitat.
- Engage with local schools for activities such as litter picks and planting, many will be glad of a local opportunity to get involved with

We can offer help and guidance with any of these suggestions.



How to go about starting up a biodiversity project

You may see something in this guide and feel happy working with us and setting it up, however some people can find it challenging to know where to start.

- Engage with organisations such as the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB, South Cumbria or Eden Rivers Trust, Natural England in Cumbria or the Council. All these groups have their contact details online and are helpful in supporting projects or offering advice.
- Find out who your local climate and greening champions are such as councillors, members of the public and local groups. They will help show you the work that is already happening in your area and you can harness their collective ideas to build a 'nature network' of knowledge. You can find your local councillors on our website: <https://westmorlandandfurness.moderngov.co.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx>
- Identify any biodiversity gaps in your area. Are there enough pollinator-friendly plants? Are the community as engaged as they could be? Are there enough suitable places for birds to call home? Questions like these can be useful to help you get started in identifying what you want to do and where you wish to do it.
- Explore any funding opportunities, we can help advise on this too.
The Matthew Good Foundation
<https://www.matthewgoodfoundation.org/grantsforgood/>
Natural England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england#org-contacts>
and The National Lottery Community Fund
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england#section-1>
all offer funding opportunities and often it is a case of contacting them to see if they can help. Local Cumbrian organisations may have money they can give you if you contact them directly about your project. Other groups may also be able to give support in the form of knowledge or time.
- Work with others. There may be other people in your community who would love to get involved in a nature project but need someone else to kick-start it. These could be elderly and isolated people or young children with their parents; perhaps you have a local Scouts or Brownies group, a coffee morning club or people attending crafts mornings. There may also be a local school who would be interested in working with you on fun projects in the local area.
- Contact us to let us know what work you are thinking of and where. We will respond to discuss the next steps, whether the proposed work is viable and what will be involved. We do have grounds keeping contractors who we need to liaise with as well as considering current park users; however, we will endeavour to ensure we can find a project for you to work on.



- Alternatively an excellent way to get involved is to join current friends groups, we can put you in touch with local groups, please email us: customer.services3@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk.

Things to consider

Once you have an area in mind and an idea of what you want to do please let us know and we can work together to assess the project and support you in planning.

Other things to consider:

- There is an insurance requirement to work on our land, which will cover liability costs of volunteers. We will support you in meeting this requirement.
- How will any biodiversity project be maintained if the initial group who set it up move away/are not able to support anymore? Many valuable habitats require active management and maintenance.

References and other supporting documents

- Cumbria's Plan Bee A pollinator action plan for Cumbria
<https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/cumbria-plan-bee>
- Our Nature and Biodiversity Action Plan
<https://westmorlandandfurness.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s21582/Appendix%20A%20for%20Nature%20and%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20Part%20One.pdf>





Maintenance times	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bee banks									■	■	■	
Bee hotels												
Beetle towers									■	■	■	
Bird and bat boxes												
Bog gardens and ponds							■	■	■	■		
Bramble patches	■	■	■								■	■
Cornfield annuals	■	■							■	■	■	■
Hedgehog habitats												
Hibernacula												
Meadow (perennial sown)						■	■	■	■	■		
Mixed native hedge	■	■	■	■								■
Nettle patches						■	■	■	■			
Planting for pollinators					■	■	■	■				
Tree planting						■	■	■				
Woodpiles												



Bee banks

Honeybees and other pollinators face a variety of challenges such as pollution, changing weather patterns, herbicide and insecticides and long-term use of bees industrially.

Of the 267 species of bee in the UK, 220 are solitary, nesting as individuals, although often come together where conditions are right. Mining bees are one category of solitary bee, they nest in underground burrows, which can be encouraged by making bee banks.

Description of feature

Mound of compacted soil kept bare by occasional disturbance.

Which species benefit the most

Solitary Bees including miner, mason, sweat and carpenter bees. They are also good habitats for pollinator-friendly plants such as viper's bugloss.

Best location

Sunny locations adjacent to good nectar sources such as meadows, watercourses and woodland. Ideal as one of a suite of measures to improve the biodiversity of a park.

Locations to avoid

Nearby to play or seating areas or on a public path.

Where or how to install

Any time of the year.

The majority of bee species take up residence from March onwards. Installation advice can be found in further information; wooden bays are used to contain sandy material and roofs are used with holes in the bays.

