



How to plant drought resistant plants

SKILL LEVEL: ■■■■

TIME OF YEAR: NOVEMBER-MARCH

WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY: Drought resistant plants that are good for wildlife provide food for birds and insects (see list of ten star plants for dry wildlife gardens below).

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY: As our summers become drier due to climate change, drought-tolerant plants reduce the need to water your garden.

WHERE TO BUY: A good independent garden centre (try to shop locally where possible).

GARDEN FOR A LIVING LONDON

As our climate changes, gardens are becoming even more vital to wildlife and people.

They can provide shade, absorb carbon, soak up flood water and help to cool buildings. A well managed network of gardens stretching across the capital would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change.

London Wildlife Trust's 'Garden for a Living London' campaign is asking Londoners to do one thing to create a wildlife and climate friendly garden. This 'How to' guide shows how to plant drought resistant plants. Follow the simple tips and get your garden working to help our city and its wildlife cope with climate change.

For more information on our campaign and to pledge your support visit

www.wildlondon.org.uk/gardening

Why do it?

Many plants will tolerate the hotter, drier British summers that are predicted in future. Once established, these plants will need little or no watering.

What to look for?

Drought resistant plants usually have leaves that are small, fleshy, waxy or hairy.

Planting ideas

Variety Aim to plant a range of different plants to provide varied habitats for wildlife.

Shady spots Think about plants for dry shady places, as well as hot sunny areas. Plants such as *Fatsia*, laurel and *Euphorbia*, will tolerate dry shade and provide shelter, flowers and berries for wildlife all year round.

Buying plants

- Buy locally and from nurseries that grow their own stock.
- Don't buy rare or exotic plants that have been grown unsustainably.
- Swap plants with your neighbours, take cuttings and gather seeds.
- Choose small plants because they will establish better than mature ones and develop stronger, deeper roots.

Looking after your plants

Watering Even drought resistant plants need careful watering before they become established. Install a water butt and re-use water from baths and washing up. Water early in the mornings and in the evening to reduce evaporation. Mulch will also reduce the need to water.

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How to plant drought resistant plants (cont'd)

Compost and mulching When planting, dig in plenty of moisture-retaining peat-free organic matter. Add a thick layer of this material around plants every spring and autumn. This will stabilise soil temperature, retain moisture and encourage wildlife.

Cool planting Plant as densely as you can. The shade from leaves will create cooler microclimates. Remove weeds to reduce competition for water and mass plants together to keep the soil cool.

Ten star plants for dry wildlife gardens

1. Butterfly bush (*Buddleia* 'Black Knight')

Good for butterflies.

2. Ice plant (*Sedum spectabile*)

Late flowering and attracts butterflies and bees.

3. Tulip (*Tulipa* 'Yokohama')

Attracts bees, especially early bumble bees.

4. Sea holly (*Eryngium marilimum*)

Good for butterflies.

5. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Good for bees.

6. Hebe (*Hebe* 'Autumn Glory')

A favourite for butterflies.

7. Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)

Attracts butterflies and birds eat the seeds.

8. Rock rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*)

Attracts butterflies and bees.

9. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Favourites for butterflies and also liked by bees.

10. Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

Again a favourite.

Extra advice

The Royal Horticultural Society recommends a wide range of drought-tolerant native plants:

www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0406/drought_resistant.asp

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