

Herts and
MiddlesexWildlife
Watch

Make a Mini Pond!

Background information

We can all do something to help our local wildlife and it doesn't have to be something big. If you have a garden (whatever the size) or school grounds you can do your bit for wildlife, such as planting wildflowers, making a bug hotel or putting up a bird box.

One habitat that is fantastic for wildlife is ponds. They support two thirds of all freshwater species, from aquatic plants and invertebrates to dragonflies, amphibians and birds. Ponds in good condition can support a complex food web.

Ponds are rapidly disappearing throughout the countryside and are also being lost in back gardens as people decide to fill them in. 50% of all ponds were lost in the 20th century and 80% of those that remain are in a poor state.

Creating a new pond is therefore one of the best things that you can do for wildlife.

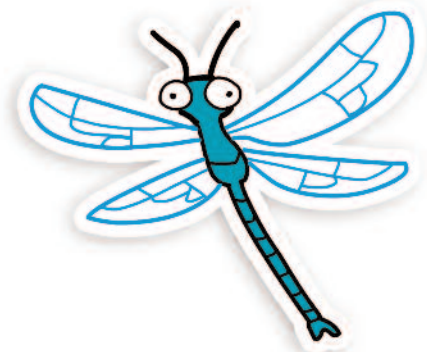
Activity objectives

This activity aims to highlight how important ponds are for wildlife, how easy it is to create a new pond and to show children what wildlife lives in a pond. For older children and KS2 this can be used as an experiment to see how quickly a new pond is colonised and what wildlife moves in.

The activity focuses on making mini ponds but if you have more space you could create a larger pond in your own designated "wildlife area"!

What you will need

1. A garden planter (without drainage holes).
2. 2-3 pond plants in baskets including at least one oxygenator (see link overleaf).
3. Pebbles or rocks.
4. Topsoil.
5. Rainwater to fill it with – from a water butt if possible.
6. Gardening gloves.



Now turn over...



for further instructions!



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wildlife watch

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Instructions

1. Choose a site for your pond. Wildlife ponds will flourish in an area that has equal sun and shade, with plenty of vegetation close by.
2. Dig a hole for your pond. The earth you have removed can be used as a base for a background rockery for frogs and toads to find shelter in amongst rocks and plants. Insert the planter – it should be flush with the surrounding ground.
 - ** This step is optional – your planter can be left sitting on the ground if you are unable to dig a hole.
3. Add a shovelful of topsoil into the bottom of the planter and place your pond plants into position inside the planter.
4. Arrange your rocks or pebbles inside the planter to create hiding places for the creatures that move in.
5. Build some rocks up the inside of the pond to allow any animals that fall in to get out again.
6. Fill the planter to the top with fresh, clean water. Rainwater from a water butt is perfect for this.
7. Let your pond settle for a few days and keep an eye on it. It won't take long for wildlife to find it!
 - ** Don't move anything into it from another pond as you risk contaminating your new wildlife haven with diseases.

Follow up

1. Get the children to check the pond each week to see what has changed and what creatures have moved in.
2. Keep a pond diary and record the changes over time.
3. Appoint some of the children as "Pond Ambassadors" to look after the pond and teach other classes how to make their own.



Useful Links

www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/how-you-can-help/wildlife-gardening
 ** download the leaflet for pond plant info!

Information for Teachers

National Curriculum Links – Science

- Y2 POS** Describe how habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants and how they depend on each other. Describe how animals obtain food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain and identify and name different sources of food. Find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.
- Y3 POS** Explore the requirements of plants for life and growth and how they vary from plant to plant.
- Y4 POS** Construct and interpret a variety of food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey.

