

# Join our blue campaign



The [Blue](#) campaign was conceived in response to the continued decline of biodiversity in Britain and promotes the rewilding of our gardens, parks, road verges and school grounds. It suggests that a part of this ground is set aside and left to grow through the summer, allowing flowers to bloom and provide food for pollinators.



A blue heart staked in the ground tells neighbours and friends that rewilding is in process (and you are not just being lazy!). You can make your own from recycled materials or get one from the nursery.



In the Allen Valleys we have our own, more flexible, version whereby some people are letting areas grow, some are creating completely wild areas and some simply adding some native plants to their formal garden planting schemes. Bees really don't mind if the flowers are mixed up with grass or planted in pretty patterns - all these activities are of benefit to pollinators and other wildlife so you don't have to be an avid rewilder to take part.

Our intent is to map the hearts in the Allen Valleys to show the wildlife corridors being created and help see where the gaps are.

## Option 1 - No-mow

It can be as simple as that! Lawns that are mown regularly can be barren spaces as far as wildlife is concerned, especially if fertilisers and herbicides are used. Let it grow and you might be surprised what else pops up as well as the grass. Cut paths through if you want to get across regularly so you are not trampling through wet grass. Then sit back and enjoy all the time and energy you've saved by not marching up and down with the mower.

Get creative and make your no-mow areas a design feature. Geometric shapes, patterns and mazes can easily be used to add a flower-show feel. It's OK to want a bit of order amongst nature's chaos when it's your garden.

To enhance your patch, plant a few of the rarer flowers.

If you want to cut it and make it neat again over winter and get rid of long grass which dies off then wait until the flowers have set seed – in the Allen Valleys this can be as late as September or even October, depending on what grows. You can of course just leave it and never mow again. Some of our richest wildflower sites are local road verges and margins that are never cut or grazed.

## Option 2 - Go native

If you like the formality of borders and managed planting, then introducing more native flowers can be a good way to boost the wildlife value of your garden. Many native flowers are perennials and can be used in just the same way as those from a garden centre. In fact many garden favourites are cultivated versions of our native flora.

They can be planted in groups in the border and will require minimal maintenance, just treat as you would any other perennial - cut back once the foliage has died down in autumn but leave any seed heads. As well as being decorative, they can provide winter food for birds. The flowers are more accessible to pollinators than many cultivated forms and are the natural food for our native wildlife.

As well as flowers, there are lots of shrubs and trees which, if you have space, can provide excellent habitat as well as food for wildlife.

Where possible, choose plants that grow naturally in the local area as not only will these thrive in your garden, but they will most suit the birds, insects and small mammals that will feed on and live in them. Many produce nuts and berries which are tasty for people too, so consider planting an edible garden; just remember to share nicely with the wildlife.

## Go totally wild

If you are really keen, you can really let go and re-wild an area of garden or land. Rewilding is basically about removing human intervention and restoring natural processes to an area of land. Depending on size it can be as simple as not mowing, stopping the application of fertiliser and pesticides and reducing or removing grazing to achieve a natural balance. There may be actions to speed up natural restoration such as planting trees. It can involve reintroducing species that have become locally extinct or are very rare and unlikely to spread/come back by themselves in the short term – depending on where the nearest population or seed source is, this is often what we do with the wild flowers and trees as they can be a catalyst for the recolonisation by insects, small mammals and birds on a much shorter timescale that would happen if we waited for them to arrive on their own. We have a variety of knowledgeable volunteers who can advise on different aspects of rewilding and native planting and examples of restored areas to visit and get ideas to bring back to your own project. Each project is different and there are lots of approaches depending on what you want to be able to do in the space.

## Contact us

For more information about the wild plant nursery, to get plants and advice on how to bring more nature and wellbeing into your garden, please go to the Higher Ground website or contact us by email:

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You can also join us on Facebook [@highergroundallendale](#) [@pluggingthegaps](#)

