

Do your bit for wildlife

Our homes and lifestyles have huge impacts on the environment and sometimes the link between them is not always clear. What we buy and where we buy it from affects the demands on the earth's resources, how the products are made and ultimately how they are disposed of.



For example, the food we buy and eat impacts on the health of the environment. The earth's biodiversity is the source of all our food, from vegetables to fish and meat. Crops are pollinated by insects, natural predators and parasites keep pest species in check and soil organisms keep the soils fertile and productive.

By making small changes to the choices we make and what we do and buy can make a difference.

The list below contains some simple steps you can take to help.

At home

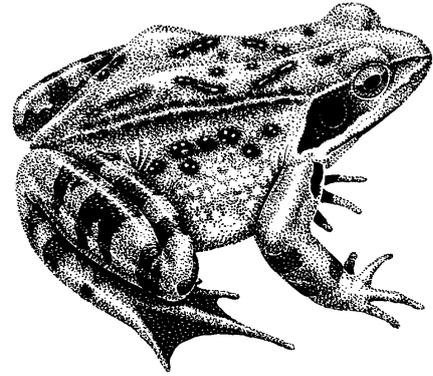
- Choose household cleaning products containing ingredients that will break down naturally in the environment. These help to reduce pollution and protect the health of people and wildlife.
- Dispose of any household chemicals, waste oil and paint correctly. Never dispose of chemicals including paints down the drain, instead use your local council's disposal facilities to dispose of them safely.
- Compost your kitchen scraps and garden waste. In the UK around 30 million tonnes of domestic refuse is produced each year, which contains about 38% organic content, such as vegetable peelings, tea bags and food scraps (Defra).



In the garden

- If space is short put window boxes or pots on the windowsill. Try growing wild herbs or scented bedding plants germinated from seeds in pots.
- Create a wildlife pond or bog garden. Water attracts frogs and toads which will keep the slugs and other pests in check.

- Make your own compost. As well as reducing the burden on landfill sites, compost heaps can provide valuable habitat for wildlife in their own right.
- Grow plants rich in nectar to encourage bees, butterflies and other insects.
- Plant some native trees and shrubs to provide a source of food and shelter for small mammals and birds.
- Avoid using chemicals like slug pellets, weed killers and chemical fertilisers in your garden. Encourage natural predators such as frogs instead.



- Avoid buying products containing peat. These contribute to the destruction of ancient peat bogs, valuable habitats for wildlife. Look for alternatives or make your own.
- Leave a small pile of logs in the corner of your garden. Decaying logs in a quiet shady corner will provide a home for a wide range of insects and mammals, such as hedgehogs.



- For watering your garden, use a water butt to collect rainwater from house, shed and garage roofs.
- Attach some trellis to a wall or fence and encourage climbers such as honeysuckle to attract insects.
- Put up some nest boxes for birds and provide them with food and water all year round.
- Put up some bat boxes to provide a place for them to roost during the day.

Going shopping

- Buy locally-produced food. The distance it has travelled will be shorter and so pollutants including CO² resulting from transporting the food are lower. Buying locally supports local businesses and the economy.
- Buy organic.
- Choose fish that comes from sustainable stocks, such as those with the Marine Stewardship Council label. Nearly 70% of the world's fish stocks are now fully fished, over-fished or depleted (Defra).
- Choose products that have as little packaging as possible, and packaging that you can actually recycle.
- Take reusable bags to the shops with you. Recycle or reuse plastic bags.
- Check out the product label. For example, choose wood products bearing the Forest Stewardship Council label, which shows they have come from well-managed forests.
- Opt for products you can use over and over, and that will last well. Use as few disposable products as possible.
- When on holiday, check before you buy any plant and animal products. Don't buy trinkets or other goods made from coral, tortoiseshell or other endangered species.

