



✦ Glossary

Perch: (of a bird) to settle or rest in some elevated position

Morsel: a small piece or amount of food

Shrub: a woody plant that is smaller than a tree

Glade: an open space in a wood or forest

Coppice: to cut back (a tree or shrub) to ground level periodically to stimulate growth

📌 Trees for wildlife

A suitable tree is probably the single best thing you could plant to bring wildlife into your garden. Birds will love to **perch** in it and, as it grows larger, they may nest in it or feed on its store of tasty **morsels**, from caterpillars and aphids to autumn berries and seeds. Help to draw them in by hanging feeders in the tree or by installing a nest box. Generally speaking, native trees are the most wildlife-friendly. Oak, ash and many others are, of course, much too big for most gardens but this still leaves a surprisingly wide choice on offer, even if your plot is very small.

Trees and wildlife habitats

One of the richest wild habitats is what ecologists call ‘woodland edge’. As the name suggests, this is the rich and varied area on the margins of a wood; it includes trees and **shrubs** for shelter and shade, next to open areas and sunny **glades**, where both flowering plants and insects such as butterflies and bees can flourish. A group of gardens is like a woodland edge, and as wild habitats become more threatened and deteriorated, gardens – urban and rural – are gaining in importance as a refuge for wildlife.

One vital role that trees play is to link gardens together, to connect breeding populations of birds and insects. Most individual gardens don’t have the space or the variety to support viable populations of wild creatures, but several gardens together can make a real difference, and trees are a key component of the resulting ecosystem.

Choosing a tree

The first step is to choose a species of tree that will suit your conditions and space. If there is room, a birch or a rowan is a good choice for light soil, or perhaps an alder for a damp garden.

Hawthorn is a great survivor on difficult sites of all types. It will enliven the garden with clouds of fragrant blossoms and heavy crops of autumn berries will attract blackbirds and thrushes as winter sets in. Bees are irresistibly drawn to trees with early blossoms in the spring: a cherry or a pear maybe, or a willow if space permits will encourage them.

Hazel is a winner in small places, as it can be **coppiced** to control its size and to let light into the space underneath it, allowing woodland flowers such as primroses, violets and bluebells to bloom in the spring and supply nectar for early bees.

Other small trees and shrubs to consider include spindle, a tree-like shrub that dazzles in autumn with its fluorescent pink-and-orange fruit and scarlet leaves. More suited to damper, acid soils, alder buckthorn makes a pleasing small tree, with dark bark and red berries that change to black – which is striking when both colours are on the tree together.

(Adapted from: A. Titchmarsh, *How to Garden*, BBC Books, 2011)





Understanding the text

1. Fill in the grid with the appropriate terms from the text. One has been done as an example.

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Species of trees | Oak, |
| Insects/bugs | |
| Flowers | |

2. Read the text again and answer the following questions.

1. Which trees are most suited to bring wildlife into your garden?
2. What is a woodland edge?
3. Why can a group of gardens be compared with a woodland edge?
4. Which elements have to be taken into consideration when choosing a tree?
5. What species of tree are most suitable for small spaces?

Understanding the text

3. Write a paragraph of about 40/50 words about the green areas in your town or city. Focus on the following elements:

- amount, distribution and location of green areas;
- number and species of trees;
- your opinion about it.

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