



*The RHS and The Wildlife
Trusts – encouraging wildlife
into your garden*

Wild About Gardens Newsletter November 2016



Morning air now has a frosty bite that signals the last warmth of summer is well and truly over. For garden creatures, it is a time to switch focus from breeding and rearing young, to survival in the coming colder months. As always, food, shelter and water are vital.

So take a late season stroll around your garden to check for [creature-friendly features](#). Add more where you can. Useful places can range from nooks and crannies in walls and simple heaps of leaves, to more elaborate structures like hedgehog houses.

Gardens are important for wildlife wherever they are, and never more so than in cities. In the UK, more than half of urban areas are made up of green space, including gardens. Sir David Attenborough highlights the importance of [cities for wildlife](#) worldwide in the new BBC series, Planet Earth II. Locally, projects like [My Wild City](#) in Bristol show how to link areas to create green corridors for wildlife.

If you are inspired to find out more about European perspectives on wildlife gardening, why not come to the [Wildlife Gardening Forum's](#) next conference on 23 November, with speakers from Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands - but hurry, there are only a few places left.

Things to do

- Even at this time of year, bird baths are a must. Birds use water to clean their feathers, and preening them afterwards helps the feathers stay insulated and in

- Leave mature flowering ivy uncut. Any flowers still there are a boon for butterflies and bees, and the berries are a feast for birds throughout the winter.
- If you don't already have one, start making a compost heap. Aside from their recycling value, compost heaps are a source of warmth and shelter for many invertebrates and for frogs and toads, slow worms and grass snakes.

More things to do in **November**.

Things to look for



Blackcap



Hedgehog



Bumblebee

By the end of October, many UK **blackcaps** will have begun their migration south. But as these leave, other blackcaps arrive, either for a pit stop or to stay for the winter. Research from the British Trust for Ornithology shows that garden bird feeders have made it worthwhile for blackcaps to overwinter here.

Hedgehogs are building up reserves and will soon be looking for somewhere to hibernate. They now need to eat as much as possible, and this is a good time to put out food. The exact timing of hibernation on weather conditions. Hedgehogs may also wake up, wander about, and even change nests during the winter.

Not many insects will be flying in cold weather, although you may see **bumblebees**. Their furry, fuzzy bodies help keep them warmer and enable them to fly on milder days. They need nectar so it is a good idea to keep your winter borders stocked with a few late-flowering plants.

More about what to look out for in **November**.