Welcome to Wimborne Community Garden
A place where people, plants and wildlife can thrive

Contents

Introduction

At the garden the aim is to grow vegetables and plants for the community, but in a nature friendly way:

- pollinators are encouraged by planting pollinator friendly plants;
- companion planting is used to help keep pests off the veggies avoiding the need to use artificial chemicals;
- we make and use our own compost, use peat free compost, crop rotation and no-dig methods
- there are lots of habitats providing food and shelter to encourage wildlife and create a haven for biodiversity.

There are estimated to be more than 15 million gardens in the UK, covering an area greater than all of the UK's nature reserves combined. Our gardens and public green spaces are therefore potentially vitally important as habitats for wildlife.

Gardening for biodiversity also has advantages for our health and wellbeing.

Research has shown that people feel better when they are surrounded by nature.

Take a look at what has been created and enjoy the biodiversity, creativity, passion, peace and tranquillity that is WCG. And if you are lucky to have your own garden, hopefully the garden here will inspire you to make your space a nature friendly one too.

Keyhole Garden

Keyhole Gardening originated in Lesotho in Africa

A keyhole garden is a circular bed with a wedge-shaped cutout to create a keyhole shape, leading to a central composting basket.

This allows:

- Easy access to the whole growing area
- Enables recycling of garden waste into the centre so it can create nutrient rich compost which continuously enriches the surrounding soil and feed the plants growing thus reducing the need for artificial fertilisers. The constant recycling and presence of earthworms and other soil invertebrates improves soil structure and fertility.
- Enhanced water retention as the central composting area helps to maintain moisture
- A longer growing season as the decomposition creates a warmer microclimate.

Hugel Mound Garden

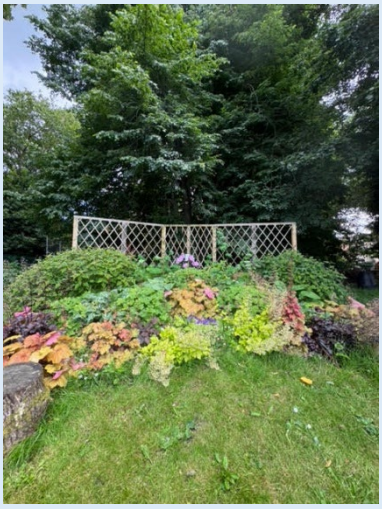
Hugelkultur or mound gardening originated in Germany.

We've put a window at the back of our Hugel bed so you can see the detritivores such as earthworms and woodlice, centipedes and beetles in action.

This mound garden was built by building up a pile of decaying wood and other organic matter and then covering in soil before being planted.

This creates a raised bed that:

- improves soil fertility and structure as the decomposing wood adds organic matter
- improves water retention
- improves soil warming due to the decomposition which can extend the growing season and benefit plant growth
- uses garden waste and other organic materials to build a fertile and sustainable growing space.



Hedgehog House

Wimborne is trying to become a hedgehog friendly town, and we are trying to do our bit here at the WCG by making this a hedgehog friendly space.

There has been a 95% decline in hedgehog numbers since the 1950s due to habitat loss, pesticides e.g. slug pellets and the lack of wildlife passageways between gardens.

Hedgehogs are an 'umbrella species' so what is good for hedgehogs can benefit a wide range of other wildlife too.

They can travel up to 2km in a single night and need to be able to move freely through the environment. There are 13cm x 13cm hedgehog holes in the fence to enable them to move in and out of the garden in their search for food, shelter and locate mates.

Hedgehogs act as natural pest controllers as they eat slugs and snails.

To make this space as hedgehog friendly as possible, there are: areas of long grass; piles of leaf litter and undisturbed areas to provide food and shelter and nesting material; there is a ramp out of the pond to ensure they can get out; there is a purpose-built hedgehog house for them.

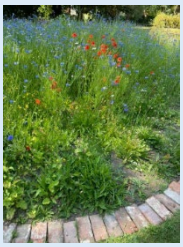
For more information visit:

https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-create-hedgehog-hole
https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home

Wildflower bed – Nectar-café

This bed contains plants that are native wildflowers rich in nectar and pollen and are an important food source for pollinators such as Bees, butterflies, hoverflies, moths and bats.

