

Birds, bats and insects

Meet the wildlife living on The Hyde Park Estate.

As part of our Green Estate initiative, the Church Commissioners have commissioned a large number of bird, bat and insect homes to be installed in gardens across The Hyde Park Estate.

Our estate gardener has been speaking to a wide range of wildlife specialists including ecologists from London Parks, Bug Life, the Wildlife Trusts and RSPB officers.

We want to encourage and keep wildlife on the Hyde Park Estate through our practices which include:

- continuing and developing our programme of planting for wildlife (butterflies, moths, bees, hoverflies)
- minimising chemical use
- maintaining wildlife-friendly gardening practices
- a key area that we are developing is building wildlife stacks (for ladybirds, beetles, spiders, earwigs), lacewing chambers for hibernation, compost bins, log piles (beetles, woodlice), birdbaths and solitary bee nesting boxes in key areas of the gardens.

Currently under construction are:

- two wildlife stacks for one area of the Quadrangle and Devonport
- two stand-alone solitary bee nesting boxes, one for Quadrangle and one for Devonport
- 12 hanging bee nests have been put up in the Water Gardens, Devonport, Quadrangle, Norfolk Crescent, Oxford Square and Sussex Square.

These are being constructed as site-specific so that they blend into the garden and are placed in the most appropriate locations and have followed RSPB and Wildlife Trust recommended designs.

These stacks and nesting boxes will be really valuable for the invertebrates and pollinators in the gardens, and we are keen to build several in each garden around the Hyde Park Estate, next to the various planting areas. For example, in the Water Gardens, there are several sites that would benefit around the pond as well as on the upper levels, as in other parts of the Quadrangle and Devonport, internal and external garden areas.

There are 60 bird boxes (three or four in each garden, one for robins and wrens, one for smaller tits etc and one for larger birds) and seven water baths. Our tree surgeon has delivered logs to begin log piles and to drill and use as bee nesting sites and in future, any trees taken down on the Hyde Park Estate will be recycled in this way.

We have met the Kent Bat Group and the Wildlife Ecologists at the Natural History Museum who have advised us on the species of bat to encourage on the Estate and therefore the appropriate bat boxes to purchase or to build. They have recommended using a variety of types, both purchased in a type of stone as well as wooden boxes. The boxes will be put up three in one tree, to provide the roosting potential for bats.

We feel that there is a brilliant opportunity here to build and construct a range of site-specific insect and wildlife-related structures which will enrich the Estate's living environment. This fits exactly into the programme that the Church Commissioners are pursuing.

The bird, bat and insect homes installation is a very exciting area of interest that we are undertaking on a scale and level that will make a difference beyond a token 'greening' of sites.

Hyde Park Estate - wildlife

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Hyde Park Estate Gardens

Discover all eight of The Hyde Park Estate's Gardens.

Norfolk, Cambridge and Oxford Gardens

These three gardens are under the direct management of the Church Commissioners. The gardens are gated to create an exclusive feel for the residents and the landscape is maintained by Conceptual Gardens, maintained to a high standard for the enjoyment of the residents. The appointed agent is Knight Frank LLP.

The cost of maintenance of the gardens is controlled through an annual service charge estimate, which is contributed to by the lessees who have exclusive rights to use this recreational space.

Sussex Square Gardens

Prior to January 2011, a Gardens Committee controlled the management of the gardens however they resigned from their appointment and the management reverted back to the freeholder. The appointed agent is Knight Frank LLP.

This is part of the Estate Management Scheme. The gardens' management is controlled by the Church Commissioners. The gardens are gated which create exclusivity for the residents. The landscape contract is maintained by Conceptual Gardens for the enjoyment of the residents.

The cost of maintenance of the gardens is controlled through an annual service charge estimate, which is contributed to by the lessees who have exclusive rights to use this recreational space.

Hyde Park Gardens

This is part of the EMS and a Gardens Committee is in charge of running and management of the gardens.

The managing agent for these gardens is Westbourne Estates.

Gloucester Square Gardens

This is part of the EMS and a Gardens Committee is in charge of running and management of the gardens.

The managing agent for these gardens is Farrar and Co.

Hyde Park Square Gardens

This is part of the EMS and a Gardens Committee is in charge of running and management of the gardens. The appointed agent is Knight Frank LLP.

The cost of maintenance of the gardens is controlled through an annual service charge estimate which is contributed to by the lessees who have exclusive rights to use this recreational space.

Connaught Square Gardens

This is part of the EMS and a Gardens Committee is in charge of running and management of the gardens. The appointed agent is Knight Frank LLP.

The cost of maintenance of the gardens is controlled through an annual service charge estimate which is contributed to by the lessees who have exclusive rights to use this recreational space.

Hyde Park Estate Greenhouse

Learn about the greenhouse installed in the garden at Devonport.

Devonport's greenhouse not only makes a handsome addition to the garden and makes use of a disused corner but it is also a tremendous asset to the Hyde Park Estate Green Strategy.

The growing area in Devonport includes the greenhouse, a cold frame and a growing-on bed. These function as the propagating area, the hardening off area and the holding bay for new and young plants that will ultimately be planted into the Hyde Park Estate gardens. The role of the greenhouse is key for our aim for sustainable gardening on the Hyde Park Estate:

- all year round gardening is now possible
- the range of plants that we can grow successfully can be expanded
- we now have dedicated growing space for the first time on the Estate
- seedlings and cuttings of bedding plants can be raised
- opportunity to introduce herbs early in the growing season
- in the long-term, raising seedlings and cuttings in the greenhouse will reduce the amount spent on plant purchases throughout the year
- propagation of indoor plants and bringing forward of bulbs for interior reception areas is now possible
- it provides an overwintering facility for some tender plants and half-hardy perennials that would normally not survive during the winter months.

Our Hyde Park Estate gardeners have trained in glasshouses in Kew, and in the Botanic Gardens, as far afield as southern Africa and at Tresco in the Scilly Isles. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to extending and expanding the role of Devonport's greenhouse on the Hyde Park Estate.

In the first week the greenhouse was installed it was already stocked with root and stem cuttings such as lavender, rosemary, verbena and ceanothus.

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Wildlife signs

We have installed a number of signs across the gardens on the Hyde Park Estate with details of the birds that can be spotted in and around the grounds.

In The Water Gardens complex, we have also installed signs with details of the pondlife that can be seen.

The signs have been installed at a low level so that they are accessible for all and are at a height that children will be able to see them.

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