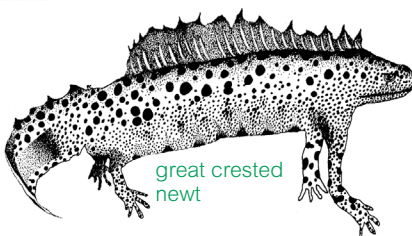
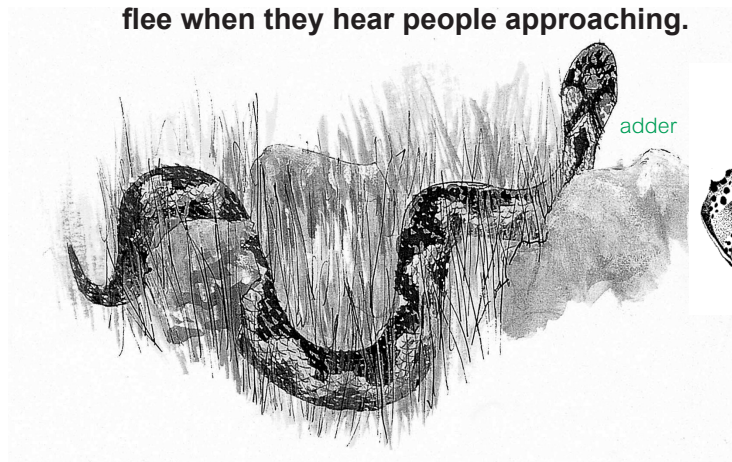


FACT SHEET 2



How to encourage Amphibians and Reptiles

These species are often considered to be 'nasty' or 'slimy' and the reptiles in particular have a poor reputation. The only poisonous snake in the UK is the adder and they are generally timid and will flee when they hear people approaching.



In Gloucestershire there are 5 different amphibians:

- COMMON FROG
- COMMON TOAD
- SMOOTH NEWT
- PALMATE NEWT
- GREAT CRESTED NEWT

And 4 species of reptile:

- GRASS SNAKE
- ADDER
- COMMON LIZARD
- SLOW WORM

The smooth snake, natterjack toad and sand lizard are not Gloucestershire species but are found elsewhere in the UK.

WHAT DO AMPHIBIANS NEED?

All 5 amphibians require water, usually in the form of a pond or lake, for at least part of the year whilst they are breeding. However what is often forgotten is that they all require habitat away from the pond once breeding is over for feeding and hibernation. Frogs and toads in particular may travel considerable distances away from their breeding pond. Their preferred habitat would include long tussocky grass, scrubby woodland, hedgerows and piles of logs or stones. Newts

may not travel so far from the pond, but do spend significant amounts of the year on land and require similar habitat.

It should be remembered that great crested newts are protected by law and it is an offence to disturb, kill, injure or handle a great crested newt without an appropriate licence.

WHAT DO REPTILES NEED? —

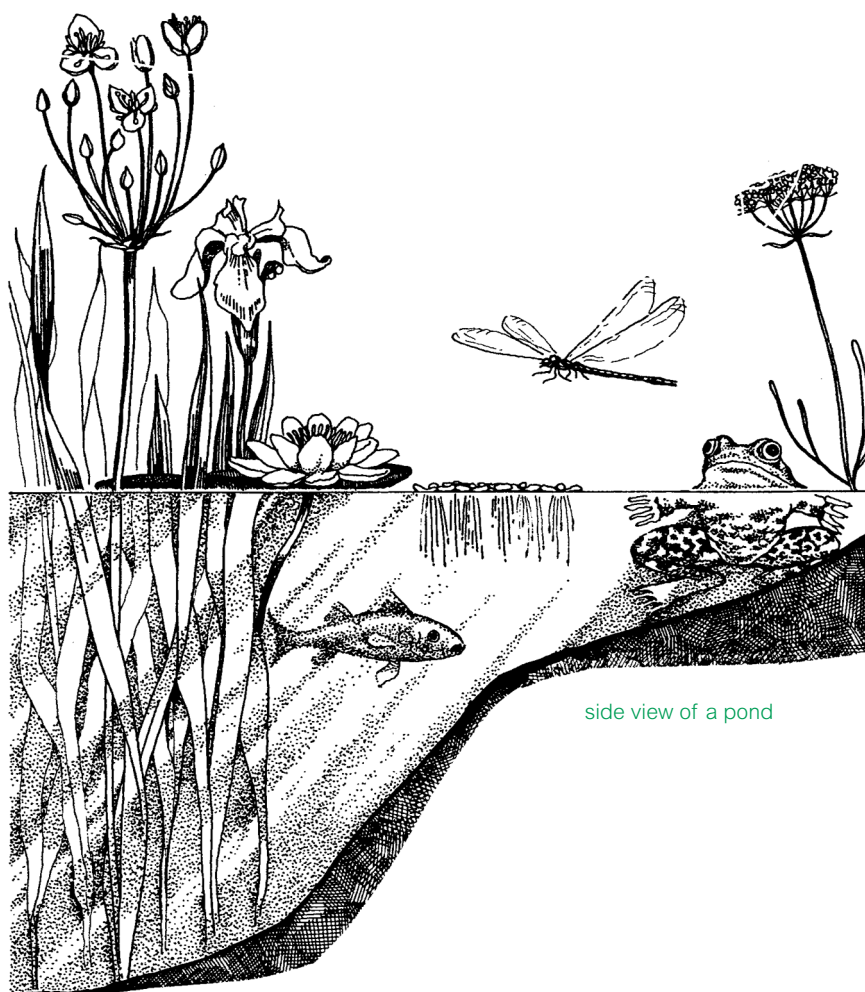
The 4 reptiles have different requirements, grass snakes and slow worms also like a varied habitat, and both will use piles of vegetation such as muck heaps or compost heaps to produce their young and to hibernate. Grass snakes will feed in water and may be seen swimming in lakes and ponds. Adders and lizards on the other hand tend to prefer drier habitats, such as open grassland, scrub and heath-land.

All 4 species are cold blooded and need to warm up each day in order to be active. They may be spotted 'basking' in sunny sheltered spots or on rocks which retain the heat.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? —————

If you have a pond or are creating a new one, then try to ensure that there is a 'safe route' from the water to appropriate mixed habitat where they can spend the rest of the year feeding. If you want to encourage amphibians to your pond it is best to avoid stocking it with fish as these will eat tadpoles and young newts. It is also important to provide some suitable places for them to hibernate during the winter months, piles of logs, or stones which can be left undisturbed are ideal. Even if you don't have a pond in your wildlife area it is still important to consider that amphibians may be present and can be catered for by providing a varied habitat.

The grass snake will also benefit from the provision of ponds and mixed adjoining habitat, and are often found in the same areas as amphibians, which form a large part of their diet. However they need somewhere warm to lay their eggs and if you have prunings, or grass cuttings, then a 'compost' heap is an ideal breeding place as well as providing homes for other creatures too. The adder and lizard prefer dry places and sheltered spots to warm up in the mornings, with plenty of cracks and crevices to hide; again a pile of stones or old stone wall is ideal.



side view of a pond



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