

Garden Wildlife

The Night Shift

Introduction

You may be familiar with the wildlife inhabiting your garden by day, but what about the night shift? A wholly different cast of wildlife characters uses your garden during the hours of darkness. Getting to know them can prove a fascinating and addictive pastime.



Wood mouse

Did you know...?

- More than 200 species of moths have been recorded in suburban gardens in Norfolk.
- Norfolk's commonest bats, the pipestrelles travel up to 5km and eat up to 3,000 insects in a single night.
- Not all slugs eat your plants! Many species of slug actually feed on rotting matter, dung and moulds and are useful in 'cleaning up' the garden.



Elephant hawkmoth

This leaflet will...

Help you discover the range of nocturnal inhabitants of gardens.
Give you tips on how you can discover the night-time wildlife in your garden.

How to attract and observe nocturnal garden creatures...

Night-time nectar

Many plants rely just as much on pollination by nocturnal insects. Try planting honeysuckle, evening primrose and traveller's joy that wait until dark to release their scent. As well as adding colour by day these will act as a magnet to many kinds of night-flying insects. Buddleia is another excellent source of nectar for many moth species.



Silver Y moth at lily

Night-time serenade

Go into your garden at night and listen carefully. Tawny owls can often be heard in gardens, especially if mature trees are present. Foxes, deer, frogs, toads and some species of cricket are also vocal at night.



Common toad

Night-time sex

Many creatures use the hours of dark to find mates and breed. A garden pond is a great place to observe courtship and mating among frogs, toads and newts.

Alternatively investigation of any snorting, wheezing and grunting in the shrubbery may also lead you to an amorous pair of hedgehogs!



Leopard slugs mating

How to see nighttime wildlife

- The easiest way to see what's going on in your garden at night is to get a torch and search among the flower beds and shrubbery.
- To attract moths and other night flying insects try making up a sugar solution and painting this onto an old tree stump or post. The results will surprise you!

Sugar solution recipe

500ml bottle of dark beer/stout

1kg dark molasses sugar

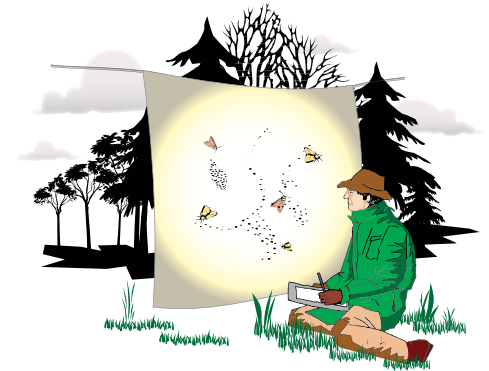
0.5kg dark treacle

Dash of rum

Method: Place the ingredients (except the rum) in a large saucepan and bring to the boil stirring continuously. Let the mix simmer for 5-10 minutes and then allow to cool. When cool add no more than 10ml of rum, thoroughly stir and store in glass bottles/jars.

- Bait an area that can be viewed from the comfort of a room and partially illuminated by house lights. This may reveal a range of night-time visitors from mice, shrews and voles to larger mammals including hedgehogs, foxes, deer and even badgers.

- To attract moths and other night-flying insects try hanging a white sheet from the washing line and placing a powerful light behind it.



- A pitfall trap, which can be an empty yogurt pot, can be a great way of harmlessly capturing beetles and other more mobile invertebrates. (See www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections for more information).



- Placing a shallow tray full of flour or sand in your garden will preserve tracks of any wildlife that happens along.

Frequently asked questions

Why do some creatures prefer the night?

One reason is to avoid daytime predators, especially birds. Other creatures such as slugs, snails and amphibians will dry out in the sunlight and much prefer the cool and damp of night time.

Will trapping moths harm them?

No. As long as you use one of the recommended techniques. After recording they can be safely released into deep cover (it is important you do not release them all in one place as this will attract birds).

What food can I put out to attract hedgehogs?

Hedgehogs will eat at least 100 invertebrates, such as snails, slugs and worms, every night. You can supplement their diet by putting out a bowl of water and some dog or cat food, as long as it is not fish flavoured. To avoid attracting rats it may be best to bring food in before you go to bed.



Hedgehog

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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