

LET'S GO
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Gardens in autumn

www.lgoal.org

CIC Registration 9435120

Leaves as a habitat

Is your garden or drive full of mounds of leaves that have fallen?

They are great habitat for overwintering insects.

Don't tidy up too much and be careful to leave a few in a dry corner of the garden.

Fallen leaves make a great habitat for wildlife gardeners. Here are some animals that use leaves.

- a. Squirrels
- b. Hedgehogs
- c. Caterpillars of butterflies and moths



Leaves as a habitat

Squirrels

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A squirrel makes a nest called a drey.

- Squirrels have a summer home and a winter home.
- It is a messy ball of leafy twigs about the same size as a football
- It is usually at least six metres from the ground



Leaves as a habitat

Squirrels

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- They build close to the trunk or in forks of branches
- They line it with lots of layers of soft materials - moss, feathers, grass, leaves, shredded bark and pine needles.

They might use a naturally occurring hole in a tree trunk, or one created by a woodpecker.



Leaves as a habitat

Squirrels

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When the cold weather hits, they will stay at home for a few days at a time.

They don't hibernate and will regularly head out to find food when the weather is mild.

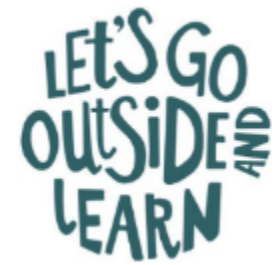
In the colder, wetter weather, they need somewhere safe, warm and dry to raise the first litter of the year, born around February.



Baby squirrels are called kittens and there are between 4-7 in each litter.

Leaves as a habitat

Hedgehogs



Hedgehogs are becoming rare in urban gardens. The borough has an action plan.

If you have them, you are not likely to see them in the day as they are nocturnal.

They can travel through several gardens in the evening. You can help by making sure that there is a gap in the fence.



They are gardeners' friends.

They feed on a variety of invertebrates such as snails and slugs, beetles, caterpillars and worms.

Leaves as a habitat

Hedgehogs



Their nests may be quite large.

They are usually made of mosses, grass, leaves and other garden debris. They can be found at the base of thick hedges and undergrowth, under thick bramble bushes, garden sheds or piles of rubbish.

Leaves as a habitat Hedgehogs

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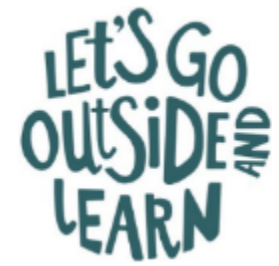


You can build an hedgehog house or buy a ready made one. Make sure that cats can't get in.



Leaves as a habitat

Hedgehogs



Hedgehogs are true hibernators.

They do not sleep, but they drop their body temperature to match their surroundings and enter a state of torpor.

This allows them to save a lot of energy and slows down all other bodily functions making normal activity impossible.



Hedgehogs usually hibernate from October/November to March/April. They can move nesting sites at least once during this period and so can sometimes be seen out and about.

During mild winters hedgehogs can remain active well into November and December.

Leaves as a habitat

Hedgehogs

You can help hedgehogs by leaving out some food and water to help build up their fat, that helps them through the winter.

You can buy food or leave out meat-based wet dog or cat foods as these are high in the protein that they need.

To avoid the food you put out being eaten by pets or foxes you could make a feeding station that is difficult for anything larger than a hedgehog to access.

Place a shallow dish of water at the entrance, and/or a 'brick maze' inside a feeding station to prevent cats getting to the food.

Do not leave out milk or bread for hedgehogs.

