

Willow Dene Wild Garden Philosophy

	Philosophy	Reason
	I don't own the garden – I share with wildlife.	We have lost 60% of insects since 2003 – I am trying to change this, at least where I have control.
	Work with nature, not against it.	I let plants grow where they survive best!
	Encourage Native Wildflowers (weeds) or use plants with simple flowers.	Native wildflowers are perfectly designed to attract native insects.
	Use a mix of plants with range of flowering times and berries	This ensures food for insects and birds throughout the year.
	Keep ground covered as much as possible with plants, litter or mulch.	This protects the soil structure and conserves moisture.
	Provide as many different areas/habitats as possible ie woodland edge, pond, long grass, shrubs etc	I hope to entice as much diverse wildlife into the garden as possible.
	Put plenty of nest boxes in different areas.	I can't always guess where birds like to nest.
	Leave rotting wood and some wood sunk in the soil.	Excellent habitat for beetles, and encourages fungi.
	Leave all the seed heads until spring well underway.	Essential as food for birds before new growth available, and for homes for insects.
	Disturb the soil as little as possible – no dig. Just make a groove for seeds and cover with compost.	Soil is a very complex structure, full of organisms and fungal pathways. Digging can destroy it all.
	“Weeding” restricted to invasive plants only, eg couch grass or creeping buttercup.	This is ongoing work!
	Don't use any pesticides, fungicides or chemicals anywhere.	If something isn't eating my vegetables, perhaps I shouldn't either!
	No longer focus on the aesthetic of the garden dictated by human fashions, now seen through the eyes of wildlife.	I get huge pleasure watching a bird collecting dandelion seeds or washing in the pond.

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE FROM THE GARDEN

Areas

Area	Comment
	<p>WOODLAND EDGE: Mix of trees and shrubs and ground cover. Lots of blossom and berries, and Hazel, which I sometimes coppice and sometimes leave to have nuts. Shrubs and trees give great cover for birds.</p>
	<p>HERB BED: Convenient for the kitchen.</p>
	<p>CENTRAL AREA: I feed birds with a variety of food, to cover all tastes. The planting is a mix to give all year round cover and food.</p>
	<p>VEG PATCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildflowers are allowed to grow wherever I don't need to plant veg. Try to keep rows of flowers to encourage insects and prevent pests taking hold. • Also grow apples, pears and plums, and soft fruit - red currants, boysenberry, strawberries and blackcurrants. Happy to share these with the birds, as long as we get some! • Seat catches the evening sun. • Water butt – essential for the veg, and sometimes for watering the compost or filling the pond. • Compost – all soft garden waste (except creeping buttercup and very invasive weeds) and all kitchen vegetable waste.
<p>GRASS AREA</p>	<p>Some kept short for the dogs! Small patch left long and wildflowers encouraged. A haven for little frogs from the pond.</p>
	<p>POND: Has different levels and as many different native plants as possible. Pebbles also help clean the water. Only ever topped up with rainwater.</p>
<p>COURTYARD</p>	<p>Often sunny in the morning, and can get very hot. An acer is supposed to shade the table, but has a few years to go! Good place to view the pond!</p>