



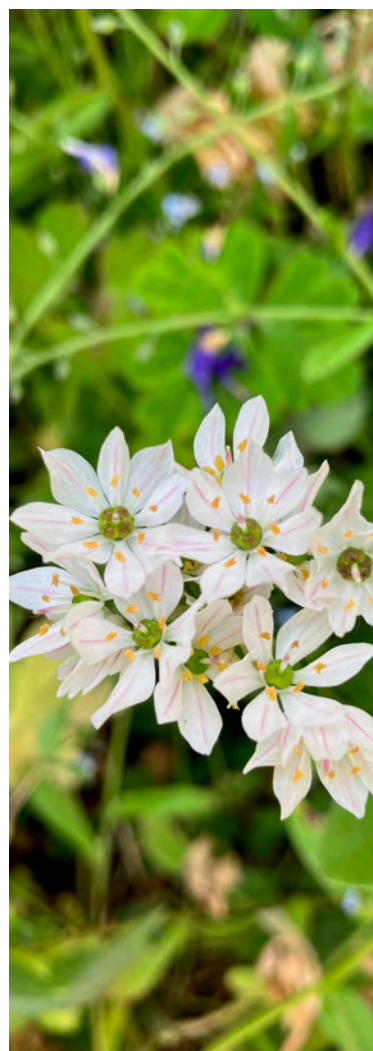
7 Quick and Pretty Wildlife Wins for Your Garden



HEAR THE BIRDS

Alliums

Alliums, alliums, alliums! So beautiful with many colour options. Flowers appear in early spring to mid summer. Plant in Autumn and forget about them! Literally zero maintenance. Bees love them as you can see. Buy organic bulbs if you can to ensure they are grown pesticide free.

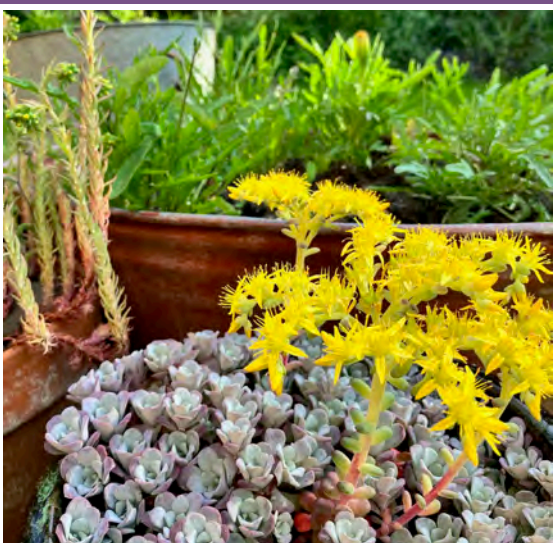
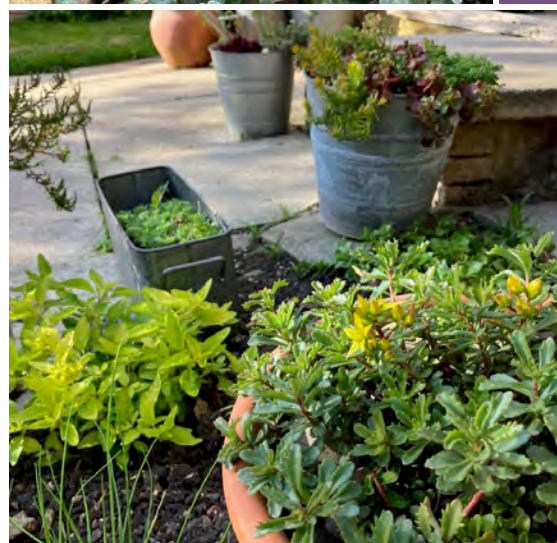




Alpine Sedums

For those after low-maintenance bee-friendliness, you can't beat these alpine sedums. These ones are sat in pots mostly full of hardcore pulled out of the garden, with a tiny scrap of compost on top. Top pictures show sedums in old metal buckets around a bit of stone used as coaster (thanks to Adam Frost for this idea).

It dies back a bit in winter, but looks good all year round and I never water it! They shimmer with frost in winter (left). Bright yellow or pink flowers in summer.



