

FOR FURTHER READING

Creating A Wildlife Garden – Bob and Liz Gibbons. 1992. Hamlyn.
How To Make A Wildlife Garden – Chris Baines. 1985. Elm Tree Books.
Wildlife Gardening – Fran Hill. 1988. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.
The National Trust Book Of Wildflower Gardening – John Stevens. 1987. Dorling Kindersley.
The Joy of Wildlife Gardening – Geoffrey Smith. 1989. RSPB.
Successful Organic Gardening – Geoff Hamilton. 1987. Dorling Kindersley.



BEECH



FUCHSIA

Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote the natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
 Klondyke Building
 Cromac Avenue
 Gasworks Business Park
 Belfast BT7 2JA
 T. 0845 302 0008

www.ni-environment.gov.uk

WILDLIFE GARDENING

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 WG 009

A WILDLIFE HEDGE

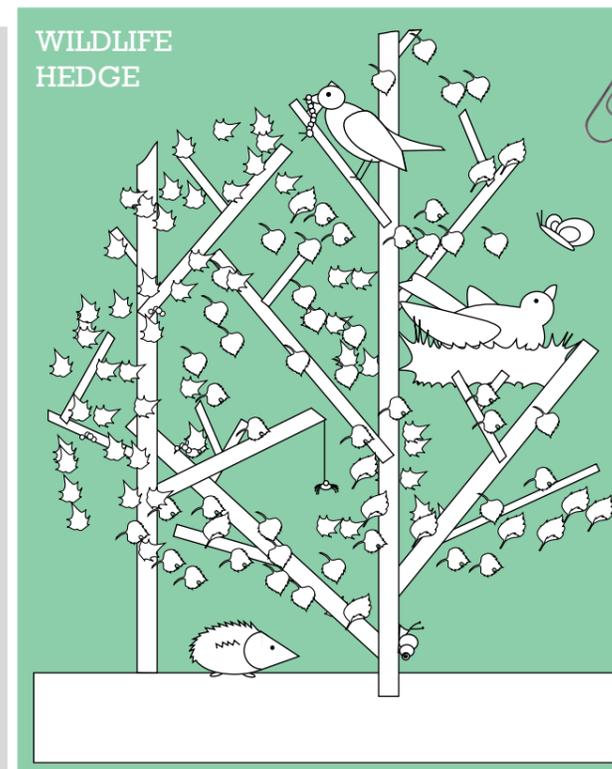
The boundaries of your garden can easily be made into a feature beneficial to wildlife. If you have fences or walls, trellises can be attached and covered in climbers (see Factsheet WG 004). Alternatively, you can plant a hedge. The best hedge for wildlife is a mixed species hedge consisting of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and various tree species. This provides nesting sites for birds, year round cover, flowers and berries and underneath, wildflowers can flourish. Single species hedges are not as good, but certain species are better than others and might fit in better in the urban environment. If you have an existing hedge and do not want to replace it, there are some ways to manage the hedge that are wildlife friendly.

A MIXED SPECIES HEDGE

A traditional Irish hedge mainly consists of 80% Hawthorn and/or Blackthorn, but will usually also have Ash, Sycamore, Rowan and other shrubs like Bramble, Gorse and Dog Rose. Often mature trees are to be found in this hedge. The variety of blossoms, berries and scent that this mixed species hedge provides makes it, without doubt, the best hedge for wildlife. However, in an urban environment, a traditional Irish hedge may look out of place. If you have a large garden, in the right setting, this type of hedge may be appropriate, but for a typical suburban semi or terraced house, a single species hedge may be more aesthetically pleasing.

A SINGLE SPECIES HEDGE

A typical garden hedge is a single species Privet hedge. The advantages of this hedge are that it is evergreen, quick growing and provides good cover for nesting birds. The problem with Privet is it grows too quickly meaning that you have to cut it frequently to keep it tidy. This is not beneficial for nesting birds and the Privet is prevented from flowering and producing berries. Privet is, however, not the only hedging species. Other species can be more pleasing to the eye, have brightly coloured flowers, interesting autumn colours and berries. Why not try Fuchsia for its red flowers, Escallonia for its pink flowers or Beech for its soft green Spring foliage and bronze Autumn colours. An interesting way to create variety is to plant blocks of different single species hedges together to form one hedge. For example, plant a block of Fuchsia followed by a block of Beech followed by a block of Berberis. One point worth considering is that if you have children, you may not want to plant a hedge with thorns like Berberis.



