

### Gardening for Birds and Wildlife



How to make some simple changes in how you manage your garden that will make it better for biodiversity

(With thanks to Birdwatch Ireland Westmeath Branch for the information)

Assessing what you have and protecting it.

- What can you do?

- First- do no harm!
- Second-simple changes can make a big difference-
- Changes in choice of plants
- Planting of new plants/areas
- Creating new habitats
- Changes in perception of 'mess'

### Shrubs for wildlife

- Low maintenance, creates habitats for birds, insects and small mammals.
- Choose native- Viburnum opulus- guelder rose or spindle.
- Beware invasives- rhododendron and cotoneaster.
- Choose a wide variety of shrubs, so there's always some flowers, berries or shelter.

Flowers

Viburnums

Lavatera

Ulex-gorse

Heathers

Hypericum

Buddleia

Berries

Viburnums

Roses with

hips

Currants

Pheasant Berry?

Pyracantha

Spindle

Evergreen

Ulex-

gorse

Heathers

Ceanothus

Conifers-

juniper

Beware

thorns!

Make

good

Make

safe

BUT

-

Holly, roses, pyracantha

etc

Shrubs

provide

Year round

interest

Nesting

for

Some

are

Trees

- Mature trees consist of several diverse habitats

- Hedgerows are important too

- Plant new trees
- Leave dead wood standing or in situ
- Large trees that die are very important habitats for insects and birds who nest inside trees.
- Check for safety and leave die and rot if possible.
- If beside buildings or paths remove branches and leave stump to rot. Otherwise cut down and leave on the ground

Planting new trees

- Native.
- Fruit trees.
- Right tree in the right place.
- Beware of stakes and tree ties!
- Beware of strimmers!!!

Under tree management



- Allow to be 'wild'
- No herbicides
- Don't mow the grass
- Don't trim
- A clear mown edge between the 'forest' and lawn sends a clear message Why are perennials good for wildlife?
- Flowers attract pollinators

- Young foliage attracts invertebrates
- Some produce edible seeds or berries
- Insects hibernate on stems in winter
- Allow perennials to set seed and stay 'messy' winter
- If you refrain from 'dead heading' lots of plants produce seeds for birds and small mammals to eat.
- Ladybirds hibernate over winter inside perennial stems

Some good choices of perennials

- Most herbs
- Seed producing perennials like Teased
- Long flowering plants like Geraniums
- Daises- e.g. Shasta daisy
- Early flowering- e.g. Leopard's Bane- Late flowering perennials e.g. Sedums or Solidago

Wild-flower meadows?

- Need prep as for lawns
- Need reseeding every few years or careful management
- Or different expectations?

Willow Sculptures

- Willow is a very important biodiversity plant

- Flowers early- pollen source
- Host to lots of insects
- It is a fast grower
- High maintenance - 3-4 times a year
- Very important plant for wildlife- late flowers for bees - mid winter berries for birds
- Nesting habitat

- Roosting habitat
- Insect habitat
- Do not remove unless on health and safety grounds

### Butterflies & Caterpillars

- Nettles, ragweed, grasses, trees, cabbages, holly, nasturtiums
- Various perennial and shrub flowers

- Shallow water- wet moss

Especially for birds

Nesting habitat

Roosting habitat

Insects

Open ground

Leaf litter and mulch

Berries and seeds

Drinking and bathing water

Remember - NO Pesticides - NO Rodenticides - LESS Herbicides

### **BEE CAUTIOUS WITH IVY CUT BACKS!**

**Ivy** is such a useful evergreen climber and if kept well trimmed it won't take over. So any I find growing up into guttering will be pulled away from the wall and cut back.

However, ivy growing in the informal boundaries of the garden will be left untrimmed as will any in flower as honey bees find the late flowers a very valuable source of nectar in autumn.

Some gardeners believe ivy protect walls from heat and cold but others consider it to be damaging to structures. I'm not sure who is right but the bees and I would certainly miss the curtains of green the clothe some of our garden buildings.





