

Nature Friendly Front Garden Design

Did you know that the design of your front garden matters to flood resilience and air quality, as well as biodiversity?

In this information pack, we provide some simple tips for making your garden more nature friendly.



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What impact does garden design have?

In recent years, it has become more popular to pave over front gardens entirely with hard surfacing. On a large scale, this can cause a number of unintended harmful consequences:

1. Increased Flood Risk

- Hard surfaces are often ‘impermeable’ meaning they prevent rainfall from being absorbed into the ground

2. Less nature / biodiversity

- Birds, bees, insects and soil dwellers all benefit from plants and trees in gardens

3. Worse Air Quality

- Plants and trees absorb roadside air pollutants, improving the air we breath



These front gardens have not been designed in a nature friendly way



What impact does garden design have?

What about grass?

Many people choose to have grass covering part of, or all of their front garden. Whilst slightly better than impermeable hard surfacing, grass isn't actually a very nature friendly design.

Plants, shrubs, hedges and trees are much better for encouraging biodiversity. They are also better for improving flood resilience, as their deeper roots can absorb more water.



Quick Tips for a more nature friendly garden / driveway

Avoid hard surfacing, where possible

- Most front gardens and driveways only need a small amount of paving to reach the front door. Try to keep as much of the garden green as possible.
- When needed, there are lots of porous paving alternatives to hard surfacing (e.g. asphalt, resin-bound gravel, pebbles, woodchip)



The owners of this driveway have planted a variety of plants, shrubs and trees which will grow over time



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Quick Tips for a more nature friendly garden / driveway

You don't need a massive space to make a positive difference

- Even small plots of land and terraced houses can be utilised



These comparison images are from houses on the same terrace



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Quick Tips for a more nature friendly garden / driveway

Be creative with your use of space!



Cars are frequently out during the day, meaning that space can be utilised. There are low-growing plants, that also don't mind occasional knocks

Try Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia nummularia); Bugle (Ajuga reptans) and Thymes such as Thymus serpyllum.



Use planter boxes and raised beds

Planter pots can be placed anywhere, allowing growth in areas of the front garden that don't have soil.

Choose plants that support pollinators for added biodiversity value, such as Catmint (Nepeta), Wild marjoram (Origanum vulgare) and Geraniums.



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Quick Tips for a more nature friendly garden / driveway

Think practically and for the longer term

When designing a nature friendly front garden, think about who will use the space and how this could change overtime.

For example, loose gravel and stepping stones can be inaccessible for some users, as the wheels of mobility aids and sticks might get stuck.



Planting wildflowers is a low maintenance option, and they're also great for encouraging biodiversity!



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