

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- GARDENS AND WILDLIFE
- ECOLOGY OF GARDENS
- NATURALISM IN GARDEN DESIGN

Purpose of this bibliography

I compiled this annotated bibliography from 2006 onwards to help readers and researchers in these subjects. I tried to include every recent book (published in the UK) that I could find on these subjects, plus some older books of historical importance, and I continue to update it periodically. The books vary from very straightforward ones suitable for school projects and readers new to gardening, to quite detailed works of reference.

The comments are my own, purely subjective, views. I have highlighted my personal recommendations – books I have found especially readable, helpful and informative. You may not agree with my views, but I hope that at least my descriptions will help you to identify the books that meet your own needs.

The length of each review is not meant to correlate with my opinion of each book; i.e. books with long reviews are not necessarily the ones I recommend the most highly, and vice versa. It is simply that some books for various reasons demand a longer discussion.

With a flood of books in recent years about wildlife-friendly gardening, there is something for everyone, from absolute beginner to experienced plants-person. However many of these books are fairly repetitive or superficial and only a few books really stand out; these are the ones in each section that I have recommended.

Section 10 of this bibliography mentions some books especially relevant to North America. Of course I don't live in North America, so my coverage is not comprehensive.

How to search this bibliography

By using the 'search' function in your PDF reader or 'control + F' in Windows you can type in any word, such as 'school' (for books I suggest suitable for school projects) or 'food' (for insect food plants), or 'nectar' (for sources of nectar), or 'wild flower', or 'ecology', or 'bumblebee' and so on. This will allow you to find the books with content covering these topics.

Marc Carlton

Last updated: November 2015

How to obtain these books

Most of the more recent books on this list are obtainable from public libraries. Many of the books on this list can also be consulted at the RHS Lindley Library, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE, (020 7821 3050). That's where I obtained many of them. It is an open-access library; you may consult books for free. If you are a member of the RHS you may borrow most of them.

All of them, including second-hand and out-of-print books, are available from on-line booksellers.

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1 Wildlife Gardening – General

This section describes general works about creating wildlife-friendly gardens. I also recommend the various short books produced by **Jenny Steel** (details in the Ponds, Meadows and Wild Flower sections below).

Recommended:

Thomas, Adrian

RSPB Gardening for Wildlife – a Complete Guide to Nature-friendly Gardening
A & C Black, 2010
ISBN 978 1 4081 2230 3

This is still by far the best all-round textbook on this subject available. Although sponsored by the RSPB it covers all aspects of nature-friendly gardening. It separately covers gardening for many groups (birds, butterflies, mammals, bees, reptiles and amphibians etc.) and also covers the creation of different kinds of habitats in garden situation, and how to make various different kind of gardens nature-friendly (including, for example, low-maintenance gardens, vegetables gardens and even balconies). There is also a 'top 400 garden plants for wildlife' which is seriously well-researched and plausible. He also mentions species or varieties of plants which don't give much for wildlife, which suggests the author has personally grown and observed many of these plants.

This is the essential textbook, and if you are only getting one book on this subject, get this one.

Toms, Mike, and Sterry, Paul

Garden Birds and Wildlife
AA Publishing 2008
978 0 7495 5912 0
225pp.

This is reviewed in full in section 6 (Birds) but covers much more than birds. It is one of the best books around at present for wildlife gardeners. Just perfect as a work of reference for schools.

Miller-Klein, Jan

Gardening for Butterflies, Bees, and other Beneficial Insects
Saith Ffynnon Books, 2010. 262pp. ISBN: 978 0 9555 288 0 4

A comprehensive and well-illustrated book about butterflies, wild bees, and plants to attract them. In a large format and crammed with information. This is the first British book of this kind that covers in such detail both butterflies and wild bees and how to garden for them.

Thompson, Ken

No Nettles Required: The Reassuring Truth about Wildlife Gardening
Eden Project Books, 2006. 183pp. ISBN: 1903 919681

Based on the results of research in Sheffield gardens, this small book discusses, and largely debunks, much of the 'received wisdom' that is current in the world of wildlife gardening, while re-affirming those practices that do make a difference to garden biodiversity. Like the research upon which it is based, this book will turn out to be very influential over time. Easy to read, in a chatty style, 'No Nettles Required' is in my view

essential reading for wildlife gardeners. Some of its findings may prove controversial, but all the better if it stimulates debate and helps to move the theory and practice of wildlife gardening forward.

Bradbury, Kate

The Wildlife Gardener. Creating a Haven for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies.

Kyler books, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-85783-157-6 144 pages.

An attractive, readable and book with plenty of advice for projects you can do yourself. The contents are accurate and well-informed, both about gardening and natural history. A very accessible work that would be a good 'starter book' to give to garden owners, or schoolteachers or budding gardeners who have some gardening knowledge or experience but would like to get a proper grip on the theory and practice of wildlife-friendly gardening.

Others:

Baines, Chris

How to make a Wildlife Garden

Frances Lincoln, 2000. 192pp.

ISBN: 0 241-11448 – 9 (1st edn,1985), 0 7112 1711 4 (2nd edn, 2000).

Well-organised, thoughtful and informative. Very influential when the first edition came out in 1985, often considered the standard work, although now eclipsed by much more detailed practical books such as that by Adrian Thomas (see above). Unusually among wildlife gardening books this has stayed in print and a new edition was re-issued in 2000. Although this is often regarded as the pioneering work that started a movement, credit should also go to the work of Ron Wilson, John Feltwell, Michael Chinery, and Violet Stevenson, all of whom also produced books in the early 1980s about aspects of gardens and wildlife. (All reviewed below).

Gibbons, Bob and Gibbons, Liz

Creating a Wildlife Garden

Hamlyn 1988. 157 pp. ISBN: 0 600 33384 1

Looks at wildlife gardening in the same way as a traditional gardening book, incorporating advice about garden planning and design, as well including comprehensive information about plants and the types of wildlife they are likely to attract. A thorough and thoughtful treatment of this subject, with good illustrations. Still one of the best. Unfortunately out of print, but still worth getting from libraries or second-hand.

Lavelle, Christine and Lavelle, Michael

How to Create a Wildlife Garden

Lorenz Books 2007

ISBN: 978 0 7548 1760 4 and 0 7548 1760 1

256pp.

This book covers many aspects of garden design and planting and advises you how to make these activities attractive to wildlife. 'Conventional-looking' gardens fall within their remit and so this book will not scare off gardeners who wrongly think that wildlife gardening is all about weeds and wilderness. This book contains much practical information; it is a 'how-to' sort of book.

I would not personally recommend some of the plants in their plant list, (especially seriously invasive plants like Buddleja davidii and Cotoneasters) and note that some of my favourite plants (to attract insects) are not there; but I could make this comment time and again about wildlife gardening books.

Buczacki, Stefan

Collins Wildlife Gardening

HarperCollins 2007

978 0 00 723184 3

224pp.

This was a big step forward amongst the plethora of wildlife gardening books. It takes discussion of wildlife gardening and wildlife –friendly gardening beyond the confines of previous authors, and tries to expand, develop and discuss those ideas. As well as an extensive coverage of every kind of 'wildlife' (including lichens!), the author advises readers to accept a garden's limitations, that no wildlife garden can cater for every kind of wild plant and animal. There are many insights of this kind.

The author makes two interesting distinctions: Firstly that wildlife gardening and organic gardening are not necessarily the same thing; there can be a big overlap, but not always. I fully agree with this point. He also makes a distinction between a 'wildlife-friendly garden' and a fully-fledged 'wildlife garden', seeing the latter as a special kind of garden. An interesting distinction, although not one I fully agree with.

As well as taking this more thoughtful approach, the book contains all the usual basic advice about how to make a garden wildlife friendly.

I have some words of warning about the beautifully illustrated short chapter on 'The wildflower meadow.' We are not well-served by authors who write on this subject, and misleading illustrations seem to be the norm in books and articles on this subject. This chapter is no exception, and on pages 160 and 161 we are shown beautiful illustrations, but not of perennial meadows, which is what the chapter is actually about. The red poppies in the illustrations give away that both of these pictures show fields containing annuals, not perennials. This does matter! Fields full of annuals are not wildflower meadows. Nevertheless the text of the chapter redeems itself with an accurate and reliable list of suggested perennial seed mixes, which will give you a meadow looking completely different to the illustrations, but much more like the genuine article that you will find in a nature reserve, i.e. a hay meadow.

