

Introduction

Bats are still subject of many ill-founded myths and prejudices but in fact are harmless and fascinating creatures. Indeed they can be very beneficial to the gardener as they feed on large numbers of insects including midges and mosquitoes. In Norfolk bat numbers are in decline, mainly due to loss of suitable breeding and roosting sites and fragmentation of their feeding areas. Much can be done in gardens to make them more attractive to bats and all of these measures will benefit other wildlife.



Long-eared bat

Did you know...?

- Human habitation, particularly our houses, now provides essential roosting and breeding sites for many of Norfolk's bat species.
- Pipistrelle bats are so small that when their wings are folded they could quite easily fit into a matchbox.
- Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. They are not blind and have quite good eyesight which is particularly sensitive to low light conditions.



Pipistrelle bat

This leaflet will...

Give you top tips on how to manage your garden for the benefit of bats.

How to attract bats to your garden...

The best way of attracting bats to your garden is to create the conditions that provide an abundance of insect prey. Even in a small garden it is possible to enhance the environment to attract much insect life, which bats will find hard to resist:

Plant native trees and shrubs

- Planting trees such as oak and ash in a large plot will greatly increase the diversity of insect life. In a smaller garden, species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, guelder rose and alder will do the job.



Hawthorn

Night scented flowers

- Try growing honeysuckle, night-scented stock, sweet rocket, tobacco plant, wallflowers, evening primrose and buddleia. Not only will these attract night-flying insects but will fill your garden with fragrance and provide a visual delight.



Large yellow underwing

Avoid using pesticides

- Chemical pesticides can indiscriminately kill many invertebrates including natural predators such as ladybirds, and so may do more harm than good. Pesticides also reduce the availability of prey for bats.

Wild areas

- Resist the temptation to tidy every part of your garden. Leave some areas of the lawn un-mown, and allow other areas to 'go wild' thus creating mini-habitats which will be populated by many invertebrates.

Plant a hedge

- If you have no room for trees, then planting a hedge of hawthorn interspersed with hazel, dogwood, field maple, blackthorn and holly will create a fantastic habitat for insects to breed and feed and attract much other wildlife.

Dead wood

- If you have dead trees in your garden try to resist the temptation to cut them down. With safety always in mind, allow them to rot naturally as this may well provide suitable roosting sites for bats.



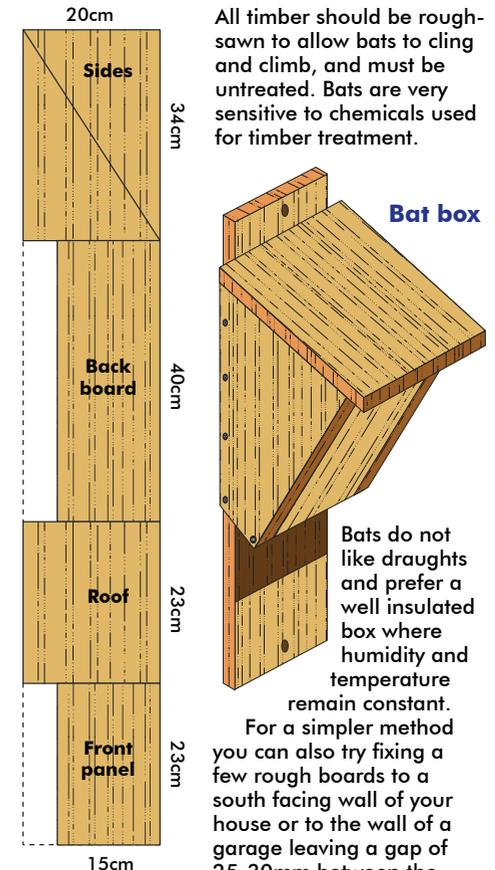
Make a wildlife pond

- A garden pond is a fantastic wildlife resource and will provide a breeding area for many species of flying insects – an important food source for bats.

Make a bat box

If you have bats feeding over your garden you may be able to encourage them to roost on your property. Try making some bat boxes and placing them at least four metres high, two to a tree, facing south-east and south-west. The boxes should be constructed with rough sawn, untreated wood and should be placed so as to have an unobstructed approach.

Mark out the measurements, cut to size and nail together to form box as shown below.



Frequently asked questions

Which bats am I likely to see in my garden?

The most likely bats to be seen in your garden when they emerge around dusk will be pipistrelles, noctules, Daubenton's and brown long-eared bats.

What do I do if I find a bat?

Like other mammals bats do become ill or get injured. If you find a bat contact the Bat Helpline on 0845 1300 228 for assistance. They will be able to put you in touch with your nearest bat rehabilitator.

Bats are gentle creatures and seldom show any aggression but they are wild animals and may be frightened. Always wear gloves if you need to handle the bat to remove it to a safer place.



Noctule bat



A pond may attract bats to your garden

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To find out more about Norfolk's wildlife visit www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections

Alternatively call Norfolk's free wildlife information service on **01603 598333**

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Protecting **Norfolk's Wildlife** for the Future