

# TOP 10 Tips for Gardening & Wildlife

Winter/Spring 2022



## 1. Don't be too tidy:

Leave nesting material for birds and allow natural composting and recycling – no need to clear all those leaves!

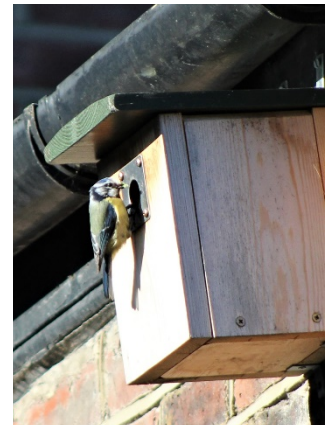
## 2. Don't disturb those log piles etc.:

They may be sheltering hibernating insects, amphibians, maybe even hedgehogs.

And leave the Ivy alone! At this time of year the Ivy berries are food for birds and the flowers important for bees. The leaves shelter overwintering larval stages of insects etc.

## 3. Put up Nest-boxes early:

Especially with a mild winter, birds are already looking for nesting sites – you'd be surprised how early they start nesting in this area. For advice on siting of boxes – visit the RSPB website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk>.



## 4. Take Part in the RSPB Garden Birdwatch:

Simply count the birds you see in your garden, from your balcony or in your local park for one hour between 28 and 30 January 2022. See RSPB Website for details of how you can take part. This annual count really helps our understanding of how our garden and park birdlife is flourishing.

## 5. Avoid buying peat-based compost:

Thinking of buying compost for your spring planting? Try to use only peat-free compost: Habitats with peat are important eco-systems as well as storing large amounts of carbon. Unfortunately, these areas are still being destroyed to provide compost for gardening. Please help to preserve these precious areas which have developed over thousands of years by avoiding peat-based compost.

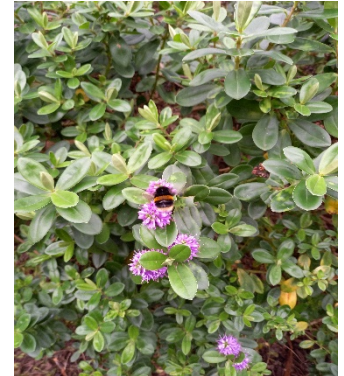
## **6. Feed the Birds!**

Food may be scarce now and you will help our resident birds overwinter by providing seed and suet-based foods. Feeders that keep the squirrels out are best. You can find feeders and appropriate foods at Garden Centres (British Trust for Ornithology ones are good) or via RSPB website.



## **7. Plant for Wildlife:**

This time of year we may be thinking of creating new areas in our garden with planting of new shrubs: Consider planting varieties that will specifically help our wildlife: My favourites for low maintenance and which seem to flourish in this area are: buddleia, lavender, hebe, erysimum, lonicera, jasmine, cotoneaster & pyracantha.



If you have room for a small tree consider varieties of apple, flowering cherry, rowan, field maple, silver birch. More information can be obtained from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust website (<https://www.hiwwt.org.uk>).

## **8. Invest in Composting:**

Even the smallest garden will benefit from a compost bin – and think about a wormery to deal with that kitchen waste!



## **9. Try wildflower alternatives to the usual bedding plants:**

Many flowering plants that insects love can be grown from seed & are now being stocked by Garden Centres. Try some wildflowers too such as comfrey, meadow cranesbill, mallow, meadowsweet, tansy, cornflowers, ox-eye daisy etc.

If all you have is a balcony or windowsill, you can try planting seeds of insect-loving plants instead of some of the much-loved geraniums!

## **10 Reduce plastic:**

Some garden centres are now selling plants in biodegradable containers – sadly most are still using plastic – try growing your own from seed in biodegradable pots or trays & reuse last year's plastic trays as well.