Where or how to maintain

Plant cover might need trimming back in autumn to ensure exposed areas remain for nesting. This feature should be managed by a group of volunteers.

Further information

- Get wildlife rich at the Bee Bank - Gardening for wildlife - Nature On Your Doorstep - The RSPB Community
- Rawcliffe Meadows Work Party Report 17th May 2018 at the Bee Bank | The Friends of Rawcliffe Meadows



Bee hotels

Cavity nesting bees need dry, hollow tubes or holes in logs and walls to lay their eggs.

Description of feature

Structures that mimic the cavities where solitary bees nest and lay their eggs. These can be made from paper straws, hollow stems of plants, drilled bamboo canes or drilled into logs.

Which species benefit the most

Different bee species prefer different diameter tubes. Aim for a range between 2mm and 13mm and a depth of around 100mm.

Best location

Different solitary bees need different conditions. In general, site the hotel at least 1m off the ground, on a south-facing wall or alternative sunny location that is protected from strong winds. Place the feature where bees have access to pollen rich habitats.

Locations to avoid

Areas likely to get driving rain, are surrounded by an urban environment with few foraging opportunities close by, or close to play areas.

Where or how to install

Any time of the year.

DIY hotels/houses are simple enough to make, they require a wooden box with a sloping roof and specific holes for tubes.



Where or how to maintain

The tubes can be build up a parasite load over time. Preferably, replace tubes every 2 to 3 years.

Further information

- <https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-08/help-wild-bees-guide.pdf>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/creating-a-bee-hotel/>
- www.nightingalegarden.org.uk/bees



Beetle towers

Description of feature

Collection of logs or wood buried in the ground to encourage the wood to rot, providing a habitat for beetles to lay eggs.

Which species benefit the most

Wood boring beetles such as Lesser Stag beetle.

Best location

Stable location unlikely to be disturbed. Some beetles take years to pupate and become adults.

Locations to avoid

Waterlogged soil.

Where or how to install

Any time of the year.

Insect towers are vertical structures made of wood with boxes holding a variety of fillings. Fillings can include canes, bark, wood, rolled up corrugated cardboard, reeds and stones. Drilling holes into deadwood is a really easy way to create a habitat for invertebrates.

These towers will require quite long central posts as at least a third of the post should be set in to the ground.

Where or how to maintain

Keep vegetation clear, so the feature is not forgotten.

Further information

- <https://stagbeetles.ptes.org/how-to-build-a-log-pile/>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/dead-wood-for-wildlife/>

Bird and bat boxes

Description of feature

Structures to provide cavities for hole nesting birds, which can also be popular with tree bumblebees and small mammals.

Which species benefit the most

Different bird species prefer different designs.

Best location

Depends on the desired bird species and whether the appropriate habitats are nearby. Great way of providing nesting opportunities is on a few mature trees with suitable features.

Locations to avoid

Places that cannot be protected against predators, especially cats. Also, areas in full sun as some types of box can overheat in strong sunshine.



Where or how to install

Any time of the year, but before March is best to ensure ready for nesting season. Key points for installing:

- Use untreated wood
- Clean out each year in winter, use boiling water
- Old inner tubes can be used for the rubber strip so the lid can be raised

Where or how to maintain

Clean out old nesting materials at the end of each breeding season in the autumn. You can also pour boiling water inside to kill any parasites.

Further information

- <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/diy.html>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/games-and-activities/activities/make-a-nestbox/>
- <https://www.bto.org/how-you-can-help/providing-birds/putting-nest-boxes-birds/make-nest-box>

Bog gardens and ponds

Description of feature

A marshy, wet area designed as a habitat for wetland plants but also insects and amphibians. Artificial ones usually have a hole-pierced butyl liner to prevent the soil above drying out. This can be planted or just left to develop its own flora.

Which species benefit the most

Native marsh flowers, amphibians and invertebrates.

Best location

Near a water source such as an overflow to a pond, water butt or at the base of downpipes from roofs.

Locations to avoid

Near children's play areas. Anywhere that might dry out, deep shade.

Where or how to install

Any time of year. See further information for instructions on how to install.

Where or how to maintain

You may want to top them up with water but should not be reliant on mains water. Plants will need occasional thinning in the autumn to prevent single species dominating or the feature drying out.

