

Rewilding: a natural solution to restoring biodiversity

Wilding, or rewilding, is the restoration of natural ecosystems to help restore nature, locking away carbon and creating natural flood resilience* in the fight against climate change and the biodiversity crisis, making the world a better place. Knepp, a 3,500 acre estate in West Sussex, has pioneered wilding in England: a mosaic of habitats is created, and therefore a great diversity of species is supported, by the action and disturbance of very low stocking rates of grazing, browsing and soil-disturbing Tamworth pigs, Longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies and deer. Rewilding can help to reconnect people with the wonder of nature as wildlife returns and habitats expands. Effective collaboration between multiple owners and communities enables rewilding to operate at a scale larger than any single land holding.

Rewilding is a choice of land management. It relies on the people who own and manage the land deciding to explore an alternative future for the land and people. On a large scale, nature's scale, rewilding can be and is driven entirely by natural processes, not being geared to reach any human-defined end state. Using grazing animals at very low stocking rates it is a highly effective, low cost method of ecological restoration. Rewilding is an opportunity to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

Further / information from: <https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/rewilding/rewilding-principles>;
<https://knepp.co.uk/home> * Land that is grazed at traditional stocking rates is so compacted that it absorbs only 1/60th of the amount of water it would otherwise. Rewilding flood catchments, creates a natural resilience which can protect communities downstream. Payments for flood alleviation could form part of the new Environmental Land Management scheme.

Rewilding gardens

We can rewild our own patches too. It is tremendously helpful for wildlife particularly if the surrounding landscape is farmed intensively. Instead of large mammals doing the job, we can create a variety of habitats in our own gardens or tubs. We can begin to view many gardens as lacking the natural abundance of nature they might support. We can ditch the chemicals, provide the wildlife-friendly shrubs and plants, a water feature, log piles, patches of long grass and so on that nature will benefit from, make a hedgehog, frog and toad entrance, and we can let go and reduce our micromanagement of whatever small patch of earth we own, rent or influence. Then sit back and enjoy the resulting birds, bees, butterflies and so on.

Further / information from: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/wildlife/rewild-your-garden>;
<https://bluecampaignhub.com/gardeners>
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/30/how-to-rewild-your-garden-ditch-chemicals-and-decorate-the-concrete>