

Gardening in a Changing Climate

Many of us have noticed that the weather isn't behaving quite as it used to. One year our gardens are waterlogged, the next we're facing drought. We experience heatwaves, heavy downpours, late frosts and long dry spells – often all within the same year.

The good news is that by working with nature, rather than against it, we can create gardens and outdoor spaces that are more resilient, healthier and better for wildlife.

Healthy soil is your garden's superpower

Healthy soil acts like a sponge. It holds onto water during dry periods and drains more effectively during heavy rain. You can improve your soil by:

- Adding homemade compost or well-rotted organic matter
- Avoiding digging wherever possible
- Keeping soil covered with plants or mulch
- Leaving fallen leaves to break down naturally where appropriate



Make every drop count

Water is becoming more precious. Simple changes can make a big difference:

- Install a water butt.
- Water deeply but less often.
- Water early in the morning or later in the evening.
- Mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
- Choose drought-tolerant plants where possible.



Create shade and shelter

Trees, shrubs and hedges do much more than look beautiful. They:

- Cool the air during hot weather.
- Protect wildlife.
- Reduce wind.
- Help prevent soil from drying out.
- Slow heavy rainfall before it reaches the ground.



Plant for resilience

A diverse garden is a resilient garden. Choose a mix of:

- Different flowering times
- Native and non-native wildlife-friendly plants
- Deep-rooted plants
- Ground-cover plants
- Plants that cope with both wet and dry conditions

The more variety you have, the better your garden can cope with changing conditions.



Leave space for wildlife

Nature is one of your best allies. Birds, bees, butterflies, hoverflies, beetles, frogs and hedgehogs all help keep gardens healthy. Create habitats by including:

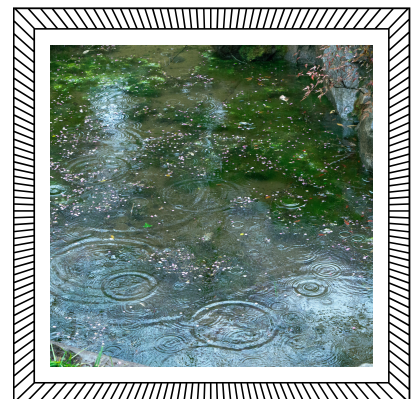
- Ponds (even tiny ones)
- Log piles
- Long grass
- Nectar-rich flowers
- Compost heaps
- Bird boxes
- Insect homes



Slow the flow

Heavy rain is becoming more common. Instead of letting water rush away:

- Create rain gardens.
- Use permeable paths and driveways, or replace some slabs with plants or gravel.
- Collect rainwater.
- Direct downpipes into planted areas.
- Grow plants that enjoy damp conditions.



Keeping water in your garden helps both wildlife and your plants.

Whether you have a large garden, a courtyard, a balcony or just a few pots, every outdoor space can help nature adapt to our changing climate.

By creating healthy soils, planting for wildlife, slowing water and working with nature, we're building gardens that are better able to cope with whatever the weather brings.

One thing to remember...

Don't try to fight the weather - help your garden become resilient enough to adapt to it.

Visit our website (www.cheltenhamactionfornature.org) for more info and tips.