

Milford on Sea Wildlife Garden Initiative

Milford Conservation Volunteers have produced a Biodiversity Action Plan for the parish, where wildlife habitats and species important to the area are summarised, and actions to conserve them agreed. Gardens can provide excellent habitat for wildlife and can be given a helping hand by making a few simple changes to the way we manage them.

While this initiative is primarily aimed at Milford residents, MCV members are asked to actively participate in this project. So whether you have a large, medium or small garden, or even a small window box or a corner of your garden that you are prepared to give over, they can all be modified and made better for wildlife.

“Have you got a Tiger in your garden”?

- Have you seen in your garden any slow-worms, garden tiger moths, stag beetles, or early bumblebees?



The beautiful garden Tiger moth

- Do you encourage wildlife to your garden with plants rich in nectar and pollen – especially in early spring and late summer? These do not have to be *wild* flowers although that helps to bring back disappearing plant species.
- Can birds, creepy crawlies, little mammals, etc. find a few small and untidy spots for nesting and hibernation (even if they haven't used them yet, as far as you know)?
- Do you have a fish-free pond or little basin surrounded with cover, which might encourage reptiles, amphibians, dragonflies, etc. (they can be quite easy to please)?

We hope information about which creatures use our gardens and why they appear to do so will encourage others make space for wildlife. The BAP report lists examples of successful Milford wild-life gardening and we aim to keep this up to date and spread the word. So if you have a garden that's good for wildlife, please get in touch with your contact details, without commitment, and we will arrange to talk with you. If you are looking for new ideas or advice we may be able to help you, **free of charge!**

Contact Giles Darvill, Co-ordinator, Milford BAP Wild-life Garden Project, on 01590 642558, giles-darvill@foxhat.freeserve.co.uk, 10 Studland Drive, Milford SO41 0QQ.



Stag Beetle



Orange Tip



Grey Squirrel

Doing nothing for wildlife: a Milford gardener's confession

I am a lazy gardener but there are ways this helps wildlife. Many of the following cost-free examples are in my smallish Milford garden now, and yet the overall impression is neat and colourful.

- I leave patches of long grass, and relocate stinging nettles and brambles into groups - butterflies, bees, ladybirds etc lay eggs and feed
- I leave ivy (flowers and berries) for winter insect and bird food, later as cover for breeding birds
- I don't weed red and white dead-nettle and dandelions, where bees feed,
- I allow dead leaves to collect in corners including in a shed or garage. Insects, amphibians and small mammals hibernate and nest
- I leave mouseholes in flower beds and banks, where bumblebees nest
- I have a tiny pond sunk into a corner – newts and dragonflies breed
- I stuff brushwood prunings out of sight under shrubs and hedges – lots of species hibernate and breed
- I encourage the wonder wild plant lungwort (also known as pulmonaria) - spring nectar and pollen food for bees, hoverflies etc; beautiful, self-propagating.