

Winter Wildlife Friendly Gardening Tips

Trees, bushes and hedges provide shelter for garden birds in the winter. Many garden hedges are privet which is a semi-deciduous shrub so it keeps most of its leaves during the winter, providing excellent shelter from the cold nights for birds. As you develop your garden try and provide habitats where birds can nest in the summer and roost in the winter.



You can also buy **bird roosting pouches** like these and put them in hedges, on a wall among the ivy or in some other sheltered location. Take a look at where the prevailing wind normally comes from, often it's the southwest, and locate them somewhere out of the wind and among vegetation where possible. Garden birds like blue tits and wrens love them.

If you are lucky enough to have a large garden and time to work in it you may already have lots of wild bird food in your garden, trees like apple, plum and pear are loved by blackbirds and thrushes. Berries like hawthorn, cotoneaster and rose hips are also great food for birds and small mammals. At this time of year we can often help by

putting out additional food for the birds so do **keep filling up the bird feeders** if you can, especially on very cold days. And don't forget about **water**, especially when it's very cold and natural water sources may be frozen. Put out a shallow bowl of water so birds can drink and wash and check it regularly in freezing conditions.



If you are a keen gardener try not to tidy up too much. Don't remove all the leaves from your garden, perhaps **leave some leaf piles** under your hedge or in the corner of the garden. These provide shelter for small mammals and hedgehogs, and somewhere for birds to rummage around for worms and insects. If you have a log and stick pile don't disturb it at this time of the year, there may be frogs or other amphibians resting for the winter or if you are very lucky a hibernating hedgehog!