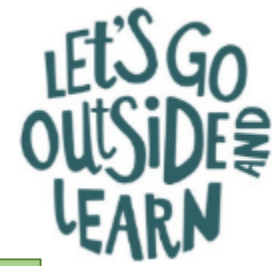


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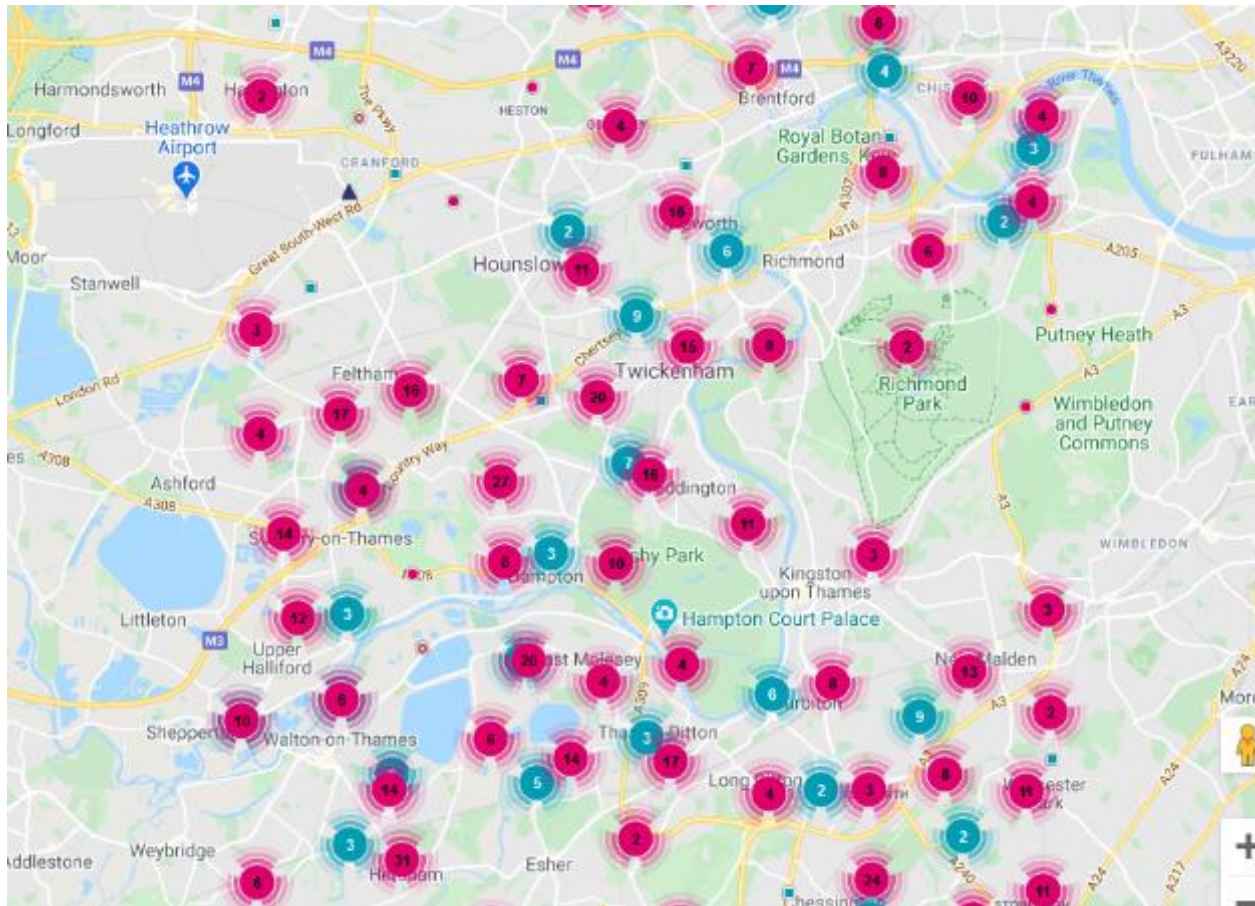


Leaves as a habitat

Hedgehogs

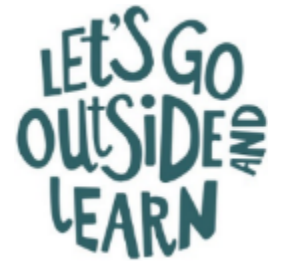


Log your hedgehog sightings with Hedgehog street.
<https://bighedgehogmap.org/>



Leaves as a habitat

Butterflies and moths



Some caterpillars survive winter by burrowing under leaf litter or squeezing into bark crevices.

Others pupate as cooler weather approaches and remain in this state until spring.

The caterpillar will stop feeding and may become more sluggish with cooler weather. This is a sign that it is preparing itself for winter.



Leaves as a habitat

Butterflies and moths

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Leave seed heads.

Not only do the seeds provide birds with food but the seed heads and hollow stems can provide shelter for various insects.

Long grass and dead leaves can also provide safe havens for several moth and butterfly life cycle stages, protecting them from winter weather and predators. This includes the holly blue butterfly.



Leaf mould

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You can also collect the leaves in bags to make leaf mould. It produces a great soil conditioner.

Place the leaves into a bin liner or old compost bag, moisten them if they are dry, then pierce holes in the bag with a knife or garden fork. Tie the top loosely and stack the bags out of sight for up to two years before spreading it on your garden.

Raking leaves is great exercise.



Other things to do in the Garden – collect seeds from annual plants

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You can also collect the seeds from this years annual plants and dry them for use next year.



Place them on kitchen roll in a dry place. Once dry, store them in a marked envelope until spring.



Other things to do in the Garden – make an insect hotel

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It can be as simple as a bundle of sticks. These are old sunflower stems. They are excellent as they can be hollowed out by insects. These are for next to my pond.



Other things to do in the Garden – make an insect hotel

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Or you can buy them ready made.



Make a 5-star hotel!
Here's some ideas.



Other things to do in the Garden



Mulch vegetable beds and flower borders. This will help structure of the soil, so your plants will be stronger the following season.

Cut back faded perennials, but don't be too tidy – attractive seed heads are great for insects.

Look after the lawn, it's had a hard summer. Remove "thatch" and moss using a rake and add it to the compost heap.

Turn your compost heap or start one if you don't already have one.



Other things to do

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Take up bird watching or learn how to identify birdsong.

You can attract birds to your garden by putting out food or digging over the garden to reveal worms and grubs.



Other things to do- bird watching

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Birds will visit your garden, and you don't need binoculars or a telescope to watch them.

Put out some bird food in a feeder and as fat balls somewhere that you can see easily from a window.

Place your feeders in the open away from bushes and fences where predators can lurk. The birds will feel safer if they can clearly see danger approaching. Put out water.

Don't worry too much about what the various species are – just enjoy observing them.

Here are some birds we see in the garden regularly.



**Other things to do –
Enjoy the autumn colour
Build on your gardening successes next year.**



Autumn Colour



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Enjoy the
Autumn
colour



Other things to do - plan ahead



MAKE A PLAN
FOR NEXT YEAR.



THINK ABOUT
DIFFERENT
AREAS OF THE
GARDEN



REMEMBER
WHAT WORKED
WELL THIS YEAR



IS THERE A
PROJECT THAT
YOU'D LIKE TO
DO NEXT YEAR?



LOOK FOR IDEAS
IN MAGAZINES,
BOOKS AND
ONLINE



THINK ABOUT
COLOUR AND
TEXTURE FOR
ALL THE
SEASONS



WHAT WILL YOU
PLANT?



WHEN WILL
YOU PLANT IT?

Learn how to plant a perennial

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/grow-plants/planting-perennials-in-autumn/>