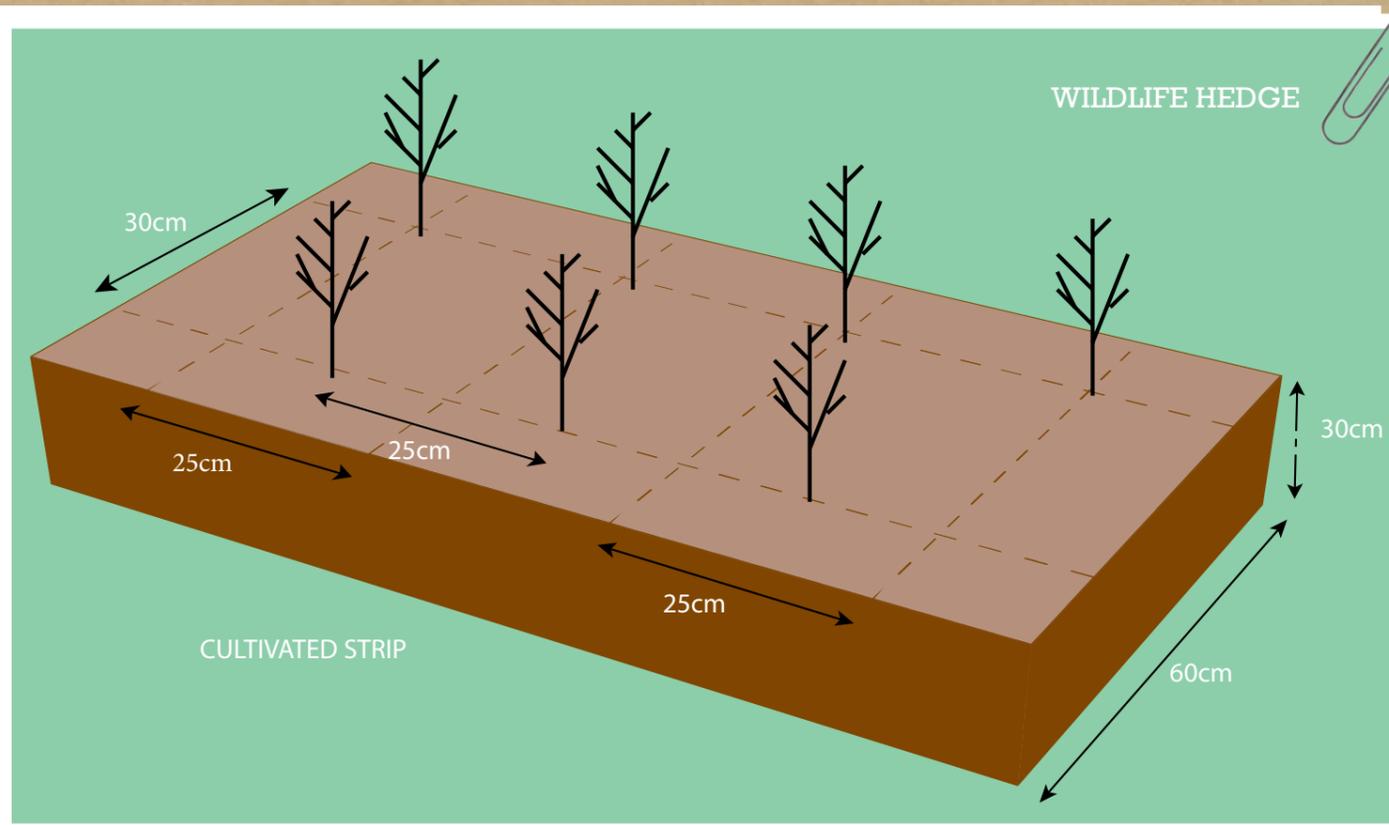
BLACKTHORN



HAWTHORN



ROWAN



PLANTING A HEDGE

The important thing about planting a hedge is to prepare the soil properly before planting. First dig a trench at least 50cms wide. Mix a good quantity of organic compost (well rotted compost, manure or purchased organic compost) with some blood, fish and bone meal and the topsoil and put back into the trench. You can now leave the trench to settle for a couple of weeks before planting. When ready for planting, peg out a line of string along the trench to keep the hedge straight. There is a different recommended planting distance for different hedging species (see table). With species like Beech and Hawthorn, you can plant them at a 45° angle to encourage thick growth at the base of the hedge. With other species you do not have to do this. Once planted, firm around the young plants and put mulch down to prevent weed growth. Once the hedge is established, climbers like Honeysuckle, Dog Rose and Clematis can be introduced.



DOG ROSE

HEDGE MAINTENANCE

Points to remember:

- If you are managing your hedge for wildlife, you must not cut your hedge while the birds are nesting or when berries would be forming. It is thus best to cut it in early Winter.
- Cut the hedge in an 'A' shape (thicker at the base, thinner at the top) as this encourages thick, bushy growth at the base creating good shelter for wildlife.
- Weed around the base to prevent choking weeds.



HONEY SUCKLE

HEDGING SPECIES

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	FLOWER COLOUR	BERRIES	WINTER COLOUR	PLANTING SPACING
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Yellow	---	Gold (autumn)	50cm
Berberis*	<i>Berberis darwinii</i>	Yellow/orange	Purple	Green	50 cm
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	White	Red	---	30cm
Escallonia	<i>Escallonia macrantha</i>	Pink	---	Glossy green	60 cm
Copper Beech	<i>F.sylvatica "Purpurea"</i>	Yellow	---	Purple	45cm
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Yellow	---	Bronze	45cm
Fuchsia	<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Red	Red/Purple	Green	50cm
Holly*	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	White	Red	Glossy green	60cm
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	White	Black	Green	30 cm
Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	White	Black	Green	80cm
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	White	Blue/Black	---	30cm

MAINTAINING YOUR HEDGE

