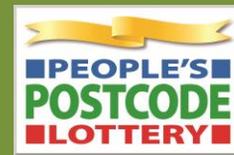


Looking after newts in your garden



Newts can often be found in gardens and are easily distinguishable from lizards by their slow movements, soft skin and preference for damp areas e.g. under logs. Here we outline some features that you can install in your garden for newts, and how you can do it.

Dig a Wildlife Pond

Creating a wildlife pond is the best thing you can do for wildlife in your garden or outdoor area. They provide breeding places for amphibians and homes for numerous invertebrates, which in turn encourages other wildlife such as bats and birds. It is also beneficial to your garden, as frogs, toads and newts all eat slugs!

To create your own, follow the steps below:

1. Find a sunny area of flat ground, away from too much shading. This will provide the ideal conditions for wildlife in the pond and allow essential oxygenating plants to grow.
2. Decide on the size and shape of your pond. Irregular edges are best as they create many different micro-habitats with areas of different depth, shade and temperature. The most important thing with a wildlife pond is that a variety of depths are provided, with lots of shallow areas and the sides gently slope to the deepest point. If space is limited, you can just create one sloping side. A deeper zone of over 60cm is perfect for over-wintering species.
3. From this plan, decide how much liner you need. We recommend butyl rubber as it is cheap, easy to use and does the job well. To work out how much you need use the following formula:
$$\text{Width} + (2 \times \text{max depth}) \times \text{Length} + (2 \times \text{max depth})$$
4. Start digging! Dig a trench out around the edge of your pond that you can bury the edges of the liner in for a neat finish.
5. Once you have dug out your pond shape, remove any sharp stones and line the hole with old newspaper, carpet or similar material to protect your liner. Unroll the liner and let the overhanging edges fall into the trenches.
6. Alternatively, you can buy a pre-formed plastic liner and dig a hole to fit it.
7. Add a layer of sand as substrate for plants and animals.
8. Place stones and logs around the edge of your pond to create shelter for future visitors.
9. Now you can just sit back and wait for the rain to fill your new pond!
10. To support as much wildlife as possible, plant your pond with native pond plants. A suggested (but not exhaustive) list is provided here



Recommended native pond plants

- Water Starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*) – favoured by newts for egg-laying
- Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) - provides upright stems for dragonfly and damselfly emergence.
- Spiked Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) or *Potamogeton* species- submerged plants for oxygenation.
- Bog-bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) – pretty and creates floating mats for egg-laying dragonflies.





Make a Deadwood Garden

Log piles are another good creature feature to add to your garden. They will provide areas for shelter and food for many different species, including amphibians, hedgehogs, lizards and invertebrates such as beetles. Fungi and lichens will also quickly colonise the dead wood.

1. Collect together logs and sticks of various different shapes, sizes and species of tree.
2. Find a shady area of the garden.
3. Pile them together. You can be as neat or as messy as you like as long as you create lots of cracks and crevices for wildlife to crawl in to!



Build a Home for Newts

A rock pile is a great thing to add to your garden for wildlife, especially in conjunction with a garden pond. Amphibians such as Great Crested Newts and Toads will crawl into the cracks in the stones for shelter and hibernation sites, and they will be used by a myriad of invertebrates.

Creating a rock pile is incredibly simple. Just follow the steps below:

- 1) Choose a site for your rock pile. Near to a pond is ideal as newts and other amphibians will not have to go far to find shelter. Even better if it is amongst long grass as this will provide food and a safe passage between the pond and shelter.
- 2) Source some stone. This could simply be rubble from a nearby building site – newts aren't fussy! But if you would like it to look neater, you can source some more decorative stone.
- 3) Pile the rocks together any way you wish ensuring that there are spaces in between the rocks and under them for newts to crawl in to. Newts are unlikely to climb so it would be better if the rock pile is wider than it is high.

If you're up for a challenge, you could turn this rock pile into a drystone wall. To find out more, contact your local Wildlife Trust.



Top tip!

Let an area of your lawn grow long to provide shelter for newts to hunt in and move through when they are on land.

