



PRESS RELEASE

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GOING FOR GOLD

CHESTER ZOO TAKES TOP HONOURS IN CHESHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST'S NEW WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDEN AWARD SCHEME

Chester Zoo has earned a Gold level Wildlife Friendly Gardening Award after entering its wildlife garden for the new scheme from Cheshire Wildlife Trust. The Award will be presented at the Zoo's Plant Conservation Day on 17th May.

Since Easter Cheshire Wildlife Trust has been encouraging gardeners throughout the county to apply for its new Wildlife Friendly Garden Awards because gardens – no matter how small – can provide vital havens for our native creatures.

Gill Bellairs from CWT said: "We are delighted that Chester Zoo applied for a Wildlife Friendly Garden Award as we know they have a very wildlife friendly garden there and it sets a great example to others.

"The Zoo is perhaps more renowned for its large and exotic animals but smaller native species are equally as important to the world's biodiversity and Chester Zoo has recognised this by creating the garden.

"It would be wonderful if people from all over Cheshire would take part in this scheme because it will help us to build an amazing, living, wildlife-rich network of routes for creatures to travel around.

"In this way, we can reconnect the protected wildlife areas, and start to create a 'Living Landscape' for Cheshire."

To qualify for the Gold level Award the Zoo had to prove how its garden contains 12 or more features that attract wildlife, from a target list that includes bird feeding stations, nectar-rich flowers, log piles, compost heaps or a pond.

Mark Sparrow, Chester Zoo's Curator of Botany and Horticulture, said: "Our garden was designed to show that the average sized back garden can be a haven for wildlife. The garden design is fairly formal to show that gardening for wildlife doesn't have to mean an overgrown and weedy wilderness.

"It contains most of the features that the Award requires including a pond, log pile, compost heap, water butt, as well as bird feeders and nest boxes. There is even a small vegetable

patch which has been planted to encourage natural predators so that pests can be controlled without resorting to chemicals.

“We are very pleased to receive this award and hope it will encourage our visitors to do the same in their own gardens”

The scheme is FREE to enter and those who qualify for a Gold, Silver or Bronze Award will receive a Wildlife Friendly Garden Award plaque, to display on their gate or on a post in the garden as well as discounts on gardening products and other ongoing benefits.

Alan Titchmarsh, the renowned gardener and television presenter, has also lent his support to the scheme, saying: “From an expansive country garden to a compact urban plot, our gardens are truly brought to life by the wildlife that visits them, and just a few simple plants and features can provide a vital haven for our native creatures.

“This scheme rewards all those gardeners who make room for wildlife, native plant species and use products that benefit the natural environment, so it’s a great opportunity to put the ‘green’ into ‘green fingers’ and get out and do your bit!”

Further information and application forms for the Wildlife Friendly Gardening Awards are available from www.cheshirewildlifetrust.co.uk , call 01948 820728 or email wildlifegardening@cheshirewt.cix.co.uk

For tips on how to make your garden more wildlife friendly please send a regular stamped A5 SAE requesting the free ‘**Wildlife Friendly Garden Awards leaflet**’ to Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Bickley Hall Farm, Bickley Nr Malpas, Cheshire, SY14 8EF.

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Cheshire Wildlife Trust – Creating a Living Landscape for Cheshire