

WILDLIFE IN YOUR GARDEN AND HOME

Since summer started you would have noticed far more wildlife activity in your gardens. The birds are more vocal protecting their territories and keeping in touch with their mates. The cuckoos and Burchell's coucal with their distinctive calls can be heard far and wide. Other birds have donned their breeding plumage and brighten the already colourful gardens.

At dusk the crickets, frogs, toads and bats regale us with their screeches, whistles and croaks. If you are most fortunate you will have noticed the dwarf chameleons carefully searching for prey. Spiders are more plentiful and if you take a walk in your garden at night you most likely will be covered on web by the time you get back inside – and maybe a spider or two hitching a ride!

When mentioning the word “wildlife” ones mind tends to turn to things such as elephants, giraffe, lion and antelope. But there are many creatures in our gardens and homes which are also “wildlife” that we see every day. Sometimes our attitude to these creepy crawlies is to squash, kill or spray it but all creature play a significant role in the web of life.

It can be worth the effort to take a magnifying glass to have a closer look at some of their amazing colours, patterns and structures and become familiar with these creatures that share our lives.

Here are some ways wildlife can be attracted to your garden. Some are simple and others may require an attitude or perhaps a change in lifestyle.

- Reduce or preferably eliminate all use of pesticides and herbicides. When chemicals are used quite often the innocent animals are also affected.
- Make a compost heap as this will reduce your household waste. Cover the compost with soil or grass cutting to discourage flies. Using the compost in your garden will encourage healthy soil and soil wildlife as well as improve water retention.
- Grow some vegetables as many creatures will come to eat your veggies and as a bonus there may be some left over for you!
- Cultivate a wild area by planting indigenous plants close together and maintaining it only by remove alien invader plants.
- To encourage diversity establish different micro-habitats like a rockery, pond or wetland.
- Attract birds with bird baths and feeders, nesting sites in hollow stumps or provide nesting boxes. The birds will also assist in pest control.

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