

## British newts: an identification guide

### How to attract bullfinches to your garden



Source: John Bridges/WTML

Despite their bold appearance, bullfinches are shy and often wary of humans. But they can still be attracted to gardens. Here are some tips for encouraging these beautiful birds to visit your patch.

#### Smooth newt

The natural diet of bullfinches is dominated by tree buds, shoots and flowers in spring, with seeds becoming more important in summer to winter.

#### How and when do bullfinches nest?

It's unusual for bullfinches to nest in gardens. As a shy species they prefer to build their nest in thick cover and rarely use nest boxes. But if your garden has areas of dense vegetation and is close to woodland, there is a chance bullfinches could use it as a nesting site.

#### How to identify bullfinches

**Colour:** Male bullfinches have a bright pink-red breast and cheeks, a black cap and grey wings. Females have a duller grey-pink breast. Both sexes have a white rump that is visible in flight.

**Beak:** bullfinches have a short, powerful-looking beak.

**Size:** bullfinches are relatively stocky for small birds and are a little larger than a robin.

Source: The Woodland Trust



The UK has three native species of newt. They can be tricky to spot and harder still to tell apart, but with a little detective work it's possible to narrow them down.

#### Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*)

- Males and females are brown in colour with spotty, orange bellies
- Adults can reach up to 10cm long from nose to tail
- Smooth newts are widespread across the UK and are often found in garden ponds
- They eat frog tadpoles as well as water and land invertebrates

#### Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

- The UK's largest newt species - adults can reach up to 17cm in length and are much darker in colour
- Found across England, mainland Scotland and Wales but absent from Ireland
- They eat tadpoles as well as aquatic and land invertebrates such as snails and worms

#### Palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*)

- Smooth and palmate newts are very similar in colouring and size. Unlike smooth newts however, palmate newts lack spots on their throats, which are pink or yellow in colour
- They are absent from Ireland, the Isle of Man and some Scottish islands, and are less common in central England
- They eat tadpoles and invertebrates and sometimes other palmate newts!

Source: The Woodland Trust

### Tree planting in Pullabrook woods

For the fifth year in a row, we along with our customers and the Woodland Trust returned to the stunning Pullabrook Wood in Dartmoor; to plant and maintain native woodland in the area.

Around 40 people met at 9am in Pullabrook Woods for some hot drinks and freshly made breakfast sandwiches before heading out into the trees. The team cleared the area of brush and debris before planting around 100 saplings; an understory of hazel, hawthorn,

cherry and rowan. Once the last tree had been planted the team set about installing chestnut stakes around the perimeter, providing fencing to keep out deer whilst the saplings grow!

To learn more about Pullabrook Woods visit [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

