

Mulching Helps

A good layer of mulch will form an ideal foraging ground for birds like the Thrush and Cape Robin. Mulch not only keeps the soil damp and cool, but it also encourages insects that are vital for a healthy soil. Mulch can be bought in bags but can also be home-made. Layers of grass cuttings and leaves make a lovely thick mulch. The mulch will eventually be broken down by the earthworms so keep replenishing it. This also saves on the garden refuse that is generated by every garden, and your soil quality will be greatly improved.

Plant Indigenous

You do not necessarily have to have a completely indigenous garden, but a good balance between exotic and indigenous will do fine. Try to include all types of plants in you garden, some nesting trees, others to provide berries and others to provide nectar or seed. The greater the variety of plants the greater the number of species you will have in your garden.

Happy Gardening!

Contact details:

For details and further information, come in to any GardenShop or call our GardenLine on 0860 100 403. Alternatively, e-mail us at info@gardenshop.co.za or log on to www.gardenshop.co.za

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Wildlife

An expert guide to gardening for Wildlife



GardenCare



Wildlife in your garden

There are many interesting life forms that can be attracted to the garden with very little effort. Wildlife species that are likely to be attracted to a suburban garden include birds, insects, frogs, hedgehogs, lizards and butterflies. There is a delicate relationship between the species that co-habit a garden. The more insects you have, the more food there is for birds and reptiles. The more reptiles you have, the more likely you are to have predatory birds like owls visiting the garden. It takes a few months for a balance to be established but once it is, you are unlikely to have any insect problems in the garden and the need to spray will be reduced.

Gardening for wildlife can not be achieved overnight. It is a way of life. The wonderful thing is that you can start by doing small things to help but the sky is the limit when you really get into it!

Ways to attract wildlife:

Reduce Pesticides:

Reduce the use of pesticides to a bare minimum. By encouraging insects, you will be encouraging their predators. If you must spray, try to spray with a Pyrethrum based insecticide as this breaks down

within 24 hours, leaving no residual poison. The other alternative is to plant insect repelling herbs alongside problem plants.

Offer Food

Supplement feeding will bring in insects and birds of all descriptions. You could put out food on a regular basis or you can plant certain varieties that produce seed, nectar or fruit. Feeding tables can be purchased that are either free standing or suitable for hanging in a tree. For the best results, have 2 feeders - one in a fairly open and exposed area and the other in a secluded bushy part of the garden. The selection of food is endless. Some examples are grain, millet, fruit, suet and bone meal. Scraps from the table like bacon rinds are also suitable.

Lizards, frogs and toads can be fed by leaving finely minced meat at ground level.

Provide Water

A well thought out water supply in a garden is a must. Again, the ideal is to have 2 water sources, one in the open and the other in a secluded area. The water can be contained in a grinding stone, birdbath and or a pond. The ideal pond would have gently sloping sides so birds could wade into the water and shaped so that wildlife can get in and out safely. Rocks can be strategically placed in the pond to help.

Having fish in a pond is a great way to attract Hammerkops and Kingfishers. In order to give them a sporting chance, plant a few water lilies and other aquatic plants to provide shelter for the fish. Ponds should have one open side to attract birds like herons, while the well-planted side will house most of the other insect and bird life.

Nectar feeders attract sunbirds, white eyes and others. Mix glucose powder with water and add a drop of red food colouring.

Offer Nesting Sites

Nesting can be encouraged in many ways. Providing sisal nesting logs will attract barbets and woodpeckers. Large nesting boxes are often inhabited by owls. Often, all birds need is a suitable tree to nest in. Thorn trees make the best nest sites as they are protected from predators. You can help to provide nesting material for them by planting veld grasses in an out-of-the-way patch. You can also hang a raffia bag in the tree that is stuffed with grasses, feathers, small sticks and coir. The birds will be grateful for the help! If weavers strip your palm trees, plant a patch of veld grass is a must. The weavers will use that to build their nests, rather than destroying your palms.