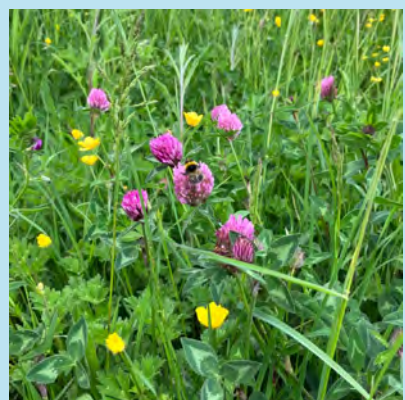


Habitat Rich Wildflower Seat

This Gabion basket makes a habitat rich table for a seating area. It's filled with old pruning offcuts and covered with a piece of old worktop. Other materials like stones, twigs, old bricks, bits of pallet can be used to fill up the basket. The baskets themselves are cheaply available online.

The table offers lots of hidey holes for insects to live in. Surround it with wildflowers sown from seed (poppies and green alkanet shown here). Then sit down and relax in your own meadow, buzzy bees queuing up to snaffle nectar around you.





Pretty and low maintenance lawns

Here are some options for low maintenance, wildlife boosting lawns:

1. Leave your lawn mossy. Studies suggest that only one metre-squared of moss absorbs more carbon than 22 trees. It doesn't need mowing, is hugely beneficial to wildlife and survives drought better than grass. It also absorbs pollution, turning it into harmless biomass. Amazing and all free!

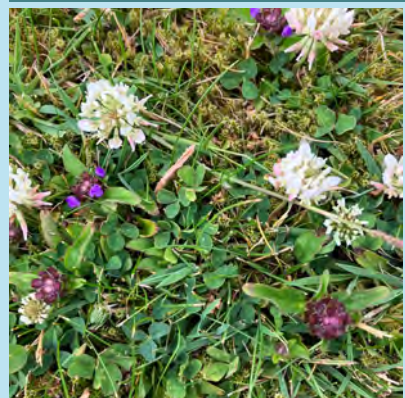
2. Create a low flowering lawn. Here are two methods:

A. Keep the mower setting high and see what springs up. Here I have white clover, daisies, buttercups and violet flowered self-heal. Much more interesting than plain green and the insects love it.

B. Sow a low flowering lawn mix on bare soil. You could also use this on bare patches of an existing lawn.

All options above keep the lawn usable for sitting on or playing football.

If you don't need so much of your lawn for sitting or games. Another option would be to dedicate a section of lawn as a wildflower meadow that grows much higher than the options above. It will be mostly grass for the first year or so, but flowers should start to emerge, especially if you add yellow rattle seed, which helps to keep grass at bay. Mowing around the edges makes it look neat. A sculpture, birdbath in the middle or a tree makes it look intentional. The longer grass provides lots of habitat for insects and small mammals.



Foxgloves

These beautiful flowers always remind me of my Grandma's garden. I think they are so romantic and herald the start of summer. Bees love them. Slugs hate them. Win-win!

Easy to grow from seed or plant one from the garden centre. Let it seed around in the Autumn to gain more seedlings the following year.

Perfect for brightening a shady spot.



Hedges and Wild Fences

Plant a hedge or a living fence.

There are so many lovely options that add lots of interest to a garden. Mixed native hedges are cheaply available at specialist nurseries (try hedging.co.uk).

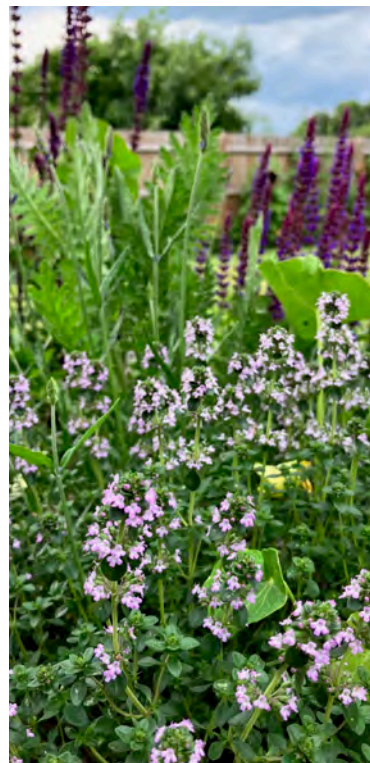
It's tempting to opt for an evergreen hedge for privacy, but most offer very little to wildlife. There are so many hedge types that are beautiful and offer wildlife habitat as well as privacy. If you have fences you can add a range of climbers such as ivy, jasmine or a range of honeysuckles (which flower in yellows, whites, pinks and purples). The latter two smell absolutely gorgeous with the sun on them. Birds love ivy and bees love the flowers. You don't just need to stick to boundaries either. This beech hedging screen would make a lovely separate area in a garden to read a book in.



