With the British countryside under threat, and the fact that gardens can be designed, modified and managed to make them attractive to wildlife, every garden - no matter what its size - is a potential nature reserve. Recent research has shown that an average sized garden, managed with conservation in mind, can support up to 3000 different species of plants and animals.

This action plan also relates to allotments, where garden produce is specifically grown, and those areas of garden (including wildlife areas) created within school grounds. Gardens can provide important wildlife corridors, particularly within an urban area.

Traditional gardens consist predominantly of grass lawns, usually closely mown and often fertilised, with extensive areas of herbs, shrubs and trees. However, more now consist predominantly of hard surfaces. Although a significant proportion of any garden vegetation may be native in origin, particularly hedges and associated trees, a large part of it is likely to be non-native and is often of unknown value to wildlife. Plants such as buddleia and ivy provide valuable nectar sources, and others such as fruit trees and shrubs provide food for birds and small mammals. A number of nationally declining species such as song thrush, great crested newt, pipistrelle bats and especially hedgehogs are known to occur in gardens.

Gardens are widespread through Britain covering some 3% of the total land area of England and Wales (Owen 1991). The extent of garden habitat within the County Borough is currently unknown.
Current Factors Affecting Habitat

Direct loss of garden area through:
- Loss of large back gardens to housing development.
- Loss of front gardens to concrete for off-road parking.
- Lack of provision of garden space in new developments.

Loss of wildlife in gardens through:
- Use of garden chemicals and slug pellets.
- Loss of hedges and replacement with fences or walls.
- Fewer open compost heaps and less dead wood left to rot.
- The desire for tidiness (e.g. lack of wild corners, the cutting of rank vegetation, removing seed heads after flowering and disturbing hedges and compost heaps during critical periods).

Detrimental effects of gardening on the wider environment
- Use of peat causing the destruction of our lowland raised bogs.
- Use of invasive non-native pond plants.
- Dereck of gardens, particularly in old estates, thus creating reservoirs for invasive aliens; e.g. Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica).

Current Action

Legal Status
Garden habitats have no specific legal protection, although trees are protected in Conservation Areas and through Tree Preservation Orders. Individual species, including great crested newts, bats and badgers are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Badger Act 1992, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and other similar legislation.

With regard to new developments private garden space is encouraged through Local Planning Guidance (Note No. 21 - Space Around Dwellings). Wrexham County Borough Council has the policy that back gardens of single bedroom developments should be a minimum of 30 sq m and those with two bedrooms or more 50 sq m. Larger plots are encouraged since they can support sustainable development by enabling residents to grow some of their own food and to compost domestic waste.

National Action
Many organisations are working to raise awareness of the important role that private gardens can play in conserving wildlife, and in helping people experience wildlife on their doorstep. Projects and initiatives include:
- Many television and radio programmes offering good advice, with presenters advocating organic gardening;
- National Garden Bird Watch Survey (RSPB/BTO);
- How to make a wildlife garden
  - Chris Barnes, Elm Tree books London 1985
  - Geoff Hamilton, Dorling Kindersley, 1987
  - School Garden Company
  - Bats in the Garden
    - School Garden Company
  - Wildlife Friendly Gardening
    - a general guide
  - Plant for Wildlife
    - Countrywide Council for Wales, 2002
  - For Peat’s sake - Where to buy peat free products
    - Wildlife Trusts 2002
  - How to make Wildflower Habitat Gardens
    - Landlife 2000
  - Successful organic gardening
    - The Ecology of a Garden
  - Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica).
  - North Wales Wildlife Trust 1997
  - The Desire for Tidiness (e.g. Lack of Wild Corners, the Cutting of Rank Vegetation, Removing Seed Heads After Flowering and Disturbing Hedges and Compost Heaps During Critical Periods).

