
Shrubs for Wildlife



The low-growing, multi-stemmed nature of a shrub provides excellent cover for wildlife. Hedgehogs, mice, birds and insects all enjoy the seclusion. Shrubs can also provide flowers, leaves and berries for nectar and food. Leaf litter adds to leafmould, and pruned stems can be stored as a refuge area for hibernating insects. See **Beneficial Insects** (<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/beneficial-insects>).

Growing a variety of shrubs gives various habitats, with food and shelter at different times of the year. They form just part of the important biodiversity in an organic growing area, along with **flowers** (<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/flowers-wildlife>), **trees** (<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/trees-wildlife>) and **water** (<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/creating-pond>). Many of our native creatures are also predators of garden pests. Did you know that a ground beetle eats slugs? And a family of blue tits can eat 100,000 aphids a year? Natural pest control is an essential aspect of organic gardening.

Here is a list of shrubs and climbing plants to encourage wildlife. Some are native, others - such as butterfly-attracting *buddleia* - have become an integral part of our gardens.

Key

D = deciduous, **E** = evergreen,

Extreme conditions tolerated: **W** = wet, **Dr** = dry

Specific soil type: **Cl** = clay; **C** = chalk

H = can be grown as a hedge

Shrubs

Barberry, *Berberis vulgaris*. Eventual height 3m (10ft) Native

Clusters of yellow flowers in the spring attract bees and flies. Bunches of red berries in the late autumn will feed many birds. Apparently birds wait until several frosts have reduced the acidity of the berries before eating them.

D, H

Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. Eventual height 4m (12ft) Native

A large shrub, sometimes a small tree, produces a thorny thicket of branches in which birds can nest undisturbed. The black hairstreak butterfly lays its eggs mainly on blackthorn. White flowers appear early spring and attract many insects. The 'sloe', dark purple fruit, are eaten by birds and small mammals. Spreads by suckers.

D, H

Buddleia, *Buddleia davidii* Eventual height 3m (10ft) Non-native

Sweetly scented violet/purple flowers with an orange eye are very popular with butterflies and other insects. This tree can be invasive as it self seeds regularly. *B.globosa* less so.

D,H

Common Dogwood, *Cornus sanguinea* . Eventual height 4m (12ft) Native

Red/brown stems are very attractive in the winter. Spring flowers are heavily scented and attract many insects. The leaves are food for the green hairstreak butterfly. Purple/black fruit in the autumn are popular with birds and small mammals

D, Dr, H

Cornelian Cherry *Cornus mas*. Eventual height 8m (25ft) Non native

Bright yellow blossoms in the spring attract many insects. Red fruit in the autumn are popular with birds and small mammals and insects.

D, C

Firethorn, *Pyracantha coccinea*. Eventual height 1.5m (5ft) Non-native

In the spring, dense heads of white flowers attract many insects. Vivid orange berries follow in the autumn. Thrushes and blackbirds are particularly fond of the berries. Other *Pyracantha* species provide different coloured berries, equally attractive to birds.

E, H

Guelder rose, *Viburnum opulus*. Eventual height 4m (13ft) Native

A beautiful shrub, with lacy caps of creamy-white flowers in the spring, that attract bees and other insects. Translucent red berries in the autumn are popular with birds and small mammals. *Viburnum lantana* also produces berries eaten by birds in the winter.

D, W

Privet *Ligustrum vulgare*. Eventual height 3m (10ft) Native

Srong smelling flowers in late spring/early summer are generally not seen if grown as a hedge. However, the shiny black berries are popular with birds.

E, H

Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*. Eventual height 3-6ft (1–1.8m) Non-native

Large white berries are attractive in the autumn and winter, but liked by few birds apart from the pheasant. However the thicket growth provides good cover for small mammals. Leaves are eaten by the Death's Head hawkmoth. Pink/white flowers are attractive to many insects and bees.

D, H

Spindle tree, *Euonymus europaeus*. Eventual height 6m (20ft) Native

Small pale cream flowers are produced in the spring and are followed by beautiful four-lobed pink fruit in the autumn. When they open, orange seeds are revealed. These are very popular with birds such as the robin.

D

Climbing plants

Climbing plants provide cover, food and nesting sites for many birds and insects as well as small mammals such as dormice and squirrels. In the absence of trees, they also provide height, much liked by birds and insects.

Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* Native

This is a fast-growing, expansive climbing plant with many thorns. White flowers in the spring attract many insects. Shiny black fruit develop in the autumn and are enjoyed by many birds, including blackbirds and warblers. Butterflies, such as the red admiral and comma also eat the juicy fruit. Dried blackberry seeds are eaten by bullfinches and greenfinches as well as small mammals, such as hedgehogs and dormice. The developing fruit are also food for caterpillars of the Green Hairstreak butterfly.

D,W, H

Wild Clematis *Clematis vitalba* Native

A pretty climber with cream coloured flowers, followed by hairy seed-heads – hence the common name, 'old man's beard'. These are popular for winter food for birds and small mammals.

D,C

Dog rose *Rosa canina* Native

A shrub or climber. The delicate pale pink flowers are a delight to see in the midsummer amongst hedges and trees. Attracts many insects including bees. The shiny red hips in the autumn provide food for many birds including the greenfinch.

D,

Honeysuckle, *Lonicera periclymenum* Native

The sweet perfume of this honeysuckle is unsurpassed. The nectar is enjoyed by many butterflies and moths, such as the night-flying elephant hawk-moth. The white admiral butterfly lays its eggs on the honeysuckle. Beneficial insects such as lacewings are attracted to aphids that feast on the plant. Red berries, following in the autumn, provide food for many birds and small mammals. A rare bird, the pied flycatcher, depends almost totally on honeysuckle for nest building material. Suitable for semi-shade.

D,

Ivy, *Hedera helix* Native

A very useful climbing plant with beautifully sculpted leaves that provide an all-year-round cover for wildlife. If sited with space between the plant and a wall, ivy cover is perfect for nesting birds. Flowers produced in the autumn are much appreciated by insects such as the hoverfly, tortoiseshell butterfly and bees. Leaves provide food for caterpillars of the swallow-tailed moth. Berries in the late winter are a source of food for small mammals, and birds such as blackcaps, woodpigeons, robins and thrushes. Excellent for shady areas.

E,



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Our charity brings together thousands of people who share a common belief - that organic growing is essential for a healthy and sustainable world.

Through campaigning, advice, community work and research, our aim is to get everyone growing 'the organic way'.

Garden Organic, the working name of the

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is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 298104) and Scotland (SC046767)

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