

Worcestershire WildlifeTrust TALK 1/9/22

Creating a wildlife garden

Work less hard in your garden and be rewarded with a wildlife bonanza! Leave even a small area of grass uncut, don't pull up all your weeds and you will attract butterflies, bees and birds into your garden. Don't mow lawns too often in hot weather, keeps them thick and prevents drying out.



"Summer Meadow" by Helen Mugridge ARPS

Helen Mugridge, a wildlife photographer and keen gardener, told a meeting of the Malvern Group of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust how she and her husband transformed a neglected garden in the Forest of Dean into a wildlife haven.

First, make a pond, said Helen, even a tiny one. Frogs, newts and dragonflies will always find it. Use hessian to overlay the edges of the plastic liner allowing marginal plants to root and dig different depths for different plants. No fish! And no tap water - unless you let it stand for a few days.

Creating shelter and planting to provide food for a range of creatures is important. Leave an area of long grass each year to create a mini - meadow (a small area will do), leaving some grass turned over, when cut, to dry out and drop seeds for the following year. Cut the heads off your dead sunflowers with enough stalk to hang them upside down from your washing line. Watch goldfinches come to feed and save a fortune in sunflower seeds!

Helen recommended the value of several websites for buying native flower species and seeds, including wild daffodils, corn cockle, meadow cranesbill, marigolds, and borage for butterflies, golden rod for hoverflies and evening primrose for moths. Nettle patches and Japanese anemone are beloved by caterpillars. Ivy provides nectar for bees, shelter for

birds, and winter berries for redwing and fieldfare. And don't cut back all the seed heads when your flowers die, they're a great source of food for wintering birds.

Enough here to transform even the smallest garden!

Next meeting of the Malvern Group: 7.30 pm on Thursday 6th October at The Lyttelton Rooms, Church Street, Malvern WR14 2AY. *Hedgehogs and how we can help them*. Terry Green, retired lecturer, Pershore College. The life of the hedgehog: the hazards it faces and how we can make its life a little easier. £2.50, all welcome.