

Help your local bats

Think of a bat's life as a complicated jigsaw, made up of many different pieces. If even one piece is missing, it can make a difference between life and death for a bat or its baby. Can you help to complete the jigsaw for bats in your area?

Plan a bat-friendly garden

Grow lots of different flowers

Pipistrelles, the bats most likely to visit your garden or school grounds, need very large numbers of tiny insects to feed on at dusk.

Many of the families of flies that they enjoy have short tongues and can only feed on nectar that is easy to reach. So, to attract these tiny insects to attract the bats, you need to grow:

- Daisies and daisy-like flowers that are open with a mass of shallow florets
- Pale flowers that are seen more easily in poor light
- Tall flowers that are more obvious in the twilight
- Flowers with large flat heads like landing platforms
- Single flowers rather than double ones, as they make it easier for the insect to reach the nectar



Where might bats be in your area?

Look at maps of your area and try to predict where bats are most likely to feed in summer. Look for river valleys, lakes and woodland edges that might be suitable. Gardens, school grounds and parks will also be visited if the plants grown there attract enough insects.



The perfume of night-scented flowers and sweet smelling herbs is especially attractive to moths, both large and small.

Search seed catalogues when planning your garden and choose a range of different flowers to encourage insects from spring to autumn.

Plant trees and shrubs

These are important in providing:

- Food for insect larvae
- Food for adult insects
- Shelter for insects
- Roosting opportunities for bats

Choose native trees as these will attract our native insects. If space is limited, useful small trees include hawthorn and elder.



Create a wet area

A pond, a marshy area, even a half tub made into a mini-pond can attract insects. Many of the tiny flies eaten by bats start life as aquatic larvae.

Use natural pest control

Never use pesticides as these kill the bat's prey, and surviving insects carry traces of poison. Instead, encourage natural predators:

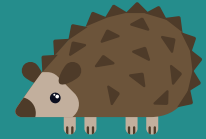
Hoverflies, wasps, ladybirds, ground beetles, centipedes, frogs and slowworms eat many pests.



Allow some weeds to grow as hiding places for natural predators.

Leave hollow stemmed plants to overwinter as shelter for ladybirds.

A heap of dead leaves and brushwood may give shelter to a hedgehog.



Provide birds with regular food and water as they too eat many pests.

DANGER!

Cats on the prowl!

Every year hundreds of bats as well as birds and small mammals fall prey to Britain's most dangerous four-legged predator, the domestic cat.



Cats do not need to stay out all night. Ask friends and neighbours to bring their cats in an hour before sunset through spring and summer so that bats can emerge safely.