Different pollinators have different feeding methods, so a variety of different plants are grown to cater for different species. There are open flowers such as those in the daisy family for Bumblebees with shorter tongues and deeper flowers for the longer tongued pollinators e.g. honeysuckle, foxglove, knapweed.



Native wildflowers are the easiest for insects to feed from and they are planted in drifts to help pollinators detect the colour and scent easily.

Garden plants, particularly perennials are also grown in the borders to prolong the availability of nectar and pollen throughout the season.

For more information on planting for pollinators visit:
https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/best-plants-bees-and-pollinators

Compost corner

The compost at the Garden is used throughout the garden and helps to improve the quality of the soil. It boosts soil fertility and biological activity, reduces diseases and helps to develop stronger, healthier plants.

- The compost when used as mulch improves drainage and water retention (reducing flooding), keeps the soil warmer, and feeds nutrients into the soil.
- Green materials are added to the compost heap as they add nitrogen, such as grass cuttings and leafy parts of plants, spent annual plants, food waste and weeds, although perennial weeds are avoided.
- Brown materials are added to provide carbon, such as woody stems, twigs, paper, cardboard.
- The compost heap is turned to mix all the materials and ensure it is evenly composted and doesn't get too hot. It also aerates the compost for the bacteria.
- The compost is used as a mulch: the no dig beds require a lot of compost.

For more information on creating your own compost visit:
https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-compost-your-waste

Insect B&B

There are areas left unmown to enable grasses to grow long and wildflowers to grow among the grass to create a meadow

- This is beneficial for wildlife as it provides nectar from the flowers, shelter among the grasses for the invertebrates and seeds which are eaten by birds and small mammals.
- Many butterflies and moths lay their eggs on the grasses, and many larvae and pupae overwinter at the bases of long grasses and in the soil.
- Leaving some grass to remain longer over winter allows these a sheltered spot to overwinter before emerging the following spring.
- Clover and other wildflowers are left to grow within the shorter mown areas and bumblebees forage for the nectar in these flowers.

For more information on growing your own meadow visit:
https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-grow-wild-patch-or-mini-meadow

No Dig Zone

Some areas of the garden are no-dig beds.

Also known as no-till gardening, it is a method of gardening that avoids disturbing the soil through digging or tilling.

- Layers of organic matter like compost and mulch are added to the soil surface to nourish the plants and suppress weeds and this is topped up each year.
- This approach aims to improve soil health by promoting a healthy soil ecosystem and preserving soil structure, which encourages beneficial microorganisms such as fungi and bacteria that feed the plants and maintains the delicate structure of mycorrhizae that allows plants to extend their root network.
- No dig helps to reduce soil compaction as the soil settles into a firm structure with fine pores which in turn allows the movement of water, air and nutrients and is better for moisture retention.
- The mulch helps retain soil moisture and reduces pest problems by minimising soil disturbance and provides habitat for beneficial insects.
- It minimizes environmental impact by keeping carbon in the soil, so it is not released into the atmosphere.

For more information on no-dig planting visit: https://www.soilassociation.org/take-action/growing-at-home/allotments-and-home-growing/no-dig-gardening/

Companion Planting

Here in the garden, we undertake companion planting. This is where plants that provide a benefit to each other are planted together.

By planting companion plants among our veggies and other plants it can help them grow by attracting beneficial insects, or repelling others, or by acting as a sacrificial plant to keep pests away from the veggies.

- Putting shallow rooted plants next to deep rooted ones reduces competition so the soil can support more variety.
- Some plants can enrich the soil with nitrogen, improving the soil for others.
- Some plants such as herbs can repel certain types of animals and insects.

Marigolds are used as companion plants as they deter pests and attract beneficial insects. They repel nematodes, whiteflies and thrips while attracting ladybirds and hoverflies that prey on pests.

Borage is planted near strawberries and tomatoes to attract bees for cross pollination.

