

Build THE Change

FACT SHEET

INTO THE OUTDOORS



GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

People love plants and seeing flowers and green areas. So wherever we live we will grow plants and build parks, gardens, and allotments to enjoy.

PARKS

NATURE RESERVES



URBAN GREEN SPACE

= Areas of greenery in towns and cities.

ALLOTMENTS

GARDENS

In the UK alone, gardens take up

430,000 HECTARES

That's the same amount of space as more than

HALF A MILLION FOOTBALL PITCHES! ⁽¹⁾

Green spaces help to reduce the impacts of climate change and pollution in cities. They;

- absorb heat,
- release oxygen and,
- help to control temperatures through the seasons.



GOOD FOR THE MIND

Having outdoor places to get fresh air, play and see nature is important for peoples' minds and bodies. Especially for those who live in cities or towns. ⁽⁴⁾

GOOD FOR WILDLIFE

Urban green space is an important source of food and shelter for many species. Having hedgerows linking up green spaces in cities can increase wildlife by 50%. ⁽³⁾

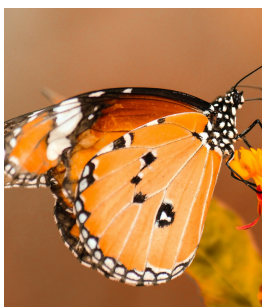
GOOD FOR THE AIR

Planting on roofs can provide 100 people enough oxygen for one year and absorb around 15 cars' worth of emissions, while planting trees in cities improves the air quality. ⁽²⁾

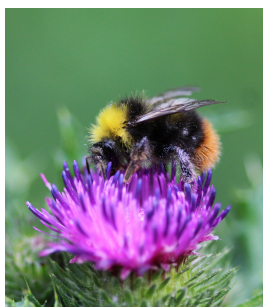
WILDLIFE



HEDGEHOG



BUTTERFLY



BEE



SWIFT



URBAN FOX



FROG

DID YOU KNOW?

Every year, these amazing birds migrate thousands of miles from the UK to Africa for the winter!

POLLINATOR POWER

Some of the key animals that need these green spaces are pollinators, including **bees, butterflies, wasps, and flies.**



They love the smell of flowers – flowers offer pollinators a sugary reward called **nectar** and when they drink it, their bodies get covered in sticky grains of pollen. As they fly around and crawl over different flowers, they **move these tiny grains of pollen** which allow other plants to grow seeds and fruit. This is called **pollination**.

Bees, butterflies, wasps, flies and even moths actually **pollinate most of the fruit and vegetables we eat every day!** If we lose pollinating insects then growing some types of food will be very difficult.



How many? There are 16,000 species of bee! Some are tiny (just a few millimeters) but others are much bigger (nearly 4cm).

HOW ARE THINGS CHANGING?

Urban green space is facing several challenges, such as:

- **Climate change** This is increasing the pressure on our green spaces. Areas of countryside are being built upon, or turned into farmland, and green space in cities isn't available in large quantities. We are in desperate need for more forests, ponds, meadows and other green space.
- **Changes to gardens** Some people prefer to pull up their grass and other important plants and have pavement. Some may prefer walls to fences, and use pesticides to keep their gardens tidy. All of these things reduce green space and make gardens less wildlife friendly.
- **Location** Existing in cities is tough. People and vehicles threaten wildlife, while the concrete landscape reduces chances of animals and plants finding a good place to live.⁽⁵⁾ This reduces the suitability of these spaces for wildlife, particularly our pollinators.

DID YOU KNOW?

By 2050, two thirds of the world's population will live in cities.⁽⁶⁾



If all the gardens in the UK made homes for wildlife, we would build a wildlife reserve equivalent to the size of the Lake District National Park! ⁽¹⁾



Planting alongside rivers can trap soils, which can improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding.



HOW CAN WE HELP?

As many of us live in urban areas, we can all be part of the change to protect these spaces. Some of the ways people are helping include:



BETTER TOGETHER

Lots of cities are banding together to create space for nature in their communities. Urban gardening and allotments are becoming increasingly popular.

CHARITIES

Charities are funding new ways to give nature space, whether that be creating 'wildlife friendly housing with **wildlife corridors, bird boxes, hedgehog tunnels and ponds** included, or working nature into the layout of a city, by planting **edible walkways** filled with herbs and vegetables, or creating conservation sites in urban areas.⁽⁴⁾

BEE KIND

Helping our pollinators – Many people are building 'insect hotels' in outdoor spaces where insects can live. People are also planting herbs and vegetables to encourage insects into their gardens, rooftops, balconies or window boxes. Some people are becoming honey bee experts and building hives for honey bees!