



WEST MIDLANDS
Greener Together



WMCA

Community Green Grants

Top Tips for Increasing Biodiversity



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Introduction

WMCA Community Green Grants: Top Tips for Increasing Biodiversity






Increasing biodiversity is essential to the success of the WMCA Community Green Grants.

In the grant application we expect to see plans and proposals that would increase the amount of biodiversity on the site. There is a requirement that the proposed work will leave a legacy which will increase the overall biodiversity of the area. Below are some key areas you could consider including in your project plan:



Habitat Creation





It's quite easy to make a difference for specific animal groups. When suggesting habitat creation please include details on how it will be maintained and where it will be located.

-  Invertebrates: create- log piles, bee hotels; plant nectar-rich plant species for pollinators; pond creation.
-  Birds: erect nest boxes for tits, robins, swifts, house martins, redstarts. Make sure you provide feeders and other habitats/ plant life to attract insects.
-  Herptiles: create - small ponds, compost heaps and provision of refugia and hibernacula.
-  Mammals – provision of undisturbed areas; holes in fences & gravel boards for [hedgehogs](#). Make adjustments such as reducing artificial lighting to make areas more inviting for bats, you can find some great tips from the Bat Conservation Trust [Gardening for bats](#).
-  When clearing any ground (cutting back vegetation or clearing debris) that has been left untouched for some time be conscious not to disturb breeding birds (breeding season is normally March to August), if hedgehogs, reptiles or amphibians are encountered allow them to move to safe cover and consider how to accommodate them within your site. If you think there is a risk of encountering a protected species contact the local [Wildlife Trust](#) for advice.



Planting for Pollinators

Can you plant more plants and flowers to help bees, butterflies and other pollinators thrive? There are plenty of helpful resources and guides with information on what will do best in your space.

-  [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)
-  [The best plants for bees and pollinators | The Wildlife Trusts](#)
-  [Gardening for Bugs - Buglife](#)
-  Get project participants involved by taking part in schemes such the Big Butterfly Count [Big Butterfly Count \(butterfly-conservation.org\)](#)







Ponds

The Wildlife Trust recommends adding a pond as one of the best ways to attract new wildlife to a garden. As well as being an appealing feature a pond can attract frogs, toads, newts and a variety of insects such as dragonflies, mayflies and pond skaters.

Creation of ponds should consider health & safety and the ongoing maintenance of the water level. Often ponds don't need to be planted but will colonise naturally over time. Make sure you include details on the size of your pond.



-  An easy step by step guide to adding a pond [How to build a pond | The Wildlife Trusts](#)
-  If space is an issue then even a mini-pond can make a big difference, the RSPB have an easy how to guide [Container Pond Ideas | DIY Mini Pond Wild Challenge - The RSPB](#)





Wildflower Meadows

Wildflower meadows and areas are becoming an increasingly popular amongst community gardens and projects. When proposing wildflower beds, it is necessary to consider whether these will be sown with annual species or with perennial hay meadow species? There is a need for provision and maintenance of both.

-  Organisation Plantlife have helpful information on creating and maintaining wildflower meadows [Plantlife Meadows | Home](#)
-  If you have a small space then a mini meadow could be a better option [Top tips from The National Trust](#)





Urban Greening

If you are working with a “Grey Space” then Urban Greening could be the right approach for your project. A car park or paved area can be transformed into a green haven by using raised beds, green walls and roofs.

-  Green walls look great and also help to keep buildings cool as well as providing a great habitat for insects [Green walls / RHS Gardening](#)
-  Raised beds can be used to grow many things from flowers to fruit and vegetables. They can also be made using repurposed materials such as wooden pallets.
-  The RSPB has an excellent website called [Nature On Your Doorstep](#) with helpful guides on how to increase nature in spaces from alleyways to balconies.



Wildlife Corridors and connection














- Applicants should consider how the proposed project connects with existing green space/nature interest e.g. parks/nature reserves/canals/streams/rivers. Your site won't exist in a vacuum and will be dependent on local sources of biodiversity to colonise it. Can you join with any existing green/blue features? This will make your project more valuable for nature conservation.
- Before you apply make sure you find out what existing work (habitat management, improvement or creation) is taking place in the area through environmental groups such as Wildlife Trust, RSPB and National Trust or through the Local Authority.





Environmental Impact

Give careful thought to the impact your project will have on the environment and factor in ways you promote sustainability through the work. Some ways of doing this include:

-  Conserve & harvest water
-  Aim to be plastic free & also to recycle plastics
-  Recycle wood
-  Compost green waste
-  Use peat-free compost
-  Mulch the soil to retain the moisture
-  Avoid using insecticides and slug pellets, herbicides, fungicides (use natural pest control) and try companion planting instead
-  Ensure local provenance of the things to be used, i.e. locally sourced
-  Reduce food miles – grow your own
-  Avoid mowing lawns – allow them to flower
-  Plant hedges as boundaries
-  If you are considering planting trees please refer to our [Right Tree Right Place guide](#)
-  When clearing a site undertake the works with care (timing to avoid breeding birds). If wildlife is encountered allow it to find shelter and incorporate replacement habitat into your scheme. If impact upon protected species could occur seek further advice.

Compiled by WMCA with content from
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