Comfrey which has deep tap roots brings minerals to the surface when planted in flower beds and vegetable plots.

Dill and fennel planted in veggie plots will attract hoverflies which will eat aphids and chives and garlic planted under roses keeps aphids and black spot away.

Nasturtiums planted among veggies attracts aphids away from the veggies and may repel ants and whitefly.

Bee Home for cavity nesting solitary bees

While bumblebees and honeybees live in colonies, most of our bees are solitary and nest in holes in the ground or in cavities in trees, walls or hollow stems.

They are very passive and only interested in collecting pollen so rarely sting.

The bee home is filled with wooden logs drilled with holes and hollow bamboo canes at least 15cm long so the female will lay both female and male eggs.

In springtime the females lay eggs inside the hollow canes in the bee home. Each egg has a store of pollen left with it for the grub to eat when it hatches. The egg is sealed up behind a plug of mud, in a ‘cell’ and one cane may have several ‘cells’ in it. The female can choose the sex of her egg and lays females at the back of the tube and males towards the front. The males hatch a few days ahead of the females. The young bees emerge in the spring the following year.

The most likely species to use the home is the red mason or leaf cutter Bee. For more information on protecting bees in the garden visit:
https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-make-bee-hotel

Bat Boxes

The UK is home to 18 species of bat, the largest being the noctule which weighs the same as four £1 coins, and the smallest is the pipistrelle, which weighs as little as a 2p coin.

Bats do not make nests, but roost, hanging upside down in cracks and crevices such as hollow trees, or in buildings, behind hanging tiles and boarding, or in roof spaces.

For several weeks in summer females gather in a maternity roost, choosing somewhere warm to give birth and look after their baby. They remain here until the young can fly and feed themselves.

We are trying to help bats here by providing this bat box as a potential roosting site.

As all our bats are insect-eaters, anything that we can do to encourage more flying insects will help provide them with food

For example:

- Growing lots of insect friendly plants throughout the year

- There are microhabitats, such as log or leaf piles, garden beds are mulched and, in some places, hollow stems are left standing over winter for bugs to shelter in.

- There are plenty of trees and shrubs which are all habitats for flying insects

- No artificial chemicals are used in the garden.

For more information on helping bats:

https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-do/dorset-bat-group

https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-build-bat-box

Edible Native Hedge

The edible native hedge is a hedgerow of trees and shrubs that produce edible fruits, nuts, berries or other edible parts that can be harvested for food.

It provides a barrier while providing a source of food for us as well as wildlife.

It provides a habitat for birds, insects and small mammals.

There are a variety of plants e.g. Dog rose, hazel, rowan, hawthorn. For more information on planting for pollinators visit: https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/best-plants-bees-and-pollinators

Dead Hedge

This dead hedge is a wildlife friendly structure.

It has been created by layering branches, twigs and other garden waste between upright stakes to form a barrier.

It creates shelter from the weather and predators and can be used as nesting sites by birds such as Robins and Wrens.

It creates a habitat for a wide range of wildlife including hedgehogs, insects and amphibians.

The decaying material within the hedge attracts insects which in turn provide food for birds and other small mammals and enriches the soil below.

Wildlife Pond

The wildlife pond is a valuable habitat for a wide range of wildlife.

The pond is home to amphibians e.g. frogs; insects such as dragonflies and damselflies, pond skaters, water boatman and beetles and provides a feeding ground for birds, bees, hedgehogs and bats, all of which act as natural pest controllers.

The ramp allows froglets to climb out so they can hide among the surrounding vegetation and grow.

They will return to their natal pond in springtime, when they reach breeding age at around 2-3 years old.

During the winter frogs hibernate in log piles, or some will return to the pond and hibernate in the mud.

There are no fish as these would eat all the wildlife.

A wildlife pond needn't be big. A washing-up bowl, a large plant pot, or a disused sink could all be repurposed as ponds, providing the creatures can get in and out.

For more information about creating a wildlife pond visit:

https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/wild-and-wet

https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions/how-create-mini-pond