Further information

- www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=356
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/water-for-wildlife/small-water-features-and-bog-gardens/>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/dig-a-damp-ditch-for-diversity/>
- <https://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/gardening-for-wetlands/how-to-build-a-mini-drainpipe-wetland/>

Bramble patches

Description of feature

Area of wild blackberry allowed to thrive and managed on a cyclical rotation.

Which species benefit the most

Butterflies and moths for nectar and larvae food. Birds and small mammals for nesting, cover and food. Berries can be consumed by humans.

Best location

Sunny spot adjacent to other habitats.





Locations to avoid

On existing good quality grassland, adjacent to footpaths for cycleways due to the risk of thorns.

Where or how to install

Many parks will have patches of bramble already established. Planting new plants is best done in the autumn / early winter. Select certified disease-free plants and amend the soil in the bed with compost. Plant brambles 4-6 feet apart in rows spaced 5-10 feet apart. Plant at the same depth the brambles were in their pots.

Where or how to maintain

Cut edges back annually to ensure brambles do not encroach into unwanted areas. Part of the patch should be cut back to ground level in the winter every two years, to ensure a varied structure and encourage flowering and fruiting on newer canes.

Further information

- How to Grow Brambles -Growing Raspberries and Blackberries -Garden Brambles (<https://www.gardeningwithcharlie.com/>)
- Growing Organic : Brambles: Growing Blackberries and Raspberries (<http://gardentalkandtips.blogspot.com/>)

Cornfield annuals

Cornfield annuals can be a popular 'first meadow' to trial a location's suitability. These are prepared on bare earth each Spring and seed is sown as per the supplier's instructions. There is therefore an annual cost. They usually flower around June to July and in

autumn or late winter they can be scythed (or trimmed) down to a low level. After one or more years of annual meadow, they can be replaced with perennial meadows, either sown or using pre-established turf.

Description of feature

Meadow-like planting of annual flowers.

Which species benefit the most

Pollinators and insects but park users will also enjoy the colourful displays.

Best location

Sunny locations.

Locations to avoid

Heavily shaded or waterlogged areas.

Where or how to install

They are best laid down on prepared bare ground in spring or autumn.

Where or how to maintain

Can need irrigation and weeding during establishment, followed by an annual cut and collect.

Further information

- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/planting-poppy-seeds>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/create-a-wildflower-meadow>

Hedgehog habitats

In the 1950s, there were around 30 million hedgehogs in the UK but now there are probably just 1 million. There are many reasons for this decline but also ways we can make our parks and gardens more friendly to hedgehogs.

Description of feature

Construct or maintain nesting and foraging habitats. This can include adding a shelter specifically designed for hedgehogs. The further information section gives extra descriptions on these.



Best location

Dry shaded area, away from noise, people and pets.

Locations to avoid

Busy areas of a park with lots of dogs or close to main roads.

Where or how to install

Before November.

Where or how to maintain

General maintenance of sites may be required but try to ensure the site looks as natural as possible. Hedgehogs carry parasites so be careful and wear gloves.

Further information

- <https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>
- <https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-08/Help-Hedgehog-free-guide.pdf>
- <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>

Hibernacula

There is an overlap between habitats designed for cavity-laying bees, ones for insects and ones for overwintering amphibians, reptiles and mammals (sometimes called hibernacula). Over wintering creatures will seek out cool, dry, stable places to hibernate. Hibernacula are safe places for them because once they are made, they are left alone.

Description of feature

A reasonably dry and cool space for creatures to hibernate over winter in safety.

Which species benefit the most

Any creature that hibernates including hedgehogs, frogs, newts, common lizard, slowworms and toads.

Best location

Close to other habitats. Choose an area that won't flood and isn't in permanent sunshine.

Locations to avoid

Areas in full sun or those which could become waterlogged.

Where or how to install

Dig a hole or make a pile of rocks, bricks, stones, logs, soil and wildflower seed. Ensure there are holes between each element to enable wildlife to access it, however too many larger holes will make the hibernacula draughty.

Where or how to maintain

General tidying may be required by volunteers to ensure feature does not get lost. As wood rots, more can be added when appropriate.

Further information

- <https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum>
- <https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Hibernacula.pdf>

Meadows (Perennial sown)

You can achieve a wildflower meadow by careful management of the existing grass or you can prepare an area of bare earth and sow with a variety of native and carefully selected non-native species. This can be by sowing seed or using ready-prepared turf.

