



GAP / JADE WARE

### Adopt a no-mow approach

The simplest way to is to stop mowing this spring. A no-mow approach (although you will still need to cut short in August), allows you to embrace attractive 'lawn weeds' including daisies, buttercups, speedwell, selfheal, clover and dandelions. Both you and the insects will be rewarded with an inviting, flowery sward. Reducing mowing, watering, chemical and fertiliser use is good for the environment, too.

GAP / JONATHAN BUCKLEY



### Add to your sward

If you prefer, you can sow seed of white clover (*Trifolium repens*) among existing grass. First cut grass low and aerate the soil with a garden fork to encourage germination. White clover is drought tolerant, so keeps the turf looking green and provides nectar-rich flowers. Smaller-leaved, sparsely flowering microclover (*T. repens* 'Euromic') creates a low, dense cover, either among grass or on its own.

## Create a wildflower lawn

Three ways to make your green patch more appealing to pollinators

### Replace your grass

For a sunny well-drained area, chamomile and thyme release aromas when trodden on, but will only tolerate light foot traffic. Chamomile has ferny foliage and daisy-like flowers. Trim in late summer to remove spent flowers or plant *Chamaemelum nobile* 'Treneague', a non-flowering, dwarf cultivar, 5–10cm (2–4in) high, requiring no trimming.

Creeping red thyme (*Thymus Coccineus* Group AGM), forms an evergreen mat to 5cm (2in). Its deep red flowers attract bees and butterflies. Other choices for a sunny, well-drained area include stonecrop, sedums and bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*).

For shady, damp spots use slender speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*), scented-leaved Corsican mint (*Mentha requienii*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and mosses. To plant, remove existing turf and dig out perennial weeds, forking the soil over to a depth of 15cm (6in). Plant closely – about 20cm (8in) apart – for dense coverage.



GAP / ROSE WORTH



# Pick plants with birds in mind

Planted now, seed-bearing herbaceous plants can help feathered garden visitors later in the year

Spring is a great time to add garden plants that will provide valuable seed for garden birds in autumn and winter. Familiar additions to a wildlife garden include trees, shrubs and climbers such as hawthorn, holly, cotoneaster and ivy that bear crops of berries which birds love to eat, but some herbaceous plants can also be grown for their seed production. These will attract much-loved smaller birds such as blue tits, sparrows and chaffinches.

For more ways to encourage birds to your garden, search 'Garden birds' at [rhs.org.uk](https://rhs.org.uk)



## *Verbascum olympicum*

Short-lived perennial with grey, woolly stems and leaves, and tall panicles of yellow summer flowers that produce quantities of black seeds popular with many small birds. Height and spread 200 x 60cm (6½ x 2ft).



## *Echinops ritro subsp. ruthenicus AGM*

(globe thistle) Robust herbaceous perennial with spiky leaves and spherical blue flowerheads; loved by pollinators. Seedheads give winter structure and attract small birds such as finches. Reaches 60 x 45cm (24 x 18in).



## *Miscanthus sinensis cultivars*

Ornamental grass that adds grace and movement to gardens. Its seeds are available after many others have been eaten or dispersed. Attracts goldfinches and greenfinches. Reaches 4 x 1m (12 x 3ft).



## *Dipsacus fullonum*

Common teasel is a biennial which, in its second year, produces purple-blue thistle-like flowers followed by seed before dying. Seedheads are a favourite with goldfinches. Grows to 150 x 30cm (5 x 1ft).



## *Hylotelephium spectabile*

Known as sedums, these thick-stemmed perennials have flat clusters of starry, pink flowers to 15cm (6in) across in late summer. Dried seedheads that follow attract small birds such as tits and sparrows. Grows to 45cm (18in).