

Biodiversity at the University of Southampton



A healthy ecosystem needs to be biodiverse in order to thrive. Each species, large and small, animal and plant, all have a role to play. A greater diversity of species ensures stability for all living in the ecosystem. Therefore, we need to do our bit to ensure that local biodiversity, as well as globally biodiversity, is preserved.

Sadly, many ecosystems around the world are suffering because of human influence. Our modern lifestyles are having a huge impact on the planet and for all those that live on it. The natural world needs our help to reduce our negative impact on the environment. Any changes that we make is a positive step towards making a difference.

At the university, we are continually implementing measures to reduce our impact and make improvements to the natural environment. We have a biodiversity policy that outlines our aims and objectives to make the university more biodiverse and this acts as a guideline when considering biodiversity across our estates. The main aim is ensuring that we are correctly maintaining the estate and creating habitats for the benefit of wildlife and people. We ensure that we prevent pollution and minimise actions on site that could have a negative impact on the environment.

The university has taken very positive steps to improve our local biodiversity, through encouraging a wide variety of flora and fauna into our green spaces. The University's estate in Southampton and Winchester is the size of more than 60 football pitches and throughout the year you will see our team of gardeners tending to a variety of landscapes that animals and plants can flourish in.

At Wide Lane Sports Grounds, native hedgerows were planted four years ago and are now large enough to be a thriving habitat for birds and insects. Elsewhere, we have planted new oak trees, sown bee-friendly wildflowers and used waste coffee grounds from our cafes as a soil fertiliser.

On Highfield Campus, Valley Gardens is a tranquil and biodiverse landscape, originally planted in the 1960s with specimen plants from the Department of Biology. Thanks to a four-year renovation project, which was completed in 2012, this space can be accessed year-round by our students, staff and visitors. We have a stream running through the gardens, which is home to the protected Great Crested Newts and we have set up wildlife cameras to capture images of a badger sett in the gardens too.