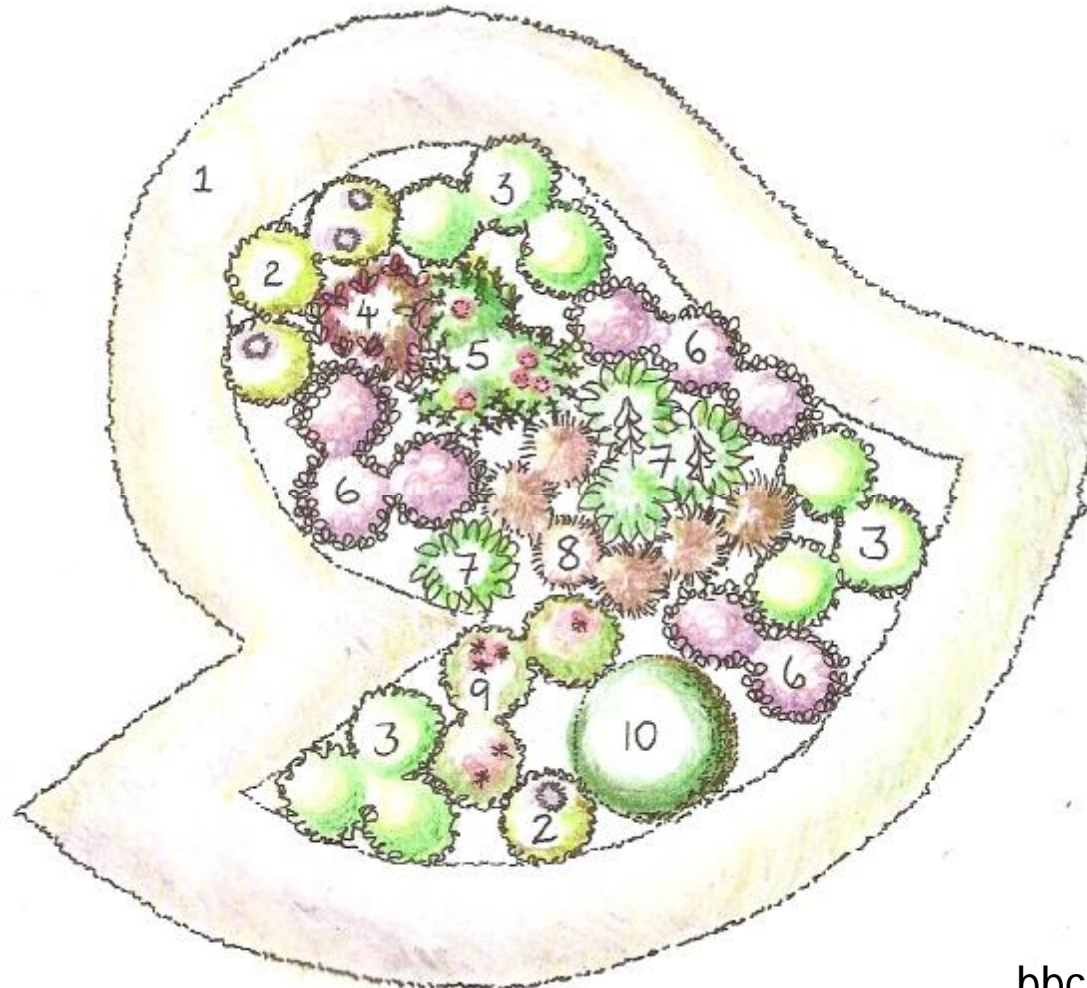


Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

Takeaway design idea: a formal wildlife garden

from *It's Only Natural* designed by Marianne Ali



A formal wildlife garden



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If you thought wildlife gardens were scruffy, this gorgeous parterre-style garden could change your mind. Formal lavender hedges and a clipped yew ball double up as wildlife habitats and lend structure to billowing clouds of beautiful wildlife-friendly plants.

1 - *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote' (x 22)

The ideal lavender for hedges as it stays compact. Its evergreen silver leaves are covered in richly-scented blue flowers all summer, attracting a cloud of bees and hoverflies from miles around: beetles, frogs and toads enjoy its shelter in winter.

2 - *Achillea millefolium* 'Lilac Beauty' (x 4)

The flat plates of Achillea flowers make nectar-rich landing pads for insects: this variety is a lovely pinkish-mauve, fading to lavender, and will flower right through summer.

3 - *Verbascum chaixii* 'Album' (x 9)

Semi-evergreen silvery foliage with a slightly furry texture and spikes of purest white flowers make this a striking plant for a dry, sunny spot.

4 - *Atriplex hortensis* (x 3)

This handsome annual plant has richly-coloured deep purple leaves: eat the young shoots lightly steamed, like spinach. Its flowers and seeds are much enjoyed by wildlife, and it will seed itself around and come back year after year.

5 - *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum' (x 3)

The gorgeous magenta-pink flowers of ornamental thistles are much-loved by bees – the birds enjoy pulling out the thistledown for nests, too. It makes a tall, good-looking plant, with its flowers held elegantly above other plants in the border.

6 - *Sedum telephium* 'Purple Emperor' (x 8)

Butterflies love the flat plates of reddish-purple flowers on this purple-leaved stonecrop. Leave flower heads on for winter structure – they look fantastic with a coating of frost - and to provide somewhere for tiny insects to hibernate.

7 - *Campanula persicifolia* (x 4)

Bellflowers make charming cottage garden-style plants with their tall stems of palest lilac, open flowers held high above low-growing rosettes of leaves.

8 - *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum' (x 6)

The fine filigree leaves of this perennial herb create a gentle cloud of shimmering purplish-brown that sets off the rest of your plants beautifully. Leave it to seed for the birds, and for new plants next year.

9 - *Knautia macedonica* (x 3)

Bees can't resist the red pincushion flowers of Knautia, an easy-going and good-looking plant for a well-drained spot in full sun.

10 - *Taxus baccata* (x 1)

Slow-growing, evergreen yew is a classic topiary plant for formal gardens and makes a fantastic habitat for birds. Clip into a perfect ball or pyramid to add structure and formality.



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