

How to make use of outdoor space to improve biodiversity

An organisations approach to biodiversity is a visible statement of their approach to climate action.

While a well-kept lawn at the front of an office looks pristine, it actually has a very low level of biodiversity. A space with wildflowers, bird boxes and trees can still look smart and inviting, as well as showing to staff and customers alike that the organisation is taking action to minimise their impact on the environment.

Incorporating the outdoor space into to your return-to-work strategy also provides the opportunity to provide new space to collaborate, exercise, and support the wellbeing of staff.

In Sept 2020, the UK government committed to protecting 30% of UK land by 2030 to support nature's recovery. Mitie is enhancing biodiversity, creating bespoke solutions for our customers.

Plan Zero implements a range of solutions to improve biodiversity



A Lawn Full of Life

Reducing the frequency that lawns are cut provides an opportunity for plants and nature to grow and recover, suitable areas can be left uncut for much of the year. Planting trees provides further space for wildlife to flourish. Pathways can be created through meadows and larger spaces, and benches installed creating spaces for colleagues to meet, exercise and relax.

In 2019 the average lawn was found to produce enough nectar to feed 1,088 bees per day . Lawns mowed once a month provide the most nectar and unmown grass provides a greater range of plants¹.

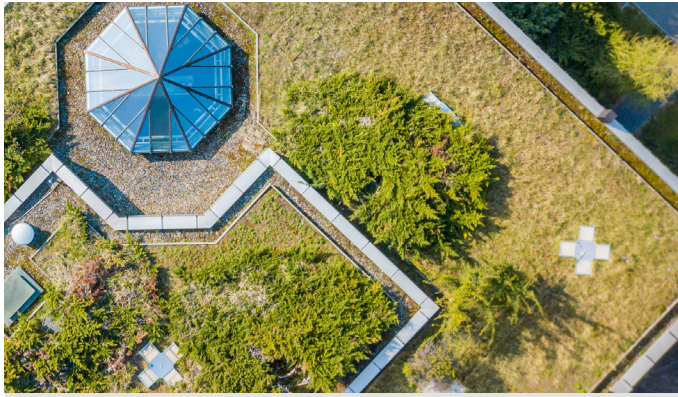


Make Use of Empty Space

Particular species including Lavender, Hebe, Sedum, Red Valerium attract pollinator species.

In combination with new hedgerows, mulch planters and other sustainable planters, space that is currently unloved can quickly be heaving with wildlife.

Different species live at different heights within hedgerows, blackbird and chaffinches nest up high, while grey partridges use grass cover at the bottom of a hedge to nest and hedgehogs feed at the base of the hedge².



Create a Green Roof

Even the most intensively built-up city centres can still be havens for bees and other insects, by adding a professionally installed green roof using plants such as Sedum, Yarrow, and Thyme. A green roof can reduce energy bills, help to counteract the heating effect of urban heat islands and reduce air pollution.

An urban heat islands (UHI) is an area that's a lot warmer than the rural areas surrounding it, typically 1-3 degrees Celsius. UHI's have worse air and water quality than rural areas³.



Install a New Home

Bird, bat and owl boxes, hedgehog houses, log piles, and wildlife walkways are just some of the solutions that can be incorporated into a facility.

A hibernaculum made from tubes buried underground is an ideal home for toads, frogs and reptiles during cold winter months.

It is estimated that in the 1950s there were 36.5 million hedgehogs in Britain. Latest data suggests this number is now less than 1.5 million⁴.



Communicate & Engage

Providing information and updates about the schemes and spaces being developed will encourage staff to make more use of outdoor spaces. Signage identifying different species and bird box locations along a new pathway for example, will help staff to engage with nature.

Evidence from Natural England shows the importance of nature to people's health and wellbeing, with 85% of people surveyed saying that being in nature makes them happy⁵.

Did you know?

1 in 3 mouthfuls of food we eat rely on a pollinators, such as bees, to pollinate them.

Further decline in invertebrate species could have lasting consequences on our food security.

Plan Zero from Mitie is enhancing biodiversity, creating bespoke solutions for our customers.

Sources

1 [Monika Every Flower Counts 2019 Results](#)

2 [RSPB The value of hedgerows for wildlife](#)

3 [National Geographic](#)

4 [Hedgehog Street](#)

5 [Natural England The People and Nature Survey for England](#)