 **Kids Garden for Wildlife**

**Toddlers through teens can plant seeds, water, weed, and care for a garden!**

You can help children create a wildlife habitat garden right outside their door and introduce them to the wonders of the natural world. Gardening for wildlife allows children an immediate way to make a real difference for wildlife and the environment. Adults can help and engage children:

**Make the Garden Their Own**

* Ask children what sort of wildlife they want to invite to the garden. This will help children then identify what plants to include in their garden and if the garden should be located in sun or shade. For example:
  + **Monarch butterflies** require milkweed and nectar plants
  + **Birds** require plants that provide seed and berries
  + **Salamanders** require old logs and moist areas
* Identify a designated spot for the garden where children are free to dig, plant and explore with a quiet seat for observing wildlife.
* ***Start small:****Cultivate just a small section of your property at first, or plant flowers in pots or other containers.*
* Personalize the garden by building or decorating bird houses, stepping stones or other functional artwork for the garden. Building toad houses and feeders connect children to the space they help create. Children can integrate natural play spaces through the use of natural materials and children’s sculpture.
* ***Be Inspired****: Explore nearby parks and children's gardens, gardening catalogs, magazines and websites for ideas on design.*

**Connect Actions to Results**

* Help children pick a few budding or blooming native plants from a plant sale or garden center that already contain nectar to quickly attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. This can jump start the garden before seed plantings begin to sprout.
* Get free milkweed seeds by pledging to become a [Butterfly Hero](https://www.nwf.org/Butterfly-Heroes). Help children understand why habitat gardening is important and that they are part of a special group of people nationwide helping to replace "animal homes" (a.k.a. milkweed gardens) that have disappeared.

**Engage the Senses**

Plant fragrant, colorful, textured native plants along with herbs. Add grasses for movement and a water feature for light and sound. Kids will love it and wildlife will too, as these elements provide animals with food, cover, and water.

**Observe, Reflect, Learn**

* Provide a magnifying glass.
* Help kids draft notes in journals, draw pictures, or take photos in the garden to reinforce what they have learned and enjoyed.
* [Ranger Rick Magazine](http://www.nwf.org/Kids/Ranger-Rick.aspx) and the Ranger Rick Activities section below can extend learning and reflection time.
* Take this [quiz](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/Ranger-Rick_Plant-a-flower_quiz.ashx) to help kids understand they are planting for a purpose.
* Search your neighborhood for these [Backyard Animals](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/RRAPR16_Games.ashx):
  + [Daddy Long Legs](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFS/Garden-For-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/daddy_long_legs.pdf)
  + [Robins](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFS/Garden-For-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/robins.pdf)
  + [Bullfrogs](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFS/Garden-For-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/Bullfrogs.pdf)
  + [Great Horned Owls](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFS/Garden-For-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/backyard_wildlife.pdf)
  + [Monarch Butterflies](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFS/Garden-For-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/monarchs.pdf)

**Share the Garden**

Support children giving tours to friends, neighbors, and family reinforces a child's ownership of their garden and helps instill a sense of pride.

**Garden Together**

Dig in! Share gardening tasks, memories of your first garden, and your favorite animal. Check back for the Kids and Family Garden Guide, where you can find more ideas to share the family fun.

* Learn how to [Create a Schoolyard Habitat for Monarchs and Other Pollinators](https://www.nwf.org/-/media/PDFs/Butterfly-Heroes/Schoolyard-Monarch-Guide.ashx?la=en&hash=7D62DA7F6FA60891B7A1C2F2EBB0ADB91FC56950)
* See how one family transformed a small space and worked to [Grow a Wild Garden](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Kids-GFW/RRMay17_GrowWildGarden_new2.ashx)!
* [Learn 9 tips](http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Gardening/Archives/2017/Kids-Gardening.aspx) for adults who want to make gardening with kids an enjoyable experience
* Check out our [Nature Play at Home](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Butterfly-Heroes/BH-Nature-Guide.pdf) - A guide to boosting your children's healthy development and creativity

**Certify the Garden**

* Review this [Checklist](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certified-Wildlife-Habitat/NWF_Garden-Certification-Checklist.ashx) to encourage your child to identify what habitat elements might be missing and how to add them.
* When all elements are included it is eligible to [Certify](https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify) as a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat®.

**Source for Hyperlinks below**

<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create/At-Home/Kids-Garden-for-Wildlife>

[**Crafts**](https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create/At-Home/Kids-Garden-for-Wildlife#collapseOne)

* [Make a Hummingbird Sipper](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-hummingbird-sipper/)
* [Make a Monarch Handimal](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-monarch-handimal/)
* [Make a Changing Caterpillar](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-changing-caterpillar/)
* [Make Folded Paper Butterflies](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/folded-paper-butterflies/)
* [Make a Butterfly Sun Catcher](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-butterfly-sun-catcher/)
* [Make a Hummingbird Feeder from Recycled Items](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/invite-hummingbirds-to-your-yard-make-a-hummingbird-feeder-from-recycled-items/)
* [Make a Splashy Birdbath](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/splashy-birdbath-2/)

[**Outdoor Activities**](https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create/At-Home/Kids-Garden-for-Wildlife#collapseTwo)

* [Plant a Party Favor](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/plant-a-party-favor/)
* [Plant a Birthday Garden](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/plant-a-birthday-garden/)
* [Creature Survey](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/creature-survey-count-the-creatures-living-in-a-one-yard-grid/)
* [Grow a Sunflower Playhouse](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/grow-a-sunflower-playhouse/)
* [Make a Butterfly Garden](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-butterfly-garden/)
* [Study Grasshoppers](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/study-grasshoppers/)
* [Make a Backyard Marsh](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-backyard-marsh/)
* [Create Nesting Homes for Bees](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/bee-friendly-create-nesting-homes-for-bees/)
* [Match Bird Beaks to Food](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/match-bird-beaks-to-food/)
* [Maintain a Wildlife Friendly Lawn](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/maintain-a-wildlife-friendly-lawn/)
* [Build a Fairy House](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/make-a-fairy-house/)
* [Spot a Dead Tree Animal Home](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/spot-a-dead-tree-animal-home/)
* [Backyard Matching Game](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/backyard-nature-matching-game/)
* [Backyard Scavenger Hunt](https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/explore-with-a-backyard-scavenger-hunt/)

[**Printables**](https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create/At-Home/Kids-Garden-for-Wildlife#collapseThree)

* [Backyard Bird Checklist](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Nature%20Notebook/Birds%20checklist%2011x172.ashx)
* [Hiding Hummingbirds](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Mazes%20and%20Games/Hummingbird_Hike_and_Seek_game_5_2010.ashx)
* [Ladybug Race](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Mazes%20and%20Games/Ladybug-Race-board-game_06-2010.ashx)
* [Backyard Birdies](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Mazes%20and%20Games/Backyard-Birdies-game_04-2012.ashx)
* [Butterfly Fun](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Mazes%20and%20Games/Butterfly_Fun_game_4_2009.ashx)
* [Snake Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_snake.ashx)
* [Frog Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_frog.ashx)
* [Moth Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_moth.ashx)
* [Chipmunk Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_chipmunk.ashx)
* [Turtle Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_turtle.ashx)
* [Salamander Coloring Page](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Coloring%20Pages/RRjrColoringPages_salamander.ashx)
* [Gardening Survey](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Nature%20Notebook/RRNN_September-2013.ashx)
* [Butterflies a-Flutter](https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Kids/Printables/Nature%20Notebook/09_AUG_NN-Butterflies-aFlutter.ashx)