How to grow the colourful annuals shown on pages 160 and 161 is in effect covered elsewhere in the short chapter called 'Cornfield Edge'.

Amos, Sharon

Create a Wildlife Friendly Garden

Collins & Brown 2005. 176pp. ISBN: 1 84340 127 4

If you want a straightforward, concise yet well-informed 'how to do it' book this is without doubt the best. If you are new to wildlife gardening this would be a very good place to start, suitable for all gardeners no matter what their background or what type of garden they have. It makes wildlife gardening seem accessible and easy (which it is), and is attractively illustrated.

My only reservation – if you follow the illustration of a cross section of a pond on page 80, you will end up in summer with a bog garden, not a pond, as the water will diffuse into the surrounding soil through capillary action. This flawed illustration is repeated again and again in books and websites to do with wildlife gardening, so be warned – there needs to be a clear separation, or barrier, between water and surrounding soil, or the water will tend to be sucked into the soil by capillary action..

Lewis, Pam

Sticky Wicket – Gardening in Tune with Nature

Frances Lincoln 2005. 208pp. ISBN: 0 7112 2480 3

Sticky Wicket is a garden in Dorset created over a period of 20 years. It became a sublimely beautiful wildlife-friendly garden, and this is described in this book. This kind of 'how we did it' garden writing follows in the footsteps of such influential authors as Margery Fish and Beth Chatto, who in their own ways developed and transformed the British 'cottage garden' planting style in the second half of the 20th century. Since this book was published Mrs Lewis has taken a more relaxed approach to her garden.

Tait Malcolm, (ed)

Wildlife Gardening for Everyone – your Questions Answered by the RHS and the Wildlife Trusts.

Think Books 2006 . 288 pp. ISBN 10 1 84525 106 8

This is written by a whole host of people, both members of the public and representatives of county wildlife trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). This book is an excellent resource. Many of its topics are based around questions posed by visitors to various websites. I especially like the book's focus on invertebrates and other small creatures, with really detailed advice and information for gardeners about the role of invertebrates. The sections on plants to attract insects are particularly concise and explain the issues clearly (e.g. that some wild bee species are generalists and can exploit a wide range of flowers; others are restricted to one or two native species).

On the other hand, the collective approach to the authorship of this volume reveals that there is a wide range of ideas around as to what constitutes wildlife gardening; For example an RHS lawn expert tells readers to feed and water lawns, which to me is the exact opposite of wildlife gardening! Fortunately in another part of the book another contributor advises readers to leave part of their lawns to grow long to allow wild flowers to develop. That's more like it...

Steel, Jenny

Bringing a Garden to Life:

The Wiggly Wiggles Guide to bringing your garden to life

Wiggly Wiggles 2007 (www.wigglywiggles.co.uk) ISBN 978 0 9553016 0 5

Jenny Steel is a wildlife gardening author and teacher. In this book she describes a wildlife-friendly garden established at the premises of a business in Herefordshire that sells supplies for organic and wildlife-friendly gardeners.

She uses the description of the garden (which was designed by somebody else) and its progress as a framework on which to hang a series of short, readable and informative features about every aspect of wildlife-friendly gardening. Much information about wild creatures and wildflowers is woven seamlessly into this whole, along with many informative photographs.

The book has a strange wavy text layout, which I found irritating at first but one gets used to it.

Bourne, Val

The Natural Gardener – The Way We All Want to Garden

Frances Lincoln 2004. 168pp. ISBN: 0 7112 2263 0

How confusing the terms 'nature', 'natural' and 'naturalism' can be in the context of garden writing, because different authors mean entirely different things. 'Naturalism' as a design and planting *style* may not foster garden wildlife at all if the gardener uses chemicals or manages the garden in an over-tidy way. And a very wildlife-friendly garden can have a formal design of straight lines and does not have to look 'naturalistic' at all. (I review some books about 'naturalism' as a *style* in Section 8 below).

Val Bourne uses the term 'natural gardening' in the sense of 'wildlife-friendly gardening'. So, basically, an attractive, very readable book about wildlife gardening under another name, which should appeal to (amongst others) keen gardeners who have a problem with the term 'wildlife gardening' because they think it's all about weeds and wilderness.

My only reservation with this book concerns some of the illustrations, which show double flowers, which are often useless as a source of pollen or nectar to insects. Strange, considering the prominence the author gives to the importance of insects in the garden.

Briggs, Josie

Creating Small Habitats for Wildlife in your Garden

Guild of Master Craftsman Publications, 2000. 186pp ISBN: 1 86108 188 X

Well laid out, well - written, with very useful tables of plants for various purposes, including a long list of grasses. Extremely well-illustrated, plenty of helpful and easy-to-understand diagrams. Another good book to start with if you are new to wildlife gardening, and good for schools.

Huntington, Lucy

The Wild Garden : Everything you need to create a garden

Cassell, 2000. 113pp. ISBN: 0 304 36232 8

Notwithstanding the name, this is really about wildlife-friendly gardening, with the emphasis on plants and garden design. An easy- to- read introduction to wildlife gardening, which will appeal to any gardener but would be especially good as an antidote for those who associate wildlife gardening in their minds with 'out-of control wilderness'. The other strong point is the quality of the plant directory which takes the trouble to explain what insects or birds each featured plant will attract as food plants. Huntington takes the view that a wildlife-friendly garden does not have to be limited to native plants and happily mixes so-called 'exotics' with wild flowers in her plant directory. The insects or birds the 'exotics' are likely to attract are listed. Based on my personal experience I feel this listing is well-informed and accurate.

Stickland, Sue

The Small Ecological Garden

Search Press/HDRA 1996. 48 pp. ISBN: 0 85532 7731

Another modest book, very affordable, and well-illustrated, plant-focussed. An excellent book to start with, covers both the basics organic gardening and encouraging wildlife, in a straightforward very approachable way. Probably the best book on this list for schools. My only complaint – why illustrate a double-flowered Camellia? The early bumblebees need single flowered Camellias!

Stevenson, Violet

The Wild Garden: A complete illustrated guide to creating a garden using wild and native plants.

Frances Lincoln 1985. 168 pp. ISBN: 07112 0422 5

An important book, well-written, by an experienced and knowledgeable horticultural writer, and well worth reading. By 'Wild Garden' The author means in effect what we would now call a 'wildlife garden' or 'wild flower garden', rather than the Victorian idea of a 'wild garden' as a romantic conceit . This book was a close contemporary of the first edition of Chris Baines' influential 'How to Make a Wildlife Garden' (1985), and it is interesting to compare the two.

Violet Stevenson's book concentrates much more on plants and a planting aesthetic, reflecting her background as a plantswoman and horticultural author, whereas Chris Baines came from a background in ecology. In their ultimate intention, the two books converge and complement each other. The Introduction, covering William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll, and the history of 'wild gardening' gives an interesting overview of the historical context that is not found elsewhere.

The 'Selective Plant Guide' in the Appendix gives a very useful and informative table of suggested native plants and their characteristics – still one of the best such lists around.

Chinery, Michael

The Living Garden. A Practical Guide to Attracting and Conserving Garden Wildlife.

Doring Kindersley 1986. 192 pp. ISBN: 0-86318-091-4

Explains how every garden contains all sorts of wildlife. Devotes a chapter to every part of the garden – flower garden, kitchen garden, trees, shrubs and hedges, water, walls, the world within the soil, the garden at night – and discusses each as a 'habitat'. This book describes the wildlife itself, in some detail, and is a good concise introduction to the study and identification of all sorts of garden wildlife; nevertheless it is also a book encouraging wildlife gardening, and has a chapter entitled 'Practical Wildlife Gardening'. Concentrates on the wildlife of gardens rather than the plants.

Wilson, Ron

The Back Garden Wildlife Sanctuary Book

Astragal books, 1979, reprinted by Penguin books, 1981

152pp. ISBN: 0 14 046 915 X

This (nowadays) little-known book focuses very much on practical ways of encouraging mammals, birds and insects to the garden, by building nest boxes, shelters etc. The author freely uses the term 'wildlife garden', proving that the concept has been around longer than many of us realise. It is now slightly dated.