Description of feature

Meadow sown once with mainly perennial species, including soft grasses.

Which species benefit the most

Pollinators and insects.

Best location

Anywhere that isn't too shady.



Locations to avoid

Waterlogged areas or those liable to flooding.

Where or how to install

They are best laid down on prepared bare ground in spring or autumn.

Where or how to maintain

Can need irrigation, weeding, two or more cuts in the first summer to reduce weed load. Cut and collect in the Autumn or early the following spring.

Further information

- <https://wildseed.co.uk/page/sowing-and-aftercare>

Mixed native hedge

Mixed native hedges are excellent for biodiversity, providing food, cover and corridors to aid species moving around.

Description of feature

Hedge planted from several species of native trees and shrubs. Species can include pedunculate oak, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, dogwood, field

maple, guelder rose, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hornbeam, spindle, wayfaring tree, wild cherry and wild privet.

Try to include three plants of the same species per 1 metre with one each of two other species.

Which species benefit the most

Birds, invertebrates, butterflies and mammals, including hedgehogs.

Best location

Park boundaries, linking other habitats and gardens.

Locations to avoid

Blocking views of junctions or screening areas that encourage anti-social behaviour.

Where or how to install

Cheapest to plant from bare root 'whips' from late autumn to early spring. Delay planting if the soil is frozen or waterlogged. Prepare a weed free strip for planting in a double staggered row of 5 plants per metre. Mulch with bark chippings to reduce competition from weeds and retain soil moisture.

Where or how to maintain

Hedgerows require regular management most likely by our operations team, recommended in late winter or early spring. Cutting different sides or sections on a rotation can ensure an annual supply of flowers and berries.

Informal hedges and trees are better than those that are regularly clipped, for instance hawthorn will produce few or no flowers if kept trim.

Further information

- www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=377
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-hedge-wildlife>
- <https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-make-hedge-wildlife>
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques/organic_nativehedge1.shtml

Nettle patches

Nettles are one of the most important native plants for wildlife in the UK, supporting over 40 species of insect. They can provide a challenge when trying to establish other habitats



such as meadows or around playing fields, but they are the easiest way of boosting biodiversity and should be embraced with this in mind.

Description of feature

Area in which nettles are allowed to flourish.

Which species benefit the most

Specialist invertebrates, birds, such as blue tits, who eat over-wintering nettle aphids, and also species that eat their late-Summer seeds such as house sparrows, chaffinches and bullfinches.

Caterpillar food plant for many colourful Butterflies, including small tortoiseshell, comma, peacock, and red admiral. Also, moths, including burnished brass, golden Y, small magpie, mother of pearl, and spectacle.

Best location

A sunny sheltered location is best for butterflies. Nettles like rich soil but will grow in most conditions. Larger patches tend to support more species.

Locations to avoid

Adjacent to paths, benches, play areas and other places where people are likely to get stung. Next to habitats, which they may invade such as species rich meadows.

Where or how to install

Late summer.

Where or how to maintain

Can managed the patches by trimming and mowing in summer.

Further information

- www.nettles.org.uk/nettles/wildlife.asp
- www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/wildflowers/stinging-nettle

Planting for pollinators

Different species of pollinators prefer different plants. Generally it is best to have as many kinds of flowering plants with different shapes and colours to flower from at least February to November. This is achieved using a structure of perennial plants and trees, with bulbs, annuals and biennials added.



Description of feature

A diversity of flower shapes and types across the year. From early spring flowers, such as crocus and primroses, to later flowering Verbena bonariensis and echinacea.

Which species benefit the most

Bees, butterflies, hoverflies, moths.

Best location

Mostly anywhere if you adopt a 'right plant for the right place' scheme. Full-sun can also be beneficial.

Locations to avoid

Very shady, dry or waterlogged ground, however some species may still be suitable.

Where or how to install

Best planted in autumn or spring. Most perennial plants are best moved in spring or autumn. Bulbs are planted in autumn.

Where or how to maintain

Weeds can be suppressed by dense planting and use of organic mulch such as woodchips.

Local example

Ornis Ring, Grange-over-Sands



Further information

- <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators-garden-plants.pdf>
- <https://www.buglife.org.uk/get-involved/gardening-for-bugs/gardening-for-bumblebees/>
- <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/nature/gardening-bees>

Tree planting

Trees planted in a variety of locations can have far-reaching positive environmental impacts.

