

Week 5 Bioscaping

Bioscaping is the landscaping of an area to improve biodiversity, manage water and eliminate chemicals and pollution.

At the very outset the elimination of the use of chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides in the area to allow any wildlife to really flourish.

Key components in increase biodiversity in an area are **Hedgerows and Waterways** as these are the highways of wildlife and their maintenance and enhancement will greatly improve biodiversity in any areas.

Hedgerows are wildlife highways that can provide food, shelter, protection, and homes for wildlife. Mixed hedgerows are far more valuable to wildlife than single species such as Griselinia.

- Mixed hedgerows include plants with berries that provide food for wildlife. This is far superior to using feeders as feeders need to be cleaned regularly to ensure birds do not pass on diseases and this rarely happens.
- Eating in a hedgerow is far safer than from a bird feeder out in the open and much preferred by wildlife.
- Small creature can hide in thorny or thick hedgerows to get away from predators.
- Shelter from poor weather is provided not only from within the hedge but also along hedgerows. Many bees, butterflies and bats use hedgerows to fly along to block them from the wind. This allows them to hunt in conditions that would otherwise not allow them to.
- Hedgerows provide nesting sites for many types of birds and habitats for so many creatures.

Hedgerows can be extended to join up two different populations of wildlife. This improved genetic diversity and further increases their abilities to prosper.

Think about the range of creatures that a hedgerow supports and it starts with insects. Many nectar sucking insects depend on the flowers of a hedgerow to support them. It is easy to put in a hedgerow with continuous flowering using the Biodiversityireland.ie website guide on hedgerow.

The birds then use the hedgerows for nesting, berries and shelter.

On the lower levels you have hedgehogs you use the dead leaves and undergrowth to hibernate in as well as hunting ground for woodlice and other insects they feed on. This is one of the reasons I have been dubbed the untidy gardener. I try to emphasize the importance of keeping parts of community areas and gardens untidy. 10 facts

It is easy to take soft tip cuttings to increase your stocks of hedging plants and expand the hedgerows in your area. Take cuttings from many different types of hedging plant and use your most diverse hedgerows to take cuttings from.

Activities: Learn how to plant a hedgerow.

Take Soft tip Cuttings

Waterways attract and support a lot of wildlife in the area.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of support for adding extra ponds and water features to community areas due to fears of the risks to children when left unsupervised in such areas.

Waterways are a vital part of our eco system and need to be kept available and pollution free for wildlife.

What can you see at the waterways?

Plants, Insects, birds, fish and mammals

Rich in food for wildlife and many creatures gather around to feed there.

To protect our waterways we need to

- Ensure no chemicals are washed in to the waterways. This includes fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides.

- Remove litter as often as possible
- Ensure banks make the waterway accessible in several locations.
- Ensure banks offer protection for creatures in the form of planting
- Think about what creatures are in our area and specifically deal with their needs.

Nocturnal animals are often over looked and today we are looking at bats and their role in the environment.

There are 9 species of bat in Ireland and they tend to focus their hunting around waterways.

They eat 3000 insects a night and weigh the same as a one euro coin.

Bats are particularly useful as they eat a lot of midges and mosquitos as these and months make up their diet. Other insects are not out at night.

10 Hedgehogs Facts

1. A baby hedgehog is called a pup or hoglet.
2. In cold countries hedgehogs hibernate in winter but in warm countries they hibernate in summer. This is called aestivation.
3. A gene responsible for placing our body parts is called sonic hedgehog.
4. The Irish for hedgehogs is gránneoga - meaning ugly one!
5. Hedgehogs can swim and take to the water to cool off in warm weather
6. Hedgehogs can get trapped in the water if the banks are too steep or if there is only one exit from the water and a predator is waiting.

7. Hedgehogs have poor eyesight but can smell a worm underground. They depend on smell to find their food.
8. Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant. This means that milk can kill them. Milk and bread are bad for all wildlife
9. Slug pellets can kill hedgehogs
10. You can help hedgehogs by reporting when you see one on biodiversityireland.ie.