Wilson, Ron

Gardening for Wildlife

Capall Bann Publishing, 1997. 192pp. ISBN: 1 86163 0115

A modest book with line illustrations only, produced by a small publishing house. It is concise, full of ideas and information, obviously written from personal experience. An unpretentious introduction to the subject. Note that the author's interpretation of 'gardening for wildlife' focuses particularly on the wildlife, and how to attract it, and in some case how to breed it in captivity, (do wildlife gardeners really want to do that?!) rather than exploring garden design and planting in any great detail. Has lots of practical instructions on making nest boxes etc. Even has instructions on making your own hide so that you observe garden wildlife more closely. Available from www.capallbann.co.uk.

Creeser, Rosemary

Wildlife Friendly Plants

Collins & Brown 2004. 144pp. ISBN: 1 84340 0936

Well, it's attractively illustrated and its heart is in the right place, but I'm worried that it jumped too hastily onto a bandwagon and while 95% of the plants cited could be said to be friendly to the wildlife found in the UK, a few of the plants illustrated would certainly not feature in my list, although they might feature in a North American wildlife garden. (*Lonicera sempervirens* and *Lobelia cardinalis*, for example, are adapted for pollination by North American hummingbirds). Nor would I consider planting the fashionable South American *Nicotiana sylvestris* to attract wildlife, as there is no moth in Europe with a tongue long enough to reach down that long corolla tube; instead we should plant *N. affinis* (syn. *N. alata*), and then only to attract the migrant Convolvulus Hawk Moth. There are other plants mentioned which I would not recommend as plants for wildlife. Presumably this book is also aimed at a North American readership, and the author had to accommodate that fact, but it would have been far more useful to readers to make some acknowledgement of that. Cross-check its recommendations with some of the other wildlife gardening books if you're not sure.

Bennett, Jackie

Wild About the Garden

Boxtree and C4 TV 1998. ISBN: 0 7522 2432 8

The follow-up to a channel 4 TV series 'Wild about the Garden'

The book takes six habitats:

Woodland, Meadow, Wetland, Seashore, Hedgerow, and Mountain Moor and Heath.

It looks at each of these along the lines of: how to create this in your own garden, relevant plants, relevant wildlife, and where to see plants belonging to each habitat type. Lots of nice photographs. Fairly simple text. Plants described are not necessarily wild plants native to Britain and Ireland; for example includes Erythroniums, Cyclamen and Pulmonarias in the woodland garden; so this is not a book about restoring native habitats. Wildlife is mentioned in each chapter but does not play a large part in the book. The book reflects television – concentrating on the visual and aesthetic aspects.

Bennett, Jackie

The Wildlife Garden Month-by-Month

David and Charles 1993. ISBN: 0 7153 0033 4

Based on a 'monthly' framework, giving plant portraits and recommended plant lists biased towards a selection of the most attractive native flowers, with interesting information about the wildlife value of each plant. This is interspersed with a series of practical projects. A straightforward reference book which forms a good introduction to wildlife gardening.

Reyrie, Charlie

The Daily Telegraph Wildlife Gardening

Cassell Illustrated, 2003. 192 pp. ISBN: 1 84403 035 0

Another modern, attractive and well-illustrated book with some very good, well-written text. Moves a long way from the idea that 'wildlife gardens' have to look like nature reserves to be somehow genuine. As a result, some of the garden images shown look 'conventional', but that's as it should be. Shows how wildlife-friendly gardening (as we now call it) has moved on since the 1970s and 1980s. Very readable.

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2 Garden Ecology

Books about the ecology of gardens

Recommended:

Thompson, Ken

An Ear to The Ground – Garden Science for Ordinary Mortals
Eden Project Books 2003. 192pp. ISBN: 1903 919193

A small format book, well-written and interesting, it covers a lot of ground without being frighteningly technical. It does exactly what it sets out to do – explain the latest thinking in garden science to ‘ordinary mortals’. Gardeners who are ‘non-scientists’ will find this an easy and readable approach to subjects such as soil, climate, pruning, weeds, and pollinators. The text is interspersed with ‘gardeners’ tips’. Includes a short but interesting chapter on gardens and wildlife, in which the author considers the work of Jennifer Owen, and discusses the controversial area of native plants and what plants to grow for wildlife.

Buczacki, Stefan

Garden Natural History (The New Naturalist Library)
Harper Collins 2007 13-978-0-00-713993-4 326pp.

This was the long-awaited treatment of gardens in the iconic Collins ‘New Naturalist’ series. It says a lot that the NN series was founded in 1945, and yet we had had to wait over 50 years for gardens to be deemed a fit subject for a volume in the series. This reflects the view prevailing until fairly recently in the worlds of ecology and conservation, that gardens were not a serious subject of study. Being asked to write a volume for the NN series is a big deal. An author is following in the footsteps of some of the greatest writers on British natural history. Does Buczacki’s volume meet expectations? My opinion is a qualified ‘yes, just about’. Qualified in that I would have liked to have seen a longer work with even more detail in it – but at the time of writing, hard data and published evidence on this subject were hard to find, and perhaps Buczacki took the subject as far as he reasonably could.

It is important to realise that this is not a book about wildlife gardening. It is not a polemic; the author attempts to take an independent, scientific approach. This is refreshing and gives the book credibility. As a result he debunks some dearly held views. He brings us down to earth. For example: “hanging baskets contribute an infinitesimally small benefit to the nation’s biodiversity” (p. 34); “The annual plant container is a transient habitat of almost no biological merit” (p.42); “A garden is not a natural habitat” (p. 76). “Gardening is a highly unnatural process” (p. 88).

Furthermore, Buczacki reminds the reader that organic pesticides are still toxic substances and the fact they are classed as organic does not make them inherently safe (indeed a number of organic pesticides have been banned). He also asserts (p.134) that the cat population is the main threat to wildlife in the garden, a statement with which I fully concur. Wildlife gardening authors tend to skirt around this problem (presumably not wanting to upset their cat-loving readers,) but Buczacki’s remit is a different one. By now you will have got the message that this book takes an independent, scientific line, and while its primary aim is to discuss the natural history of gardens, it frequently casts a spotlight on the world of wildlife gardening (and gardening as a whole), giving us wildlife gardeners much food for thought and debate. This can only be a good thing.

Unfortunately Collins regards its iconic 'New Naturalist' series as collectors items, pricing them highly and giving them short print runs. Don't let that put you off – get this book from a library if necessary.

Carroll, Steven and Salt, Steven

Ecology for Gardeners

Timber Press (Portland, Oregon) 2004. 328pp. ISBN: 0-88192-611-6

Rather like a basic ecology textbook for gardeners, explaining important concepts from scratch, it then goes on to discuss 'interactions among garden organisms' and 'gardening as applied ecology'. Although a North American book, most of the content is relevant to the British reader, and it takes the reader into territory barely touched by many British wildlife gardening books.

Others:

Marinelli, Janet

Stalking the Wild Amaranth – Gardening in the Age of Extinction

Henry Holt 1998. 238pp. ISBN: 0 8050 4415 9

So interesting it is hard to put down, it is a mixture of gardens, science, and history. The author covers ecological principles and controversies that affect gardens in North America, history of 'native' versus 'exotic' debates, and ideas of 'nature' and naturalism, and much more. Very readable, and especially relevant to gardeners in North America, but readers interested in gardening and ecology everywhere will find this interesting. I was most impressed how the author even manages to weave MacArthur and Wilson's Theory of Island Biogeography into the text in a seamless, painless way.

Thompson, Ken

Where do Camels Belong? The Story and Science of Invasive Species

Profile Books 2014. 262pp. ISBN: 978 178125 1744

A very interesting discussion of the issues to do with 'nativeness' and 'invasive' species. These two terms are full of contradictions – think carefully before you use them! This book explains why.

See also **Dunnett and Hitchmough** 'The Dynamic Landscape' reviewed in Section 8

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3 Garden Life

Books about the wildlife found in gardens, including insects (apart from bumblebees, which have their own section).

