

# KEEPING YOUR FRONT GARDEN

## **Advice to residents applying for a crossover or dropped kerb.**

Gardens are one of the most important places for wildlife particularly as modern farming methods and building development have increased.

In some areas of the Borough increasing numbers of front gardens are being replaced by hard surfaces for car parking.

If there is not alternative to parking your car in your front garden here are a few ways you could improve it's value for wildlife - as well as making it look more attractive. Keep existing hedges, trees and other plants - and make room for some new ones too.

## **Surfaces to Use**

Try to pave or surface only as much space as you need. Some people use the design above but often two tracks for your car wheels will be enough. It will cost less too.

Choose a surface that lets water through such as gravel, grills, small slabs or bricks and ensure that the layer below allows water to drain naturally through the soil. This reduces the risk of flooding that can damage wildlife habitats. You get more puddles if you use materials like concrete or tarmac. These surfaces also increase water run-off which picks up oils and chemicals, that are then fed directly into our rivers.

## **Hedges - Renovate Old Ones or Plant a New One**

Hedges can provide nest sites, shelter and berries for birds as well as flowers for insects and butterflies. Privet, hawthorn, holly and yew are popular.

## **Trees to plant**

The trees described here are small, easily grown without too much care and attention, and offer shelter and food in abundance. Just avoid the very sappy trees (like Lime) and those with brittle branches (such as Robinia) and the car underneath will be fine!

Remember to allow for growth and consider your neighbours. Choose a mixture of both deciduous and evergreen.

**Crab Apple** (Malus) - There are many varieties of beautiful crab apple. They are rounded in shape, with white/pink/red scented flowers in May and colourful crab apples and autumn foliage.

**Hawthorn** (Crataegus) - This produces an abundance of autumn berries and leaves in striking shades of orange, and red and white or pink flowers.

**Mountain Ash** (Sorbus) - Delicate deciduous trees with a mass of red to orange berries and colourful foliage in autumn.

**Silver Birch** - Attractive tree with small leaves, and catkins in spring.

### **Climbing Plants**

Climbing plants are good option in small gardens. Try Ivy, Boston Ivy, Climbing Hydrangea and Virginia Creeper. Other climbers can be supported by a trellis.

### **Shrubs**

Shrubs provide a haven for many beneficial insects, from pest-eating ladybirds to nectar loving butterflies.

- Mock Orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*) produces white/cream flowers with a heady orange scent in Summer.
- Firethorn (*pyracantha*) grows also as a hedge with Spring flowers and Autumn berries.

**Flowers** - Instead of ornamental species try using native plants.

Fox Glove, yellow Archangel, Red Dead Nettle, Lily of the Valley, Primrose. Other garden plants that are popular with butterflies include hemp agrimony, sedum marjoram, scabious and sweet rocket.

Our examples are just a few of many possibilities. Your local garden centre will be pleased to offer advice on plants. There are some contact numbers for advice below.

Ealing Parks & Countryside Service on 1081 758 5916 or

LA21 Natural Environment and Biodiversity Group on 0181 758 5269

You may need advice about planning permission: phone the Council on 0181 758 8106/8039

A joint initiative between the LA21 Natural Environment and Biodiversity project group and the Council's Environment Group with additional help from Stephen Cole of the Ealing and Hanwell (Boston Road) Allotment Association.