



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

Wild About Gardens Newsletter October 2016



Wild About Gardens Week (24–30 October), is here, with a host of events and activities for you to enjoy. This year's focus is bats; there is a [photo competition](#), lots of [information to download](#) such as a new booklet on bats, *Stars of the Night*, and a host of bat-related events throughout the country. Find out [what's on](#).

In the garden, we may be enjoying the spectacle of leaves glowing red, purple and orange, but many species of wildlife have begun their annual struggle to put on enough weight to get through the winter. [Feed the birds](#) - good-quality seed mixes in hanging feeders and fat-rich suet balls go down well with tits and finches, but don't neglect species that prefer to feed from the ground, such as thrushes and blackbirds. You can also provide hibernation sites: [piles of logs](#) or stones in out-of-the-way corners for amphibians and small mammals; large piles of fallen leaves or bespoke 'hibernation houses' for hedgehogs.

Also a feature of many gardens at this time of year, but woefully under-appreciated as a vital part of garden biodiversity, are the fruiting bodies of fungi. Few British species (barring honey fungus) are a danger to plants so if some pop up under trees or in lawns in your plot, don't be worried, rather enjoy them as visible indicators of the health of your garden's ecosystem. To learn more, join a ['fungi foray'](#).

Things to do

- Provide for a range of birds' feeding habits: tits and finches prefer hanging feeders; robins, sparrows and chaffinches favour bird tables; while blackbirds and thrushes like to forage on the ground (windfall fruit will be enjoyed by many).
- Rake together fallen leaves into out-of-the-way corners – they form ideal hibernation sites for insects, amphibians and small mammals.
- If you are pruning trees and shrubs, piles of twigs and branches cut into short lengths to form log piles make valuable wildlife habitat.
- Leave mature ivy uncut, it is an extremely valuable source of late nectar, followed by black berries for birds.

More things to do in **October**.

Things to look for



Fungi

Fungi of all sorts live in turf – they only appear above ground as fruiting bodies, mushrooms or 'toadstools'. Common turf fungi include shaggy inkcap, brown mottlegill and the parasol mushroom. Under trees, you may find red with white spots fly agaric. There are more than 12,000 fungi native to the UK.



Goldfinches are specialist seed-eaters, and these flamboyantly colourful little birds are becoming more common in gardens. As well as teasels, they will feed on the seedheads of many garden plants, so don't be too hasty to deadhead at this time of year

Goldfinches



Spiders themselves may not be visible, but the dews and early frosts of October can beautifully highlight their quiet works. Some species seem to prefer houses: often male house spiders on the prowl for receptive females!

Spider

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

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