Recommended:

Owen, Jennifer

Wildlife of a Garden: A thirty-year Study
Royal Horticultural Society 2010
259 pp. ISBN 9-781-907057-120

Following on from her previous two books (details below), this is the result of a 30 year monitoring of a suburban garden in Leicester. Not a special wildlife garden, a typical ordinary garden, although managed sympathetically and not over-tidied. This book documents a remarkable catalogue of wildlife, especially invertebrates. It is a valuable book for several reasons:

- Owen's work was used from the 1990s onwards as evidence to support the notion that gardens can be valuable for wildlife, a proposal that initially met resistance from some ecologists and conservationists;
- It is as interesting to consider why some species are missing from Owen's lists, as to study the lists of what was present.
- It is interesting to monitor species in your own garden and see how they differ from Owen's list. Although difficult for some groups of invertebrates this is easy enough to do for butterflies and bumblebees.

Early, Jeremy

My Side of the Fence: The Natural History of a Surrey Garden
Published by Jeremy Early, 2013
256 pp. ISBN 978-0-9530098-1-7

The author is a journalist and photographer and this is a detailed and beautifully illustrated record of wildlife in his garden, including seriously good coverage of invertebrates which invites comparison with Owen's lists. The author discusses bees, wasps and so on in an accessible way with good illustrations, and this is a good introduction to the kind of solitary bees you are likely to find in your own garden.

Grissell, Eric

Insects and Gardens: In pursuit of a Garden Ecology
Timber Press (Portland, Oregon) 2001. 345pp. ISBN: 0-88192-504-7

Simply the best book about insects and their partnership with garden plants that there is. Very readable and yet manages to give a complete run-down of insect classification and biology. Contains much on diversity on the garden, and why more diversity = more complexity = more stability. That's what gardening in partnership with nature is all about. Although some of the examples discussed are North American species of insect unfamiliar to the European reader, don't let this deter you as the principles are the same everywhere. This book gives theoretical depth to some of the practices espoused by wildlife gardeners. Every gardener should read it.

Brackenbury, John

Insects and Flowers: A Biological Partnership
Blandford, 1995. 160pp. ISBN: 0 7137 2492 9

A beautiful book that discusses the relationship between insects and flowers, and the role of flowers as a source of food (pollen and nectar) for insects, and how insects see colours. Illustrated with stunning photographs. A truly inspiring book. Out of print but in libraries, or buy it on-line.

Nabhan, Gary, and Buchmann, Stephen.

The Forgotten Pollinators.
Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1996. 292pp, ISBN: 155963 353 0

A serious, but very readable and informative book about pollinators (especially bees), their conservation, and the role of gardens. Relevant both to North America and Europe. One of my favourite books.

Others:**Preston-Mafham, Rod**

Spiders in the Garden.
Osmia Publications Ltd. 2003. Distributed by the Oxford Bee Company, (www.oxbeeco.com)28pp. ISBN: 1 904770 031

Concise booklet about the beautiful and fascinating spiders that are common in gardens. Good for schools. Spiders are very interesting creatures that deserve a better press.

Mann, Darren and O'Toole, Chris

Garden Beetles
Osmia Publications Ltd 2004.
42pp. ISBN 1-904700-08-8

Short, well-illustrated, and readable book about beetles in the garden. Includes short sections on "encouraging garden beetles" and "making a beetle-friendly garden". There are so many species of beetles and they are so important in garden ecology.

Chinery Michael,

Garden Wildlife of Britain and Europe
Harper Collins 1997. 255pp. ISBN: 0 26 1674 08 0

A fully and clearly illustrated identification guide to garden wildlife, including all kinds of animals, birds, mosses lichens and 'weeds'. A straightforward book that could be useful for school wildlife gardens.

Chinery, Michael

The Natural History of the Garden
Collins, 1977. 288pp. ISBN: 000 219606 9

Extensive discussion and description of garden animal and bird life. A book about natural history for the gardener. Very informative. Contains a section of wildlife gardening Both paperback and hardback editions were published, I have often seen the paperback in second-hand bookshops.

Owen, Dennis

The Natural History of Britain and Northern Europe: Towns and Gardens

Book Club Associates/Hodder and Stoughton 1978. 224pp. [No ISBN]

A discourse about the ecology of built-up areas, slightly dated but still valuable as there are so few books of this kind. Good illustrated section on identification. Worth getting second-hand.

Owen, Jennifer

Garden Life

Chatto and Windus 1983. 212 pp. ISBN: 0-7011-2610-8

An affordable precursor to Jennifer Owen's more detailed and academic 'Ecology of a Garden' mentioned below, 'Garden Life' is easily readable for the non-scientist. It is based on a year of observations of wildlife of every kind in Owen's suburban back garden in Leicester. To quote the dust flap: "Jennifer Owen has been studying the wildlife in her garden for over a decade. With her husband, she has gathered together probably more information about the plants or animals that inhabit or visit their garden than is known for any other comparably-sized area." This book seems to be still in print and is not expensive.

Owen, Jennifer

The Ecology of a Garden: the First Fifteen Years

Cambridge University Press 1991. 403pp. ISBN: 0 521 34335 6

The dust flap sums up this book well: "Many gardens are recognised as being rich in wildlife. Published accounts of their natural history, however, are largely anecdotal with little quantitative basis. The documentation of the wildlife that existed in the author's Leicestershire garden over a fifteen-year period between 1972 and 1986 is therefore unique. In total, 1782 species of animal and 422 species of plant were recorded and the diversity, abundance and yearly fluctuations of many animal groups were monitored." This is a detailed, fully referenced, *quantitative* study. As such it is unique and important, as it is not just a species list. If this study continues, (and apparently Owen is preparing a follow-up volume) trends over time can be mapped, and therein lies its scientific worth.

Unfortunately, like many academic books, this book is very expensive. Get it from a library – it's well worth reading.

Olsen, Lars-Henrik, Sunesen, Jakob, and Pedersen, Bente Vita

Small Woodland Creatures

Oxford University Press, 2001. 208pp. ISBN: 0-19-850797 6

So what's a book about 'small woodland creatures' got to do with wildlife gardens? Well everything really, for are not gardens the ecological analogue of a glade in the woodland or a woodland edge? This tells you how to identify all those strange looking flies, and wasps and beetles and bugs and other invertebrates that populate your garden, together with woodland (i.e. garden) butterflies and some of the commoner moths. Attractive layout, readable, with clear illustrations. Originally published 1997 in Denmark, this is an English translation.

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4 Wild bees (including Bumblebees)

For information about solitary bees in your garden and photographs, I also recommend **Jeremy Early's** 'My Side of the Fence' (details above).

Recommended:

Falk, Steven, illustrated by **Lewington, Richard**

The Field Guide to the Bees of Britain and Ireland

Bloomsbury, (British Wildlife Field Guides) 2015. 432pp. ISBN 978-1-910389-02-7

This is totally up-to-date, full of illustrations, photographs, distribution maps and interesting information. It is suitable for all levels of reader from the absolute beginner to the expert, and covers bumblebees as well as solitary bees. It is over 100 years since the last field guide to British Bees was produced, so there was a great need for this book, and Falk and Lewington have done us proud.

Edwards, Mike, and Jenner, Martin

Field Guide to the Bumblebees of Great Britain and Ireland

Ocelli, Revised edition 2009. 108pp. ISBN 978 0 9549 71311

Well-illustrated and comprehensive small paperback. Its main strength is its identification guidance. Identification of bumblebees to species level is not always an easy matter and this book is already establishing its reputation as the new standard work for identification in the field. For gardeners it includes a valuable section on gardening for bumblebees and bumblebee plant lists for all seasons.

Goulson, Dave

Gardening for Bumblebees

27 pages. No ISBN. Available from Bumblebee Conservation Trust <http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>

A short and informative booklet about bumblebees and how to cater for them in your garden.

O'Toole, Christopher

Bees, a Natural History

Firefly Books, 2013. 240pp. ISBN 978-1-77085-208-2

A comprehensive discussion of the ecology of wild bees throughout the world, with wonderful close-up illustrations and plenty of information about flowers and pollination. By one of the world's leading experts. A good antidote to the inaccurate information about bees that is frequently heard in the mass media.

Kirk, WDJ, and Howes, FN

Plants for Bees: A guide to the plants that benefit the bees of the British Isles

IBRA (International Bee Research Association) 2012. 310 pp.

