



Gardening For Life 2009

Birds, bumblebees, bats and butterflies will all come under the spotlight this spring when the third annual Garden Wildlife Watch survey gets underway in the Borough.

Members of Woking LA21's Gardening For Life (GFL) group are encouraging all residents to take part in the survey which kicks off during April to monitor the presence of birds and wildlife in the Borough's gardens.

Ten years ago, LA21 carried out a Garden Profile Survey which included questions on the size, layout and inhabitants of Woking's gardens. In 2007, the group decided to conduct a similar survey to monitor how our gardens have changed and how species are coping with the effects of climate change. The survey was so enthusiastically received by Woking residents that the group has decided to make it an annual initiative.

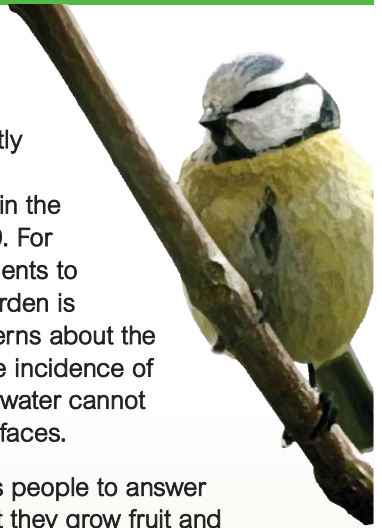
Anyone can take part in the survey as group leader, Gill Stribley, explains: "We are keen to hear from anyone who has an interest in wildlife. People do not even have to have a garden of their own - observations of communal gardens, allotments, balconies or window boxes are also valid. The results of the survey will really help us to build up an accurate picture of the Borough's wildlife."

The first three parts of the survey aim to monitor the presence of birds and wildlife in gardens, and will

be familiar to residents who took part in the survey in 2007 and 2008. Some new issues relating to gardens have recently become topical and additional questions have been included in the Garden Wildlife Watch for 2009. For example, the survey asks residents to consider how much of their garden is paved, following on from concerns about the loss of garden habitats and the incidence of rapid rain run-off because rainwater cannot pass through impermeable surfaces.

In addition, the survey prompts people to answer questions about whether or not they grow fruit and vegetables in their gardens or if they would consider doing so in the future. This is in response to increased interest in growing pesticide-free food and enjoying fresh produce at little or no cost. "We are really keen to support residents who would like to grow their own produce," says Gill. "LA21 would love to hear from any residents who would be willing to offer growing space in their large garden on the one hand, and from people wanting to grow their own vegetables on the other, who would consider joining a garden share scheme."

Woking Garden Wildlife Watch forms are available at <http://sites.google.com/site/wokingla21> for printing or completing on line. Paper copies can be collected from libraries and the Civic Offices, or by phoning **01483 755855** and emailing la21@woking.gov.uk. The website also has information identifying species and a number of relevant articles and environmentally friendly gardening tips.



About Woking LA21

Woking LA21 is a community-led initiative concerned with environmental and sustainability issues, which seeks to involve all who live and work in Woking Borough. It works in partnership with Woking Borough Council, local groups and organisations, to promote sustainable living, embracing environmental, social and economic issues.