Description of feature

Species should be locally native and choosing trees of UK provenance avoids importing tree diseases.

Suggested species: alder, common beech, crab apple, elder, English oak, field maple, hazel, holly, rowan, silver birch, wild cherry.

Which species benefit the most

Birds, bats, pollinators, invertebrates and mammals.

Best location

Anywhere with plenty of space to allow growth with plenty of light and not too wet. Tree species should be appropriate to the soil type and should aim to make connections with existing trees and woodland wherever possible.

Locations to avoid

You should plant a tree at least its mature height away from the nearest building. Avoid planting too close to ponds where leaves could fall in and disrupt the ecosystem.

You should not plant trees in habitats with existing high ecological value such as wetlands, heathlands, grassland that has never been ploughed or sites with protected species, without a thorough assessment of the risk to existing ecological interest.

Where or how to install

Mid-October to late March. Buy a seedling between 60-90 cm tall (a 'whip') for the quickest growth rate. "Some sites will take larger trees, but this will be assessed by a site by site basis".

Where or how to maintain

Keeping a 1 metre diameter around the tree clear of weeds and grass for the first 2-3 years will reduce competition for moisture and nutrients.

You can suppress weeds with mulch, such as bark chips or straw bales. Apply it to a depth of around 10cm to prevent it being blown away or dispersed and top it up annually.

Local example

Fletcher Park, Kendal



Further information

- <https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-plant-tree>
- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/where/>
- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/care/>
- <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/types/trees/native-tree-shrubs>

Woodpiles

Piles of wood attract invertebrates and anything that feeds on them, including frogs and newts. Small mammals and hedgehogs like them as shelter too.

Description of feature

Semi-permanent collection of wood, including logs, designed as a habitat. They can be above ground with earth piled up to support them or dug into pits in the ground to encourage the wood to rot for beetle larvae.

Which species benefit the most

Invertebrates, amphibians, small mammals. Species of fungi that live on rotting wood.

Best location

Sun or shade will determine the species present and how long the feature persists.

Locations to avoid

Places that will be disturbed frequently. Highly waterlogged places.

Where or how to install

Any time of year. Please note the biosecurity risk of using wood from other locations as this could bring in diseases such as ash die back and non-native species.

Where or how to maintain

Might need vegetation clearing back occasionally. When logs decay, new ones may need to be added.



Further information

- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/create-a-log-pile-for-wildlife/>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-log-shelter>



Appendix 2: Community project ideas

Sunflower competition

Communities and organisations across the UK organised sunflower competitions last summer to see who could grow the tallest plant or widest flower. The initiatives have encouraged people to get closer to nature and understand the importance of plants with a little competitive spirit. Sunflower growing not only encourages children's green fingers to develop but they provide a vibrant display for everyone to enjoy, including pollinators.



No Mow campaigns

The 'No Mow May' campaign involves not mowing your lawn throughout the month to let pollinator-friendly wildflowers grow instead and can be adopted as a community. With 15 million gardens in Britain, our lawns have the potential to become major sources of nectar and give a head start to early pollinators.

More information and resources can be found at: <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/>.

Did you know... Just eight dandelion flowers can produce enough nectar sugar to meet an adult bumblebee's baseline energy needs.

Community composting

Composting suitable food and garden waste has benefits of reducing landfill and helping with carbon sequestration in the fight against climate change.

Home composting has increased hugely but many homes do not have the space for a dedicated compost bin. Community composting initiatives see bins placed in one central location where local residents can take their green waste to be turned into compost. Residents can 'subscribe' to the scheme and receive a compost caddy to collect waste at home before taking it to the compost site.

Compost made can be shared amongst the community or put back into local planters for everyone to enjoy. Discounted compost bins are available here or bins can be made easily out of old pallets.

Compost bin tips

- Site the bins in sunny locations if possible.
- Use nitrogen-rich green waste such as veg peelings and leaf clippings as well as carbon-rich material such as twigs and cardboard.
- Avoid cooked food, dairy products and meat.
- Break everything up as small as you can.
- Allow air to get to it, either by gaps in the side or by turning.
- Keep a cover on it to avoid it getting too soggy.
- Empty in six months from the bottom, take the compost and put back anything that needs a bit longer.
- Do not compost invasive or non-native species, these need to be destroyed separately and securely





Westmorland
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