

Wildlife Friendly Gardening Workshops

In February 2023, a series of Wildlife Friendly Gardening Workshops were co-run by the Natural History Consortium and South Gloucestershire Council. These training events were funded by the West of England Combined [Pollinator Fund](#) with the aim to support allotment holders to:

- grow on allotments without chemical pesticides
- support allotment holders with suggestions of alternatives to using chemical pesticides
- share how to make space for nature, including ideal plants for pollinators and how to provide different habitats and homes for wildlife

The 3 workshops provided opportunities for informal get-togethers, to encourage sharing ideas, asking questions and providing resources. Lynne and Yvonne from [Hedgehog Rescue](#) attended and shared information and take-home packs to support hedgehog welfare.

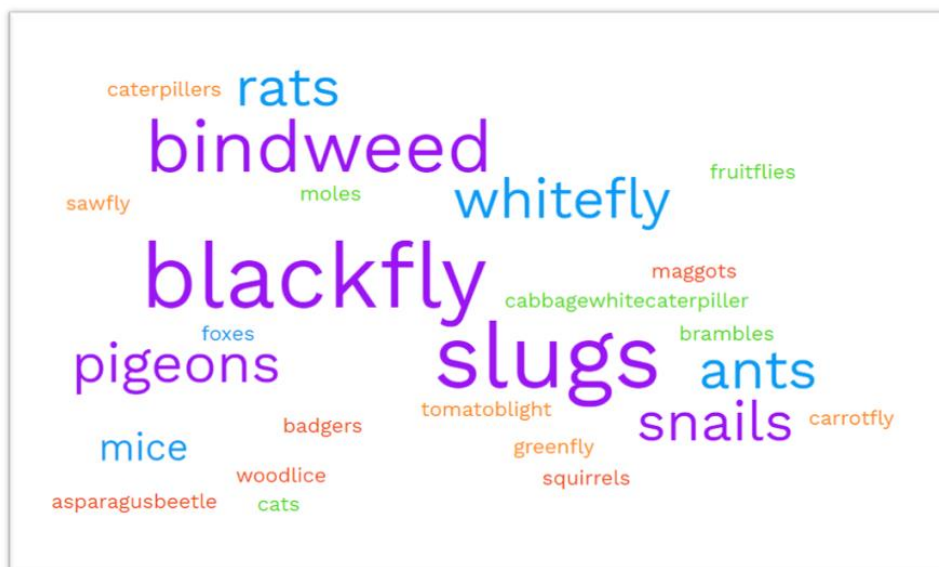
- Workshop 1, Orchard Road Allotment - 17th January 2023 (9 people)
- Workshop 2, Woodyleaze Allotment - 19th January 2023 (10 people)
- Workshop 3, Orchard Road Allotment - 28th January 2023 (5 people)

The final workshop was hosted on a weekend and included small activities for children.

During the first half of the workshop, NHC led discussion and activities around frequent allotment “pests”, with wildlife-friendly ideas to help manage these pests, whilst avoiding the use of pesticides.

Picture on Right:

Word cloud showing the types of pests that came up. The size of the word indicates how frequently the words came up as “top pests” suggested across all workshops.



After the allotment, a follow-up resource sheet with wildlife-friendly alternatives to pesticides were shared with the attendees of the session, along with a list of reputable online resources for further information on wildlife friendly gardening.

The second part of the workshop included a series of activities carried out at nearby allotment sites, with resources provided by South Gloucester Council:

Workshop 1:

Mini tour of communal area, including 2 ponds; one for fish, one for wildlife.

Mini-tours were by allotment holders who were attending the workshop; sharing tips and advice.

Pollinator-friendly wildlife seeds planted in bare earth along boundary hedges, mini bug-hotels placed along bare brick walls, with small information signs with tips on wildlife friendly gardening.

Log pile placed away from the main path (place recommended by allotment warden onsite), as a home for beetles and other invertebrates.

Workshop 2:

Planted cyclamen - these plants are winter-hardy and flower in late winter/early spring; a good source of nectar for early emerging pollinators.

Litter picking - collected a few bags of rubbish- most of the litter was household waste that we think had blown in/been littered. Removed as it can harm wildlife.

Yvonne from Hedgehog Rescue in Yate shared resources and a talk about the need for supporting hedgehogs, and how to do so (i.e., with shelter, hedges and bushes, stop using pesticides, supporting access with hedgehog sized gaps in fences, and discussed low-disturbance ways to find out if hedgehogs are nearby/using a "hedgehog house"). Activity followed by placing a hedgehog house at a suitable place within the allotment boundary.

Caroline brought a variety of bug hotels - 2x large hotels and attached to fencing (facing south or west, so that the coldest winter winds from the north and east don't blow straight into them). These will provide nesting and hibernation habitat for invertebrates, such as ladybirds and butterflies.

Smaller bug hotels were placed around bases of trees. These may provide nesting places for solitary bees or shelter for important predators such as ladybirds and earwigs.

Workshop 3:

Planted a variety of small, early flowering plants; a good source of nectar for early pollinating insects. #

The plants included Celandine, Grape hyacinth, and Lambs Ear.

The plants were planted in a bare communal area, and around the communal wildlife pond. 3 small bug hotels were placed in the area.

Some handmade bug hotels (children's activity during the earlier part of the workshop - made from bamboo and pipe cleaners) were placed in the allotment too.