ISBN-10: 0-86098-271-8 ISBN-13: 978-086098-271-5

This is based on the work called *Plants and Beekeeping* which was originally written by FN Howes in the 1940s and was long in print as a resource for beekeepers. This new edition is greatly expanded, and now takes into account the needs of bumblebees and solitary bees, with new chapters about 'Plants for Bumblebees' and 'Plants for Solitary Bees' as well as a revised and expanded plant list. Herein lies its worth. It is much better than many of the other books about 'bee plants' which only deal with honey bees and fail to acknowledge the significantly different ecology and forage needs of the other 260 or species of wild bees that live in Britain. While the plant list still concentrates on honeybees, and therefore needs careful interpretation if you use it as a source of planting suggestions for other kinds of bees, it now mentions and recommends some flowers that are particularly suitable for other kinds of bees.

Others:

Benton, Ted

Bumblebees

Collins New Naturalist series, 2006. 580pp ISBN: 0 00 717451 9

The most significant work on bumblebees for many years. Very comprehensive. Important for wildlife gardeners because of the discussion of the role of gardens and urban habitats in the conservation of wild bees and other invertebrates (Chapter 11), which pushes the debate forward onto the terrain of large scale or 'landscape wide' conservation. Also contains an extensive list of bumblebee food plants (for pollen and nectar).

Unfortunately Collins regards its iconic 'New Naturalist' series as collectors items, pricing them highly and giving them short print runs. Don't let that put you off – get this book from a library if necessary.

Feltwell, John

Bumblebees

Wildlife Matters, 2006. 60pp ISBN: 0 907970 03 6

This small book is an attractive, interesting, well- illustrated and accessible introduction to bumblebees. It is really concise yet covers everything. If you are new to studying bumblebees this small book is a good place to start. If you are a teacher wanting a really attractive and straightforward book for your school library, this is the book for you. If neither of these, you will still enjoy this book. (Available from on-line booksellers).

Macdonald, Murdo

Bumblebees: Naturally Scottish. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), 2003. 35pp. ISBN 1 85397 364 5.

Available free as a [pdf download](#) from SNH. Attractively laid out, another good short introductory work on bumblebees, would be perfect for schools. A good introduction for the non-expert, very accessible.

Edwards, Mike, and Early, Jeremy

Wild Bees of Scotland

Published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), 2015. Available as a free [pdf download](#) from SNH website.

The Scottish bee fauna is smaller than that further south, but also has its own specialities. This 20 page illustrated free guide will help you identify 14 solitary bee species that live in Scotland. Note that this guide does not cover bumblebees.

Crawford, Martin

Bee Plants

The Agroforestry Research Trust, 2000. 117pp. ISBN: 1 874275 22 X

A thorough, comprehensive and well-researched document that lists flower and tree species, indicates whether they provide nectar, pollen, or both, their months of flowering, and whether they are used by bumblebees (as well as honeybees). Available from The Agroforestry Research Trust, 46 Hunters Moon, Dartington, Totnes, TQ9 6JT (www.agroforestry.co.uk) .

Intenthron, Manfred, and Gerrard, John

Making Nests for Bumblebees

Published by the International Bee Research Organisation (IBRA) 1999, reprinted 2003. 36pp. No ISBN.

Available on-line from www.ibra.org.uk

Bumblebees are very particular about their nesting requirements and are reluctant to use the expensive nestboxes sold to wildlife gardeners. This small book explains their requirements and suggests how to make your own nest boxes that bumblebees are more likely to use.

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5 Creating Wild Flower Meadows

Creating wildflower meadows or lawns from scratch in a garden situation is not for the faint-hearted! These books are worth reading before you start...

Recommended:

Steel, Jenny

Making Garden Meadows - How to create a natural haven for wildlife.

Brambleby Books, 2013. 65 pp. ISBN 9781-1908-241-221

This small inexpensive book is a 'must-read' if you want to make any kind of meadow in your garden or establish flowers in an existing lawn. It is clear and accurate, full of information. The author is an experienced writer and teacher in the area of wildlife gardening and clearly explains the difference between perennial meadows (spring and summer), and areas of cornfield annuals. She gives full instructions, explains all the steps, and does not gloss over the amount work involved. She explains alternative options to make meadows in existing lawns or in rough grass. Finally there is a summary of the annual maintenance required by spring meadows, summer meadows, and combinations.

The following two books are not about how to make meadows, but give a lot of background:

Peterken, George

Meadows

British Wildlife Publishing, 2013. 430pp. ISBN 978-09564902-4-7

This comprehensive work covers history, cultural background and ecology and conservation of meadows. It covers different types of meadows across Britain and the rest of Europe. Full of interesting information. It is a key work of reference about traditional meadows, their history and management.

Pilkington, Margaret

Wildflower Meadows: Survivors from a Golden Age

Papadakis, 2014. 224pp. ISBN 978 1 906 506 26 1

This is a large format book with copious illustrations. It contains, informative plant descriptions and illustrations of all the perennial lowland meadow flowers and grasses. It uses the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) approach to describe meadow types. There is also considerable information about typical grassland insects and many photos of them. For cultural history of meadows there is more in Peterken, but for ecological and botanical information I also recommend this work.

If you are planning to create a wildflower meadow this book shows you exactly what it should look like. My only disappointment is that I would have liked to have seen more information about the upland hay meadows of the Pennines, which are barely mentioned for those, and other types of meadow, you have to look in Peterken.

Lloyd, Christopher

Meadows

Cassell Illustrated, 2004. 192pp. ISBN: 1 844 030 66 0

A large format lavishly illustrated book, but this is no 'coffee table book' as it is by the late Christopher Lloyd, an accomplished gardener and gardening writer. As you would expect from a writer of Lloyd's erudition, it is simply packed with useful information, much of it based on his personal experience of establishing several variations on the meadow theme in his garden at Great Dixter in Sussex. It's a compelling read.

Even though Lloyd does not refrain from speaking his mind about purists and 'narrow minded' ecologists (as he sees them) who would only plant native species in a meadow in a garden situation, this book is of as much interest to the reader who is establishing meadows outside a garden situation as within, and Lloyd really does know what he is talking about. Contains an interesting chapter at the end about North American prairies, and experience of establishing such plantings in the UK. I had not realised until I read this quite how different a North American prairie is to a European meadow.

Lewis, Pam

Making Wildflower Meadows

Francis Lincoln 2003. 160 pp. ISBN: 0 711 221 32

This is a very readable book which is based around the endeavours of the author to make various wild flower meadows in her garden in Dorset. Despite the title, this is much more than a textbook, and Pam Lewis really puts her heart into her writing. Pam Lewis writes with the authentic voice of hard-won experience; this is a useful read for anyone contemplating creating or restoring a wild flower meadow.

Verner, Yvette

Creating a Flower Meadow

Green Earth Books, 1998. 144pp. ISBN: 1 900 322 08 0

Not a textbook, but a personal story about how the author and her husband bought a field in their village and converted it into a wild flower meadow. Gives lists of species for both Britain and Ireland and for North America. A good read, and relevant if you are planning to create or restore a large meadow, although not specifically about gardens.

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6 Gardening to Encourage Birds

Recommended:

Toms, Mike, and Sterry, Paul

Garden Birds and Wildlife

AA Publishing 2008

978 0 7495 5912 0

225pp.

This is published under the auspices of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). It makes use of statistical data supplied by garden owners over many years to the BTO through the Garden Birdwatch scheme. It provides comprehensive, concise and well-presented information about almost every bird species that might be seen in a garden, which makes it an invaluable work of reference to gardeners who take an interest in the birds that visit their gardens or neighbourhood. Additionally this book has extensive information about wild flowers, wild shrubs, and common mammals, reptiles amphibians and invertebrates that visit gardens, with good quality photographs.

This book was written by a scientific researcher (Mike Toms of the BTO) and a leading wildlife photographer (Paul Sterry). They do not come from the world of horticulture and the slant of the book is natural history and science. There is an accurate, concise section on 'wildlife friendly gardens' on page 44, and they even tackle the controversial issue of 'native versus non-native' plants, a subject which many writers about wildlife gardening fail to deal with.

This is one of the best books around at present for wildlife gardeners. Just perfect as a work of reference for schools.

Johnson, Hazel & Johnson, Pamela

The Birdwatcher's Gardener

Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications, 1999. 167pp. ISBN: 1 86108 135 9

Well-written, well-organised, readable and just packed with useful information for the wildlife gardener. Has tables recommending plant species for nesting sites, nest materials, seeds, fruits and berries. Includes an assessment of commercially available wild bird foods. Not just for bird enthusiasts, this book contains information of relevance to all wildlife gardeners, from absolute beginners to the very experienced.

Perrins, Christopher

Garden Tits

Osmia Publications, 2004. Distributed by the Oxford Bee Company, (www.oxbeeco.com)

33pp. ISBN: 1 904770 06 1

A short very informative book about birds of the tit family, their behaviour and life cycle, and how to support them in gardens. would be good for schools as these birds are common and easy to attract.

Moss, Stephen

Gardening for Birds

Harper Collins 2000. 144pp. ISBN: 0 00 712 317 5

Goes over the same general territory as the other books about birds and gardens but is organised in a different way, with specimen layouts of six types of garden, a monthly calendar of bird events and activities in the garden, (an excellent idea and very helpful for people like me who come from a background in

horticulture and botany rather than ornithology) a descriptive plant list, and a bird directory giving identification details of the commonest garden birds.

Burton, Robert

Garden Bird Behaviour: How to Recognise and Interpret Everyday Bird Activities
New Holland Publishers Ltd, 2005. ISBN: 184330 9386 144pp

Excellent, readable book , packed with interesting information. Useful list of organisations and further reading for gardeners particularly interested in birds.

Others:

Burton, Robert

Birdfeeder Garden
Dorling Kindersley 1998. ISBN: 0 7513 0440 9

Good, comprehensive information about birds and plants, and the needs of birds. Sections about plants and plant choice rather unadventurous, but still a good introductory book to creating a bird-friendly garden. Goes through a long descriptive list of plants shrubs and trees, listing the birds which make use of each species as food. This is very useful information.

Turner, E. L

Every Garden a Bird Sanctuary
H F & G Witherby Ltd, 1935. 190pp.

Of historic interest, shows that gardening for wildlife is not a new idea. Also suggests, sadly, that in 1935 you could expect far more birds in a suburban garden than today. Flocks of waxwings and fieldfares in Cambridge? This book is the kind of little treasure you stumble across in the darker recesses of second hand book shops, or you can find it online.

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7 Gardening to encourage Butterflies and Moths

Recommended:

Miller-Klein, Jan

Gardening for Butterflies, Bees, and other Beneficial Insects

Details above under Section 1: Wildlife Gardening: general.

Warren, E J M

The Country Diary Book of Creating a Butterfly Garden

Webb and Bower Ltd, 1988. 144 pp. ISBN: 0 86350 203 2

Published in the 1980s, but still one of the most comprehensive books available on the subject of butterfly gardening, and well worth reading. Look for a second-hand copy on-line.

Crafer, Tim

Foodplant list for the Caterpillars of Britain's Butterflies and Larger Moths

Atropos Publishing, 2005 124pp. ISBN: 0 9551 0860 8

Moth and butterfly larvae are herbivorous, needing quite specific food plants. This book provides a list of over 450 food plants consumed by the caterpillars of over 800 species of Britain's butterflies and larger moths. It is actually intended as an identification aid so it is organised according to the plant species and the caterpillars that are known to feed on them. Still a unique and useful resource. Available from Atropos: (www.atropos.info).

Note that the following two books (reviewed in [Section 8](#)) also give information about food plants:

Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, et al.

Scottish Plants for Scottish Gardens

Jill Duchess of Hamilton, Penny Hart and John Simmons

English Plants for your Garden

Leverton, Roy

Enjoying Moths. T & AD Poyser 2001. 276 pp. ISBN 0-85661-124-7

A discursive, highly readable book about every aspect of moths in the UK and their natural history. Includes chapters on finding moths by day and by night, traps, photography, and conservation. Includes information about managing a garden for moths, foodplants for moths and nectar flowers. The essential book about moths.

Others:

Shepherd, Allan

Curious Incidents in the Garden at Night-time. The Fantastic Story of the Disappearing Night.
Centre for Alternative Technology, 2005. 152pp. ISBN: 190217 5255

This entertaining small book is a mixture of all sorts of things, with a lot about moths and plants for moths. To quote from the publisher's blurb:

' Part fable, part practical gardening book, this eloquent appreciation of the glories of the garden at night-time will be loved by anyone with a passion for gardening, wildlife, and the future of planet earth.'

Obtainable from The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys. SY20 9AZ, (www.cat.org) .

Rothschild, Miriam and Farrell, Clive

Butterfly Gardener

Michael Joseph, 1983. ISBN: 0 7181 2258 5

The first half of the book was written by the late Dame Miriam Rothschild and covers planting to attract native butterflies. Rothschild has an engaging, discursive style in which she often refers to her own experience. Her writing provides much information for the gardener who is interested in butterflies, and this book is well worth tracking down. A suggested design for a garden to attract butterflies is provided. Although currently out of print you should be able to obtain this book through a public library. The second half of the book is about keeping tropical butterflies in glasshouses, and does not concern us.

Oates, Matthew

Garden Plants for Butterflies

Brian Masterton and Associates Ltd, 1985. 52pp. ISBN: 0 9510287 0 7

Short, concise and informative, attractively-laid out, the lists nectar plants, is clearly based on personal observation and experience , and is botanically accurate. Unfortunately this booklet is now difficult to get hold of.

Vickery, Margaret

Gardening for Butterflies

Butterfly Conservation, 1998. 45pp. ISBN: 0 952 2602 6 3

Again not very long, but builds on the findings of a survey run for over a decade by Butterfly Conservation (the national butterfly and moth conservation organisation). Good on basic principles, but given that it is partly based on survey results and published under the auspices of the highly respected Butterfly Conservation organisation I would have expected more attention to accuracy and detail.

The list of '100 best butterfly plants in order of attraction' just does not give enough information for the reader to assess its accuracy and value. For example, simply writing 'Ice Plant' or 'Michaelmas Daisy' is not good enough, as those names could refer to a number of plant species and cultivars, some of which are of little or no use to butterflies, and some Michaelmas Daisies are weedy and very invasive. Is 'Black-eyed Susan' supposed to be *Coreopsis* or *Thunbergia*? And if it is *Coreopsis*, which species? And why does Hemp Agrimony appear twice? Does this list appeal equally to all kinds of butterflies? And how was 'order of attraction' measured? For this sort of list to be of maximum value to any gardener with limited space and resources, accurate species and cultivar names must be given.

Tampion, John & Tampion, Maureen

How to Attract Butterflies to your Garden

Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications, 2003. 170pp. ISBN: 1 86108 297 5

Good text, well-illustrated and attractively laid out. The reader should be aware however that this book seems to be aimed at an international readership and recommends some nectar plants (such as *Lantana* and *Pentas*) that are sub-tropical or tropical in origin and require over-wintering in a frost-free greenhouse or conservatory in Britain. Plants that are hardy in the British and Irish climate are not separately distinguished. Likewise, the butterflies discussed and illustrated include North American, Australian and Southern European species, as well as those found in Britain and Ireland. So you really need to already have a good grasp of which are the British and Irish butterflies, and which of the recommended plant species are suitable for British and Irish gardens before you start reading this book. That rather defeats its object.

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8 Growing Wild Flowers in Gardens

There are many books explaining how to grow wild flowers in a garden situation.

Recommended:

Slatcher, Julian

Gardening with Wild Plants

Guild of Master Craftsman Publications, 2000. 186pp. ISBN: 9781861088031

Attractively produced, accurate, (apart from one or two illustrations) really does stick to British wild plants, and is in print! Does not really cover the subject of food plants for insects – you will have to go to the works of Jill Duchess of Hamilton for that (see below).

Steel, Jenny

Wildflowers for Wildlife- Plants to make your Garden Wildlife Friendly

Osmia Publications, 2001. 46pp. ISBN: 0 9539906 2 1

This booklet is an accessible, straightforward introduction to incorporating wild flowers in the garden. Would be good for school projects. Has a useful plant list, and list of suppliers.

Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, et al.

Scottish Plants for Scottish Gardens

The Mercat Press. 1996. ISBN 1-87-364489-2.

One of the more informative books about growing native plants in gardens. Although the plant choice is limited to the flora of Scotland, most of these plants also grow in England, Wales and Ireland. You don't have to live in Scotland to learn from this book. Following the Introduction by Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, the main body of the work consists of individual plant descriptions by the late Franklyn Perring (a distinguished botanist who, with Max Walters, edited the first *Atlas of the British Flora* in 1962).

These plant descriptions are well-illustrated and give accurate detailed descriptions of the plants, their typical habitats, and the specific insects that are known to use each as food plants. This book is particularly useful as a source for the latter information, which is often omitted or only given in a vague manner in books on wild flower growing.

At the end of the book is a check-list of Scotland's native flora, (flowering plants and ferns), including the plant names in English, Gaelic, and Scots.

Jill Duchess of Hamilton, Penny Hart and John Simmons

English Plants for your Garden

Frances Lincoln, 2000. 176 pp. ISBN: 0 7112 1435 2

This book offers guidance on what the authors consider are the best English native plants to grow in your garden. Although it sticks to 'English' plants, most of them grow wild in the other parts of Britain and Ireland, so this book contains information relevant to gardeners in the whole of Britain and Ireland.

162 English native plants (including flowers, trees and grasses) are selected for detailed treatment and discussed individually.

These discussions are valuable to the wildlife gardener as they list the specific types of insects which feed off or live on each plant species discussed. I know of no other book on wildlife gardening which lists this information in this way. This information can help the reader to plan a diverse garden which will be a food resource for the maximum number of kinds of insect.

At the back of the book there is a more extensive directory listing all English native plants and highlighting those which the authors consider to be of particular garden value.

Klein, Carol

Wild Flowers – Nature's Own to Garden Grown
BBC Books 2013 224pp. ISBN 978 184 9905848

Actually not a book just about wild flowers, Carol Klein takes familiar wild flowers and moves on to cover their near relatives as well, many of which are well-known garden flowers. Although Klein could not have known this when she wrote the book, the recent results of the RHS Plants For Bugs Project suggests that this approach is the best to attract pollinators to gardens: using native plants and 'near natives', which are their close relatives from elsewhere in Eurasia. So here you have it, an inspiring book showing you how to plant a beautiful garden that will attract loads of pollinators. Just be aware that occasionally the author recommends double flowers, or foliage plants, that are not particularly attractive to pollinators. But the overall message is a very good one and a good template for the future of wildlife-friendly gardening.

Others:

Dealler, Stephen

Wild Flowers for the Garden
Batsford 1977. 138pp. ISBN: 0 7134 0090 0

Written before the present interest in 'wildlife gardening' had really got going, so something of a pioneer book, reflecting its time. When this book was written there were very few commercial sources for seed or plants of native species, a situation which has now completely changed. The Grower's Directory (Chapter 4) gives a useful description of many native plants suitable for garden use, and there is also a concise list of wild flowers for butterflies, in Ch 5, and a useful list of native plants and their use in garden planting schemes according to their habit and habitat (Appendix I).

Chambers, John

John Chambers' Wild Flower Garden
Elm Tree Books, 1987. 143 pp. ISBN: 0 241 12056

The author was a pioneer in persuading modern gardeners and landscape designers to take a serious interest in wild flower growing, producing his first mail order catalogue of British wild flower seeds in 1980.

The book describes a selection of 80 wild flowers. The information is accurate and detailed. This book is strong on cultivation details and how to grow each species from seed. I recommend this book particularly for this reason.

Chambers, John

Wild Flower Gardening
Ward Lock, 1989. 160pp. ISBN 0 7063 6773 1

Another detailed and informative work about growing British wild flowers in a garden situation. Has a guide to the 100 most suitable wild flowers [for gardens], and suggestions for a 'mixed border': wild flowers and garden flowers growing together. That is what I do extensively in my garden and it is a very successful way of growing wild flowers.

Banks, Roger

Living in a Wild Garden
Copyright © Marc Carlton 2006-2015 www.foxleas.com

The World's Work Ltd, The Windmill Press 1980. ISBN: 437 01200 X

About a garden in Scotland which had become 'semi-wild' when they moved in and they left it that way. Much about individual plants and their qualities, particularly for eating. A bit quaint and wayward, but an engaging read.

Ingwersen, Walter

Wild Flowers in the Garden

Geoffrey Bles, 1951. 217pp. [no ISBN]

A delightful book by a well-known plantsman who founded Ingwersen's alpine nursery. Straying off his usual subject of alpines, this book discusses the value of a huge range of British wild flowers as garden plants. Not about garden wildlife, but a good read all the same, and very thorough and wide-ranging in its scope. Not just of historical interest, still worth reading.

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9 Wildlife Ponds

Recommended:

Jenny Steel

Wildlife Ponds: How to create a natural looking pond and attract wildlife to your garden.
Webbs Barn Designs 2002. 31pp. ISBN: 0 954 1116 1 3

Jenny Steel is an author and lecturer specialising in wildlife gardening. This is one of a series of inexpensive, up-to-date and factually accurate booklets on wildlife gardening subjects which she publishes under the heading 'Gardening with Nature'. All are very good introductions to the subject. If you can't obtain them elsewhere, they are available through Jenny Steel's website: www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk
Choosing plants for wildlife ponds is still a bit of a problem because of the inappropriate and invasive aquatic plants still sold in some garden centres and aquatic centres. This book gives correct advice on choosing species. There is a table at the start of this book listing wild flowers for ponds and their characteristics which I found really helpful when I was choosing plants for our pond.

Bardsley, Louise

The Wildlife Pond Handbook: A Practical Guide to creating and maintaining your own Wetland for Wildlife
New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd 2003. 80pp. ISBN: 1 84330 111 3

The best and apparently the only comprehensive book about wildlife ponds. I have one warning – the diagram on page 26 is completely wrong. If you design your pond like that the water will be sucked out into the surrounding earth by capillary action! Has the artist ever actually made a pond?

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10 Naturalistic planting styles

Not necessarily about wildlife gardening, these books are largely about 'naturalism' as a style or design approach, (although Dunnett and Hitchmough also stray well into the territory of ecology, and Feltwell covers a bit of everything!)

Recommended:

Dunnett, Nigel and Hitchmough, James (eds.)

The Dynamic Landscape: Design, Ecology and Management of Naturalistic Urban Planting. Spon Press, 2004. 332pp. ISBN: 0415 25620 8

This is an academic work, comprehensive and ground-breaking in the field of designed landscapes based on ecological principles. The authors are based at the University of Sheffield, where they research and develop new-style landscape designs using ecological principles and mixtures of native and non-native plants. The book contains contributions by a number of other leading writers and researchers in this field.

Contains much discussion of the social, historical and cultural context of 'ecological', 'natural', and 'sustainable' approaches to gardening, and much discussion of what these words actually mean. In fact they mean a lot of different things to different people! Very little about 'wildlife gardening' as such, but an enormous amount of relevant background and contextual material. For example, the first chapter provides more discussion about 'native' and 'non-native' plants than all the wildlife gardening books put together. Further chapters include a history of ecological planting, and a discussion of the dynamic nature of plant communities.

Essential reading for serious students and professionals who are interested in garden ecology. Like all academic works this book is expensive, but well worth getting from a library.

Feltwell, John

The Naturalist's Garden

Ebury Press, 1987. 160pp. ISBN: 0 85223 661 1

This book's unifying theme is a history of gardening, and it concisely covers much familiar territory for those who have read Miles Hadfield's *History of British Gardening* or Penelope Hobhouse's *Plants in Garden History*. But this history is refreshingly presented from the point of view of 'the naturalist', which Feltwell interprets in a number of ways: – how gardens related to the natural world, how gardeners copied nature, how and when wild flowers became garden flowers; and a special focus on individual gardener-naturalists such as Pliny, Gilbert White, Charles Darwin, and Fabre. There is also detail about individual species of insects and birds and their relationship with the gardener, and suggestions for wildlife-friendly gardening. Feltwell also deals with the subject of 'naturalism' as an approach to garden design, discussing the manner in which Jekyll, Sackville-West and Christopher Lloyd successively pushed forward an approach that synthesises a naturalist planting style within formal frameworks.