Examples of Wildlife and Organic Gardening Publications
- How to make a wildlife garden
  - Chris Barnes, Elm Tree books London 1985
- Successful organic gardening
  - Geoff Hamilton, Dorling Kindersley, 1987
- Wildlife Friendly Gardening
  - a general guide
- Plant for Wildlife
  - Countrywide Council for Wales, 2002
- For Peat’s sake - Where to buy peat free products
  - Wildlife Trusts 2002
- How to make Wildflower Habitat Gardens
  - Landlife 2000
- How to make a wildlife garden
  - Brian Etheridge, How to make a wildlife garden

Objectives and Targets
1. Raise awareness of the value and importance of gardens for biodiversity and use it as a flagship habitat over the next ten years.
2. Reduce the use of peat based composts to 20% over the next ten years.
3. Reduce the use of wildlife unfriendly pesticides by 50% over the next ten years.
4. Establish a green network in all new developments.
5. Establish a monitoring system to determine the extent and value of gardens in the County Borough for wildlife.

Local Action
- Agenda 21 Forum/ WCBC sale of compost bins and water butts at reduced prices during Environment Week.
- Annual Green Fair in Wrexham town centre promoting environmental awareness.
- BTCV, Green Gym Community Gardening, allotments, tree nurseries and orchards.
- Creation of Wildlife Areas in school grounds and educational centres.

Links to Other Action Plans
Lowland Bog Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,
Song thrush Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,
Great Crested Newt Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,*
Bats in the Garden Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,*
Pond Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,*
Woodland Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,*
Hedgerows Action Plan in Wrexham County Borough,*
Local Biodiversity Action Plans in neighbouring counties.

*To be published 2003.
## Proposed Action with Lead Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advice and Publicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a demonstration wildlife garden.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>By 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise an Open Day at an existing garden.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>WCBC, Groundwork, BTCV</td>
<td>Once every 2 years for the duration of the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote wildlife friendly gardening</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>CCW, NWWT, WCBC, Libraries,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BTCV, Garden Centres</td>
<td>2003 give at least 2 talks per year to allotment and gardening societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce advice on best practice, e.g.</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organic gardening, pest control, timing of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedge cutting, water saving, cat bells etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate a peat free compost campaign.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NWWT, CCW, EN, WCBC</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a garden scheme through leaflets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>WCBC, Agenda 21, Groundwork</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use local events and publications</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy and Legislation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby for protection of existing gardens</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and allotments through the tighter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regulation of ‘back garden/allotment’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retain and encourage the provision of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedges in new developments.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td>By end of 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate and develop green networks,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linking gardens to other habitats and the</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wider countryside.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instigate opportunities to enhance the</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>WCBC</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guidelines for (future) minimum garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>size.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target communities with garden deprivation</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>WCBC, Groundwork, BTCV</td>
<td>Ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the creation of urban green spaces.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring and Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey the extent of gardens (and allotments) from maps and aerial photographs.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>WCBC, NEWI, Groundwork, BTCV</td>
<td>2012 or when resources permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link up with national survey events such as RSPB’s ‘Big Garden Watch’.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>As occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up a database for garden observations.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>WCBC/ NWWT, Local recorders</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Abbreviations for table

- **BTCV**: British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- **CCW**: Countryside Council for Wales
- **EN**: English Nature
- **NEWI**: North East Wales Institute
- **NWWT**: North Wales Wildlife Trust
- **RSPB**: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- **WCBC**: Wrexham County Borough Council

---

**Further information**

**Biodiversity Officer**

Environment Section, Planning Department, Wrexham County Borough Council, Lambpit Street, PO Box 1290, Wrexham, LL11 1WL

tel: 01978 292019 fax: 01978 292502
e-mail: amanda.davies@wrexham.gov.uk

website: www.wrexham.gov.uk/planning

Illustrations courtesy of English Nature.

Mae’r Cynllun hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Ffoniwch 01978 292019 am eich copi.

A large print version of this Plan is available.

Please call 01978 292019.