

# FIVE WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER WILDLIFE

## 1. Keep some areas messy



While many of us take pride in a neat and tidy garden, for wildlife the rule of thumb is usually the messier, the better. Keep some areas of your garden untidy by gathering together dead leaves, vegetation, log piles and twigs. These unkempt areas will be the perfect places for hedgehogs and amphibians like frogs and toads to hibernate, as well as providing a habitat for insects.

## 2. Provide a food source

Food is hard to come by for lots of animals at this time of year. Birds in particular struggle to source food during the winter, so putting out bird feeders can be a great way to help them through the harsh, cold months. Use both hanging feeders and ground feeders, along with a range of bird seed, to ensure you cater to a variety of different bird species. Take a look at our range of bird feeders.

Having lots of shrubs, bushes and other plants in your garden is also beneficial – ivy and rowan are two great choices as their berries are the favourite fruit of some bird species, such as redwings and song thrushes, and are ripe throughout winter. It's worth leaving any ivy pruning until the last fruit has gone to ensure you maximise the food available for birds.

### 3. Make a bug hotel



Bugs need warm and dry shelters to spend the cooler months in, so give them a great place to hibernate by making a bug hotel and placing it in your garden. Having insects in your garden is beneficial because many of them pollinate plants and are predators for pests. Whether you choose to use bricks, wood or both, your hotel gives them a fighting chance at surviving the winter months.

### 4. Provide fresh water

As ponds and lakes freeze over when the temperatures fall, water can be difficult for wildlife to source during the winter. Help them out by leaving out fresh water and keeping bird baths topped up and free of ice. Or, if you have a pond, try melting a hole into the ice using a saucepan, so that animals can drink from it.

### 5. Put up a nesting box

Putting up a nesting box in your garden is another great way to support wildlife at this time of year. It will provide birds with shelter during the winter and many will revisit nesting boxes during the spring to nest in. Ensure you keep it away from any potential predators (including cats!) and place it away from direct sunlight.

References: This article was written after consulting many of the on - line resources from organisations such as Wildlife Trusts, BBC Wildlife Magazine, and RSPB