

Cunning Containers

Hanging baskets, planters and window boxes for the wildlife garden



Hanging baskets, herb holders, mini meadows, even a pond in a pot – can you contain your joy? Pots and containers are one way of introducing wildlife features into more formal areas of the garden like the patio or outside the back door.

For smaller gardens, containers are perfect for a small space. Herbs in particular make good container plants and attract lots of wildlife – as well as being useful in the kitchen.

There are also many ingenious planting schemes that can be tried. Sow your own mini-wildflower meadow in a window box, or line a pot with plastic to make a potted pond or bog garden. Even use objects such as old chimney pots, sinks, kettles, and holey boots as containers.

Planting ideas are given below for:

- A wildlife hanging basket
- Butterfly/nectar tubs and baskets
- Cornfield meadow pots
- Pond in a pot
- Wetland bog pot
- Woodland pot for a shady position
- Heathland pot
- Chalk downland pot

Quirky containers

Old watering cans, kettles or teapots, holey boots, metal pails and buckets, bird or other pet's cage, paint tins, catering tins, old pans and colanders,

— the sky's the limit!



How to do it ... tubs and troughs for wildlife

Nectar-rich plants for butterflies and other insects

Early: aubretia, alyssum, snowdrops, species crocuses, English bluebells

Late: red valerian, lavender, michaelmas daisies, yarrow

Long lasting and nectar rich: heliotrope, marigolds, scabious, knapweeds, agastache, buddleia

For bees and others: rosemary, sage, thyme, alyssum, comfrey, clover, borage, catmint, teasel

Larval foodplants: stinging nettle, ivy, bird's-foot-trefoil, nasturtiums, garlic mustard, lady's smock (cuckoo flower)

Cover for hibernation: ivy

- Drainage holes if necessary, drill 5-10mm diameter drainage holes into the bottom about 15cm apart.
- 2. Cover with crocks.
- 3. Half fill with peat-free compost.
- 4. Start planting: continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm from the top.
- 5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer.





Remember
native species are best, but
nectar-rich plants can be a
good food source.

How to do it ...wildlife hanging baskets

- 1. Rest the basket on a bucket or large pot for stability .
- 2. Line with an old woolly jumper (not a moss liner) cut to size or choose a solid basket.
- 3. Start planting using peat-free compost. Put in a tall, central plant (such as scabious, lavender, sage) smaller ones around it and trailing plants through the sides.
- 4. Continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm from the top.
- 5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer .

Cool blues: aubrieta, lobelia, wild pansy, nepeta

Hot reds: marigolds, fuchsia

Neutral whites: sweet alyssum, erigeron, ox-eye daisy

Tall central plant: knapweed, scabious, lavender, snapdragon, pot marigold **Herb smellies/eatables:** verbena, patio tomatoes, chives, thyme, rosemary, parsley,

sage, patio strawberry, dwarf lavender

Trailers: ivy, nasturtium, honeysuckle, sweet pea, lobelia 'Pendula'

photos - A. Williams

Cornfield meadow pots

Cool blues: Cornflower, wild pansy

Poppy, corncockle, pheasant's eye Hot reds: Corn marigold, corn buttercup Soft yellows:

- 1. Drainage holes if necessary, drill 5-10mm diameter holes into the bottom about 15cm apart.
- 2. Cover with crocks.
- 3. Half fill with peat-free compost.
- 4. Start planting! Continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm from the top.
- 5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer.
- 6. Sow each year.

Boggy wetland pot

Cool blues: Water forget-me-not, brooklime, skullcap

Hot reds: Purple loosestrife, marsh

woundwort, ragged robin, flowering rush

Neutral whites, soft yellows and greens:

Gypsywort, marsh cinquefoil, cuckooflower, soft rush,

meadowsweet, marsh marigold

- 1. Drainage holes if necessary, drill 5-10mm diameter holes into the bottom about 15cm apart.
- 2. Cover with crocks, liner or plastic bags to retard drainage.
- 3. Half fill with peat-free compost.
- 4. Start planting! Continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm from the top.
- 5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer.

Pond in a pot

Submerged oxygenators: Hornwort, spiked water milfoil Submerged floaters: Potamogetons, water starwort, frogbit Emergent plants (on a shelf): Water forget-me-not, gypsywort, flowering rush, arrowhead, watercrowfoot

- 1. Find a suitable leak-free container such as an old sink with the plug hole plugged.
- 2. Put a 2-4cm thick layer of peat-free compost in the bottom and cover with gravel to hold it down.
- 3. Run water in very gently, preferably over plastic to avoid stirring the substrate. Use rain water if possible. Let tap water stand for a few days.
- 4. Plant up after a few days when water has cleared.
- 5. Maintain water levels.

'Woodland' pot suitable for a shady or semi-shaded position

Cool blues: Wood forget-me-not, bluebell, bugle,

lungwort

Red hots: Hedge woundwort, red campion, foxglove,

herb Robert, lungwort

Neutral whites, Primrose, lesser celandline, yellow

yellows & greens: archangel, ivy, wood avens, ferns,

hellebores, wood sage, lords and ladies,

wood spurge

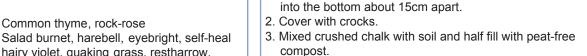
- 1. Drainage holes if necessary, drill 5-10mm diameter drainage holes into the bottom about 15cm apart.
- 2. Cover with crocks.
- 3. Half fill with peat-free (especially use a leaf mould based) compost.
- 4. Start planting! Continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm from the top.
- 5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer.

Chalk grassland pot

Low growing: Common thyme, rock-rose

Flowers:

hairy violet, quaking grass, restharrow, meadow clary, cowslip, kidney vetch, horsehoe vetch, small scabious.



4. Start planting! Continue building up plants and compost until about 5cm fro the top.

1. Drainage holes – if necessary, drill 5-10mm diameter holes

5. Water well and enjoy! Feed once a week and water frequently in summer.



Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

Conservation Centre Robinswood Hill Country Park Reservoir Road Gloucester GL4 6SX

Tel: 01452 383333 Fax: 01452 383334 info@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

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www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk