

What is garden for life?

Garden for Life is helping everyone grow closer to nature by exploring, enjoying and caring for biodiversity in gardens throughout Scotland.

Supporters of the project include: British Trust for Ornithology; BTCV; Beechgrove Garden (Tern TV); Butterfly Conservation Scotland; Buglife; Biodiversity Implementation Team (SNH); Bumblebee Conservation; Community Food & Health (Scotland); Dobbies; Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens; Grounds for Learning; Growth Forth; Keep Scotland Beautiful; Plantlife Scotland; Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; RSPB Scotland; Rural Projects; Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society; Scottish Government Biodiversity Team; Scottish Natural Heritage; Scottish Wildlife Trust; The National Trust for Scotland; Trellis.

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garden for life

in pots & containers and you'll never be short of visitors.

... everyone with a garden, or even a window box, can enjoy nature's riches



Why grow plants in pots?

Decorating your garden or balcony with pots of plants is fun – when you choose 'Plant for Wildlife' plants your garden becomes more rewarding for wildlife visitors as well. You may have to use containers where you can't plant directly into the ground. Using pots makes it easy to change your decorations with the seasons: star performers can be brought to the front and any pots looking tired can be tucked away until they start flowering again. Planted pots add an extra dimension to your patio or balcony!



On a hard surface permanent plants like *Choisya ternata* (Mexican orange Blossom) are great in pots.



Herbs and annuals like *Nemesia* can take their turns at the front of a group of pots.

Looking out onto the Cottage Terrace with its many pots at The Beechgrove Garden For Life.



Where should I place my pots?

You will want to arrange your containers where you will enjoy them most – perhaps at the front door, on the patio, or where you can see them from the house. Your wildlife visitors will make the most use of them when they are placed in a sunny and sheltered position.



By the front door or patio door enjoy pots with Nasturtiums, Golden marjoram and Bugle.

How do I look after my planted pots?

You must treat your plants like babies – they are dependant on you for everything, especially food, drink and shelter. Even after rain very little water actually gets into the pot and during the winter evergreen plants will need regular watering!

Containers

Choose frostproof pots for permanent planting e.g. reconstituted stone, plastic, wood, highly fired and glazed stoneware. Terracotta pots should be kept dry in winter – in a shed or cold greenhouse.

Drainage

Leave a 2-3cm space at the top to hold the water you supply.

Crocks – protect drainage hole from compost with a few crocks.

Bigger pots will benefit from a layer of gravel for extra drainage.

Feet – sit pots on feet in winter to keep drainage holes open.



Compost

Always choose a quality ready made potting compost.

Permanent plantings need soil-based John Innes Compost No 2. For temporary pots choose a specific compost for containers or a multipurpose peat-free compost.

Feeding

Either use a slow release fertiliser (e.g. Osmacote) that lasts for six months, or feed regularly when watering with a liquid fertiliser (e.g. Miracle-Gro).

Watering

It's not easy to overwater a pot that has good drainage! So regular watering is your best policy... more often in warm and windy weather.

Pest Control

Regular feeding and watering will keep your plants unstressed! They will then resist pest and disease attacks and be generally healthy. Any pests appearing will soon be controlled by your other wildlife visitors!

What plants should I choose?

You can think of your plants as permanent or temporary visitors. The temporary visitors are either annual plants that grow, flower and die in a season, or tender plants that are killed by frost, which we often discard when the summer ends. Permanent plants will stay in your pots for three or more years. You can mix these different plants up, but in the recipes shown here we have kept them separate so you can easily recognise the two groups.

The plants in our recipes all supply nectar or pollen to visiting wildlife. If in doubt about a particular variety, always make sure its flowers are singles not doubles - most doubles don't have nectar supplying parts!



summer
riot

summer riot

All these annual or tender perennials provide nectar for wildlife visitors and a stunning summer floral display for you!

Feature Plants

Standard marguerite or try Standard fuchsia, *Antirrhinums*, *Calendula*, *Heliotrope*, Wallflowers, *Matthiola* – perennial stock, Sweet peas (x8)

Trailing Plants

Trailing lobelia (x6), *Brachycombe* (x3) or try *Bidens*, Pansies, *Nasturtiums*, Trailing fuchsias, Livingstone daisies, *Petunia surfinia*.

Filler Plants

Busy lizzies (x4) or try French marigolds, *Tagetes*, *Nemesia*, Sweet Williams, *Dimorphotheca*.

Pot

Large terracotta pot – put inside before winter.



hanging
summer riot

hanging summer riot

Feature Plant

Calendula – single flowers

Trailers

Blue & white trailing lobelia

Filler Plants

Blue pansies, *Nasturtiums*



permanent
feast

permanent feast

Using shrubs and perennial plants that will last a few years.

Feature Plants

1/4 standard *Cotoneaster* (Coral beauty) or try *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Choisya ternata* (Mexican orange blossom), Hebe Mrs Winder, *Cistus* (Sunrose), *Weigela florida variegata*.

Trailers

*Hedera helix** varieties (x3) (Ivies), *Erica carnea* x3 or try *Ajuga** (bugle), *Aubrieta*, *Arabis*, *Lamium*, *Vincas*, *Helianthemum*, *Phlox douglasii*.

Filler Plants

Lavender (x2), Heuchera palace purple (x2) or try *Dianthus deltooides**, *Cotoneaster*, *Calluna** (Heather), *Santolina* (Cotton lavender), *Geranium sanguineum**, *Nepeta six hills giant* (Catmint)

Pot

500mm old oak barrel (unaffected by frost)



herbs at
the window

herbs at the window

Allow the herbs to flower in order to feed your wildlife visitors – trim them back when the flowers have finished to encourage new growth for use in the kitchen!

Feature Plants

Rosemary (x1) or try Sages – any of the different leaved varieties, Variegated lemon balm, *Santolina*.

Fillers

Golden marjoram (x2), Chives (x2) or try Chamomile, Borage, *Calendula*, Hyssop, Variegated applemint, Winter savory, Golden feverfew.

Trailers

Thymes* (x3) or try Wild strawberry*, Ginger mint (beware – it spreads!), *Nasturtium*, *Primula vulgaris** (primrose), *Viola tricolor**.

Pot

900 mm plastic window trough

* These plants are native to Scotland.