# Seven garden clutter items to remove for a wildlife-friendly spring refresh



With the arrival of warmer weather, many British gardeners are gearing up for their spring cleaning routines, focusing on preparations for the summer season. Wildlife expert Doug O'Connor of DeerFencing.com has issued detailed guidance highlighting seven key garden items that should be removed to revitalise outdoor spaces and help curb unwanted wildlife visits.

Doug O'Connor explained, "Most people don't realise how quickly clutter can accumulate in outdoor spaces. This not only makes your garden less enjoyable but can attract unwanted wildlife to your property." He pointed out that gardens often become storage areas for items that no longer serve a purpose after the winter months.

Among the items identified for removal are cracked plastic pots and containers, which pose a dual nuisance. Beyond being unsightly, these broken pots can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes due to stagnant rainwater and serve as shelters for small rodents. Doug recounted, "I've visited countless properties where homeowners wonder why they have a rodent problem, only to find dozens of old plant pots stacked behind their shed. These create perfect shelter for mice, which in turn attract snakes and other predators to your garden." He encourages gardeners to keep only the pots they plan to use, cleaning reusable plastic pots and recycling those broken, while repurposing terracotta pots as drainage material.

Old gardening chemicals—such as out-of-date fertilisers, weed killers, and pesticides—are another concern. Doug emphasised that these substances not only occupy space but can become hazardous as they deteriorate, potentially contaminating soil or attracting curious animals like deer. He urged gardeners to check use-by dates and dispose of expired chemicals through local waste programmes rather than domestic bins or drains.

Clutter from worn-out gardening tools is also on the list for clearance. Doug shared an example of a property with "four broken lawnmowers... because they 'might fix them someday'." Such tools can present environmental hazards due to residual fuel and oil, as well as detract from garden aesthetics. His advice is to be realistic about repair possibilities and to recycle or scrap unusable equipment.

Leaf piles and grass clippings have been flagged as problematic since they provide habitats for various wildlife. "Yard waste piles are basically an invitation for deer and other wildlife to inhabit your property," Doug said, explaining how these piles offer shelter and attract insects that bring in larger predators. He recommends composting in enclosed bins and proper disposal of non-compostable yard waste.

Similarly, leftover materials from building projects often become hiding spots for animals such as rabbits and groundhogs, which can damage plants and attract predators like foxes. Doug suggests passing on usable materials through local marketplace groups and responsibly discarding the rest.

Garden decorations which have deteriorated, such as wind chimes, worn gnomes, and rusty ornaments, also pose risks. Doug cautioned that "broken ornaments and plastic plants" might injure deer or be ingested by wildlife or pets. He advises choosing quality, durable decorations and recycling broken items according to their materials.

Finally, Doug pinpointed food sources as the primary reason wildlife, including deer, are attracted to residential gardens. Fruit trees with unharvested, fallen fruit, old bird feeders, and improperly stored pet food all act as major lures. "Once they discover easy meals, they'll keep coming back and bringing friends," he warned. Doug recommends regular cleaning or replacement of bird feeders, prompt harvesting or removal of fruit trees, and secure storage of pet food. Bird feeders should be placed where spilled seed can be easily tidied to prevent attracting unwanted visitors.

This comprehensive advice aims to assist gardeners across the UK in managing their outdoor spaces effectively as spring progresses, balancing enjoyment of their gardens with the management of local wildlife interactions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2023/03/how-to-spring-clean-your-garden-for-wildlife/> - This article supports the claim about the importance of removing clutter from gardens in spring to reduce unwanted wildlife visits and improve garden enjoyment.
* <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=459> - The Royal Horticultural Society highlights that cracked plastic pots can collect stagnant water, creating mosquito breeding grounds and shelters for rodents, aligning with Doug O'Connor's advice on removing broken plastic pots.
* <https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/topics/waste-and-recycling/household-hazardous-waste> - This governmental source advises on the proper disposal of old gardening chemicals, such as fertilizers, weed killers, and pesticides, as they can be hazardous and contaminate soil if not handled properly.
* <https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/advice/how-to-deal-with-wood-leaves-and-debris-in-your-garden/> - This resource explains how leaf piles and grass clippings can provide shelter for wildlife and insects, confirming Doug's point about these being potential wildlife attractants and recommending composting methods.
* <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/rabbits-predators-human-garden-wildlife-management> - National Geographic discusses how leftover building materials can harbor animals like rabbits and groundhogs, and how these animals attract predators such as foxes, supporting the article's advice on clearing these materials.
* <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/feeding-wildlife-garden-right-way> - The Wildlife Trusts provide guidance on managing food sources in gardens, emphasizing secure storage and cleaning of bird feeders to prevent attracting unwanted wildlife, which aligns with Doug O'Connor's recommendations.
* <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/lifestyle/gardening-experts-urge-brits-rid-31504621> - Please view link - unable to able to access data