

MARLDON CLOSE BILBOROUGH, NOTTINGHAM

Hosta Consulting

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Pollinator Award

Project overview

Marldon Close is located in a sub-urban setting in Nottingham. The project was part of Nottingham City Homes Decent Neighbourhood Scheme. The objective of the project was to turn a disused area into a space for residents in which biodiversity could thrive. Hosta Consulting created a 200m² species rich Wildflower meadow, which covered a previously under utilised area of land along the length of the main building consisting of a large area of bare earth backed by a tall privet hedge.

Additional flowering plants were chosen to complement the wildflower meadow and offer seasonal interest.

The project was implemented and project managed by Hosta Consulting along with a small scale construction team.

The total cost of the project was £16,000.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The existing site contained one tree and a single species privet hedge. A small area of patchy closely mown grass covered one corner of the building. No other plants existed on the site.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

On the site previous to the implementation of the project, a large patch of bare earth existed in the rear garden area. Heavy rainfall caused soil to flow over onto a hard standing area, causing safety issues for residents. The addition of the wildflower meadow in the garden would help to mitigate the overflow problem by stabilising the soil and utilising the rainwater.



Wildflowers attracting pollinators

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This scheme can be replicated anywhere there are bare patches of earth in need of regeneration. Wildflower planting is perfect for roadside verges or disused areas. The flowers will quickly cover an area, providing essential food and shelter for pollinators and beneficial wildlife.

Carefully selected non-invasive plants that have become naturalised in Britain were chosen for the wildflower scheme. Only plants that have easily accessible open flowers were used in the scheme to provide maximum access for pollinators, such as *Anthemis arvensis*, *Centaurea cyanus* and *Achillea millefolium*.

The wildflower meadow is very low maintenance. It needs only one cut per year to enable distributed seeds to germinate and grow strongly. The addition of this ecologically valuable expanse of wildflower meadow will mean that the area will be teeming with wildlife and ensure there is a huge supply of food for pollinators.

Wild habitats and species in Nottingham have been declining at an alarming rate and this project contributes to local Biodiversity by re-creating and protecting one of the habitats that has seen a 97% decline since the 1930's (Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group).

These species rich Wildflower meadows can be incorporated throughout cities and would be a sure way to increase and sustain biodiversity in the built environment.

Due to the fact that the wildflowers used in the scheme will self seed freely, this type of self sustaining landscape management asset will be very valuable to nature in the future.



Wildflowers attracting pollinators



How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

The installation process included:

- Carefully selecting wildflowers that were proven to have a maximum benefit for beneficial insects and wildlife;
- Clearing rubble off site and rotavating the ground to ensure that plant roots would have maximum contact with the soil and to ensure the ground wasn't compacted;
- Laying the wildflowers to cover the prepared area

Monitoring of the scheme has proven that the project has been a great success in terms of promoting biodiversity in the area. In one visit, at least six different bee species were noted to be present along with a whole host of hoverflies, butterflies and other beneficial insects.

The objective of turning a disused space into one that has promoted biodiversity in the area has been met. The space is now one that residents can enjoy and interact with wildlife.

This scheme would further benefit with the addition of bug hotels. At the moment the privet hedge can provide a suitable nesting site for a lot of wildlife but the addition of bug hotels would be something that Hosta Consulting will look to implement in future projects.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

I am extremely passionate about promoting biodiversity in urban areas. Many natural habitats are being lost to new developments so it is absolutely vital that these habitats are replaced and as much as possible is done to help to promote and sustain biodiversity.



LEFT: Before Wildflower was planted



BOTTOM: Finished Wildflower meadow in full bloom