Clockwise from top - Hawthorn (not actually very thorny) spring blossom. Colourful curved Beech hedging in Autumn. Hawthorn Autumn berries. Pink Cosmos in front of an Ivy and Honeysuckle covered fence. Ivy flowers, native Honeysuckle flowers.



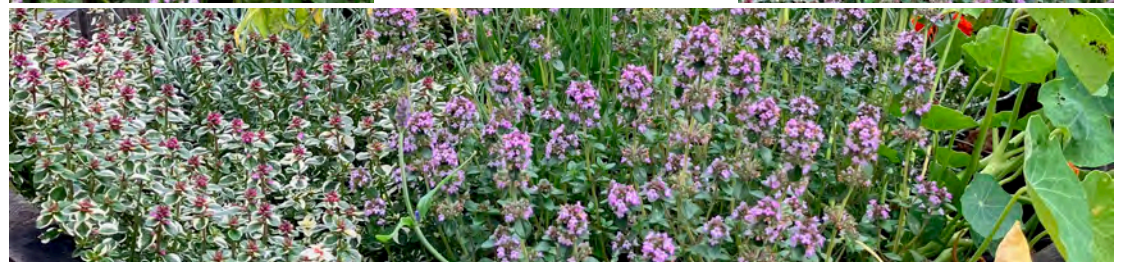
FLOWERING HERBS



An ever-interesting herb tub, planted in Spring. It's provided interesting colour and texture for months. The bees have loved it! In Winter it will still be evergreen/silver and look lovely with some frost on it. Plus handy herbs for cooking! This is an easy thing to do when you first move in or if you're renting. You could even add bulbs for extra spring va-va-voom! Super low maintenance and perennial.

Tubs this size can eat compost. To save resources I filled the bottom layer with stones and hardcore found in the garden. You could also put an upside down plastic tub in the bottom (with holes in). These plants all love good drainage so the more rubble the better. It only needs watering when it hasn't rained for more than a week in hot summer.

Plants shown in this pot are: Rosemary, Curry plant, Lavender, Salvia Nemorosa and Carradonna (the latter is taller). Nasturtiums sown direct offer some orange colour contrast in late summer.





HEAR THE BIRDS



What's different?

Hear the Birds specialises in gardens that are made for humans and wildlife. Biodiverse and Beautiful.

I combine my architectural design skills with a passion for plants and the environment. I like nothing better than sitting in my own garden listening to the birds and the gentle hum of insect life around me.

Why I do it

My passion for gardens started age 25 (when it was not cool to garden as it is now) growing vegetables. A few pots of beans soon turned into renovating a rented garden, shortly followed by an allotment and then two. As a farmer's daughter I love being outside and caught the bug of growing delicious things to eat. This soon extended to ornamental plants, native plants and their varieties. I am a former chair of Helmdon Gardening Club and a keen current member of Sulgrave Gardening Club.

About

Hi, I'm Clare, an architect with a passion for gardens and the environment. While designing eco homes, my work naturally extended to garden design. I realised that collectively, gardens big and small could be part of a wider network of improved biodiversity. So I set up a separate garden design business to expand this aim.



Stay in touch!

Why not head over to hear-the-birds.co.uk and sign up to my newsletter.

For all our latest news, hints and tips on enjoying your garden and making it an eco paradise.

follow me on instagram
[@hear_the_birds](https://www.instagram.com/hear_the_birds)



If you'd like some help making your garden into a happy place for you and for wildlife, I'd be delighted to help!

