

### Introduction

With the loss of many ponds in the wider countryside, gardens have become an increasingly important refuge for amphibians. An amphibian friendly garden will provide food, shelter and hibernation sites and, if there is water present, an essential breeding area.



Common frog

Amphibians are very useful creatures to have in the garden and will feast merrily on slugs and snails, helping to keep your garden in balance and allowing your fruit and vegetables to prosper!

### Did you know...?

- Four species of native British amphibians regularly occur in Norfolk gardens.
- Garden ponds now constitute a very important breeding refuge for amphibians, especially the endangered great crested newt.
- With milder winters in Norfolk, spawning dates for frogs are up to two weeks earlier than twenty years ago.



Common frog

### This leaflet will...

Show you how to attract amphibians to your garden.

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

# How to attract amphibians to your garden...

## Create a pond

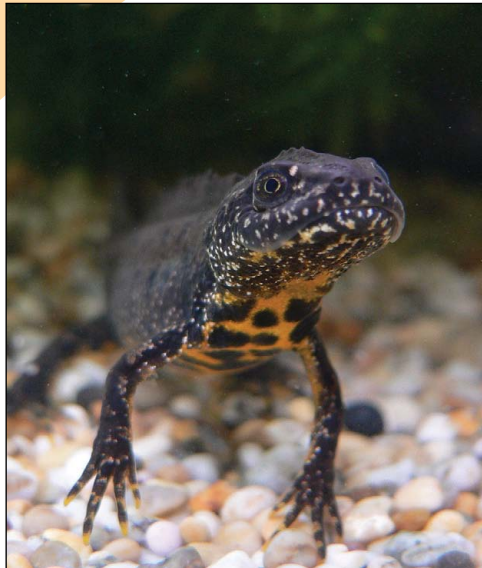
Not only is a garden pond a fantastic wildlife resource in its own right, it is also a vital habitat for amphibians to breed. Frogs and smooth (common) newts will readily take to newly constructed ponds and if you create an area of shallow water (for frogs) and have a good covering of vegetation (for newts) both species may breed. Toads may visit your pond to cool off during hot days but are less likely to breed since they tend to have traditional spawning grounds and are much fussier about which ponds they use. However you may be really lucky and attract great crested newts to breed.

Make the pond surround as natural as possible. Ideally it should be rough grass, but leave at least one side wild to provide shelter for amphibians entering or leaving the pond.



The spoil from digging a pond can also be put to good use. For example if it is used as a raised feature, perhaps as a basis for a rockery, chambers can be created within the pile to provide safe resting or hibernation areas for young frogs, toads and newts.

Even if you do not have much space, you can still make a small water feature that will attract amphibians. Even 'ponds' made from plastic bowls or waterproofed half-barrels sunk into the ground and stocked with a few native water plants will provide a cooling-off place for frogs and toads.



Great crested newt

## Paving slabs

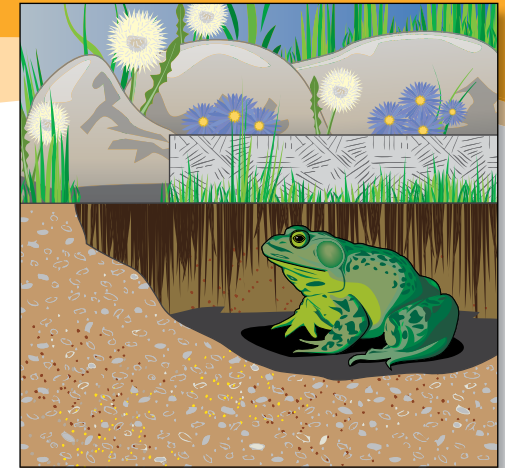
Another very good way of providing shelter and hibernation sites for amphibians is to place some paving slabs in quiet parts of the garden. The soil beneath the slabs should be scraped out to form a shallow bowl with a tunnel sloping up towards one edge of the slab. The slab can be lifted occasionally when the weather is mild to investigate what has taken up residence.



Common toad

## Make a log pile

A log pile placed in a quiet, shaded spot, such as under a hedge, will attract lots of invertebrates; a rich food source for frogs and toads which favour moist, cool conditions for hunting prey. It will also provide shelter from the sun and a potential hibernation site. The log pile should be in contact with the soil allowing it to remain damp underneath – half-burying some logs in the ground at the base of your pile will achieve this.



## Wild patch

Amphibians need safe areas to move around in and search for food. They do not like being exposed on short grass or hard surfaces which makes them vulnerable to predators. Leaving some areas of your garden wild, especially areas of long grass, will provide a perfect habitat for amphibians to hunt and move from one area to another and will also be a valuable resource for other wild creatures.



Common toad

# Frequently asked questions

## Can amphibians and fish live together?

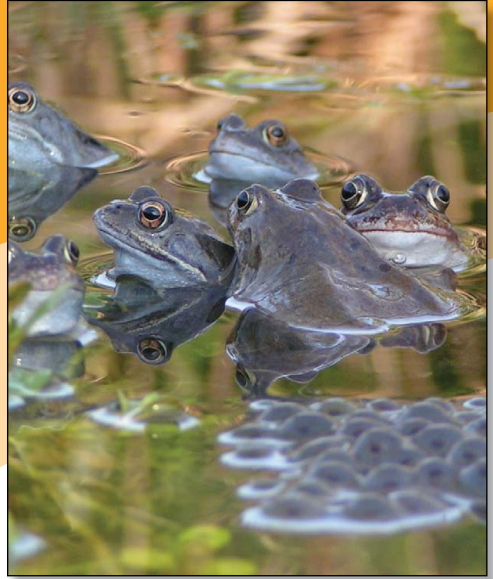
Fish and amphibians don't usually thrive together in the confined space of a garden pond. Fish may eat the young of frogs and newts.

## How can I tell the difference between frog, toad and newt spawn?

Frog spawn is laid in large jelly-like clumps which tend to be deposited in the shallow margins of ponds. Toad spawn is laid in long 'ribbons', each with a double row of eggs and is woven around pond plants. Newts lay their eggs singly and then carefully wrap them in submerged foliage.

## Where can I get some frogspawn to stock my new pond?

Frog spawn should not be moved from one pond to another as there is a risk of spreading infection and invasive pond plants. If you create the correct environment in your pond and garden, frogs will almost certainly find it for themselves.



Common frogs with spawn

To find out more about Norfolk's wildlife visit [www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections)

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

Norfolk Wildlife Trust,  
Bewick House,  
22 Thorpe Road,  
Norwich,  
NR1 1RY

Tel: 01603 625540

[wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk)

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