This wide-ranging review therefore fulfils a dual role of providing historical depth to modern concepts of naturalism in garden design; and giving historical depth to modern wildlife gardening, by demonstrating that this is by no means a new idea.

This is a wide-ranging book that spans the boundaries of several categories and it is hard to 'pigeonhole' it. Therein lies its strength and interest.

Greenoak, Francesca

Natural Style For Gardens

Mitchell Beazley, 1998. ISBN: 1 84000 031 7

A really good book, aimed at the UK market but with some additional references for reader in North America. Aimed at home gardeners and very accessible. Not a book primarily about wildlife gardening, but about working with nature, creating a 'natural garden'. Greenoak's definition of a 'natural garden' is: 'Focus is placed upon associations of wild species of plants that are easy to grow, and garden cultivars that will naturalise readily'. Much about style, design harmony and aesthetics, and the natural balance. A very good synthesis of these elements.

Others:**Gerritsen, Henk, and Oudolf, Piet**

Dream Plants for the Natural Garden

Frances Lincoln 2000. ISBN: 0 7112 1737 8

Piet Oudolf and Henk Gerritsen were originators of the style of planting drifts or blocks of tall perennials which is sometimes called 'prairie planting'. The Oudolf Borders at the RHS Wisley Garden are a good example. Gerritsen was the designer of the exceptional wildlife-friendly planting at Waltham Place in Berkshire.

From the Preface: "The authors think of gardens as places which nature can and should inspire... The book looks at plants from a new aesthetic: a way of seeing living things that is informed by a love of nature, by appreciating plants for what they are rather than so much sculptural material or botanic paint."

The book omits plants which need special conditions such as wetland, very arid conditions. They also omit ground cover because they do not think that ground-cover plants mix well with perennials. They also mention a few self-seeding plants (annual, biennial, perennial) which can hold their own. They intend to avoid troublesome or unreliable plants, but they do have a chapter on 'extremely nice invasive plants'. The book is plant-centred, with a small discussion of pests and wildlife.

Chatto, Beth

The Green Tapestry

Collins 1989. ISBN: 0 00 410448 X

Beth Chatto is one of Britain's leading and most influential gardening writers. This book describes her philosophy of planting, with a history of her garden .

There is an interesting section on her 'principles of planting'. She has always advocated combining and placing plants according to the conditions to which they are adapted (e.g. woodland, wetland, dry soil.). In fact she was one of the pioneers of combining plants according to their ecological roles, in permanent plant communities. This is one of the main tenets of wildlife-friendly gardening.

Chatto, Beth

Beth Chatto's Woodland Garden

Cassell 2002. ISBN: 0 304 36366 9

Discussion of Beth Chatto's sublimely beautiful woodland garden season by season, with wonderful photographs. Possibly her best book.

Kingsbury, Noël,

Natural Gardening in Small Spaces

Frances Lincoln, 2003. 176pp. ISBN: 0 7112 2015 8

A book about naturalistic planting design by a leading exponent of that approach. This is not a book about 'wildlife-friendly gardening', it has a broader remit and shows readers how to emulate natural plant combinations, using both native and introduced plants. This book is clear, well-researched, well-written, and many photographic examples from existing gardens are provided. There is plenty for the wildlife gardener here, in particular the attention paid to the integrity of design and planting schemes, and aesthetic values. These facets of garden design are sometimes given short shrift in wildlife gardening books; Kingsbury's work acts as an antidote to that and provides many examples to inspire the wildlife gardener to aim for adventurous and beautiful planting schemes.

Thompson, Peter

The Self-sustaining Garden. A Gardener's Guide to Matrix Planting.

B.T. Batsford, 1997. 159pp. ISBN: 0 7134 8133 1

An interesting book that deserves a wide readership. The author proposes that instead of the traditional approach to gardening involving digging, hoeing, weeding, and ever more digging, gardeners should embrace a form of planting in which plants are fitted together into coherent, self-sustaining communities which in the longer term removes most of the need for digging or weeding. In the author's words, 'matrix planting', as he calls this style, is:

"...concerned with the successive layers of vegetation, one above the other, through which plants form multi-dimensional communities, not only in the space above the ground but also in time, as the seasons change and one year gives way to the next."

This technique of creating self-sustaining plant communities has much in common with wildlife-friendly gardening. However do not expect a book about wildlife gardening when you read this book. That is not its remit. It is designed for an international readership of temperate-zone gardeners and the recommended planting schemes include many exotic plants, especially from New Zealand, that in some cases are not suitable for the British climate. Don't let this put you off – the *theoretical* parts of this book especially Chapters 1 – 3, as opposed to the plant lists, give wildlife gardeners plenty of to think about.

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11 Some Books for Wildlife Gardeners in North America

Because the Internet is international, gardeners in the USA and Canada sometimes come across my website, so this section is specially for you.

Recommended:

Stein, Sara

Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of our own Back Yards
Houghton Mifflin 1993. 294pp. ISBN: 0395 65373 8

Excellent, readable work, based on the author's own experience of 're-education' as a wildlife gardener. From the dust flap: 'America's landscape style of neat yards and gardens has devastated suburban ecology. With their mowers, shears, and misguided choice of plants, gardeners are wiping out animal species and destroying their habitats and food supplies.' This book explains the alternative to that scenario. Has useful appendix giving food plants for North American butterflies (both nectar plants for adults and host plants for caterpillars) and also has a list of native hedging plants with berries for birds.

Druce, Ken, and Roach, Margaret

The Natural Habitat Garden
Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1994. ISBN: 0 517 58989 3

Dealing entirely with North America (from desert and semi-desert gardens to the cold regions of the north), this is an extremely interesting book. For North American readers this work is a fundamental source of information and ideas.

Holm, Heather

Pollinators of Native Plants. Attract, Observe and Identify Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants. Pollination Press, 2014. 306pp. ISBN 978-09913563-0-0.

I highly recommend this book – an enormous amount of useful information about insects, flowers and their geographical distribution. The author recommends many (native) flowers for gardeners, with detailed descriptions and planting information. Although focussing on the area east of the Rockies there is much information of relevance to gardeners west of the Rockies.

Lewis, Alcinda (ed.)

Butterfly Gardens
Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York, 1995, ISBN: 0 945352 88 3

Although I have occasionally seen it advertised in British mail order catalogues, this excellent little book is intended for gardeners and butterfly enthusiasts living in North America. Most of the butterflies mentioned do not live in Europe (although some have close relatives) and many of the butterfly plants mentioned are specific to North American climatic conditions and are not appropriate plants for North European gardens. So, if you live in Europe, this book is interesting but much of it does not apply to you. If you live in North America, this book is invaluable.

The Xerces Society with the Smithsonian Institution:

Butterfly Gardening: Creating Summer Magic in Your Garden

Sierra Club Books, 1998. 208pp. ISBN 0 87156 975 2

Excellent book about butterfly gardening for North American gardeners. A series of essays by different authors, including two by the late Miriam Rothschild. Includes lists of nectar plants for N. American butterflies and moths, and lists of most familiar species and their larval food plants, and details of further reading and resources.

Others:

Cox, Jeff

Landscaping with Nature: Using nature's designs to plan your yard.

Rodale Press 1991. ISBN: 0 87857 911 7

Dealing entirely with North America, this is a practical book about using natural patterns and combinations as a template for your garden. Has one chapter which deals specifically with wildlife, but most other chapters also deal with the subject in one way or another, i.e. 'learning from nature' partners with nature', 'plants in the natural landscape. Well worth reading if you garden in North America.

Colston Burrell, C (ed.)

Wildflower Gardens: 60 spectacular plants and how to grow them in your garden

Brooklyn Botanic Garden 1999. 112pp. ISBN: 1 8895 38 11 6

A readable collection of short essays for North American gardeners on subjects such as 'wild flower gardens, nature and nurture'.

You will also find the following extremely relevant. They are all by American authors:

Marinelli 'Stalking the Wild Amaranth' reviewed in Section 2 above;

Nabhan and Buchmann 'The Forgotten Pollinators' reviewed in Section 3 above;

Grissell, Eric 'Insects and Gardens' reviewed in Section 3 above.

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