Bug-Friendly Lighting

Light pollution threatens biodiversity, increases energy use and prevents us from seeing the stars. To help everyone address the issue of light pollution, Buglife recommends following a set of guidelines for helping bugs.

This guidance sets out five considerations that, if followed, will reduce the impact of artificial lighting on bugs and other wildlife. Many principles overlap with other lighting guidance and provide benefits to the environment, as well as human enjoyment of the night sky.

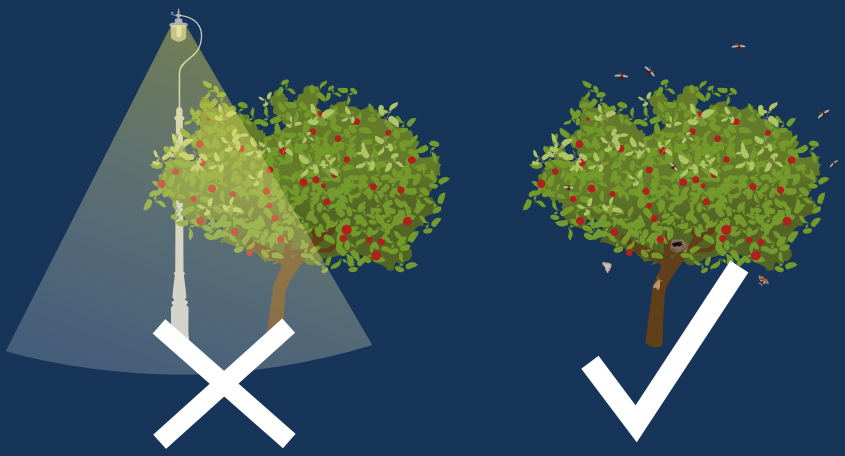
Bugs have a very different set of needs to people when it comes to light. What many people may see as beauty when lighting up a tree or hedge in a garden or park, a moth may perceive as 24-hour daylight and may not be able to function naturally.

A single light on a tree or river could prevent generations of bugs from emerging, with drastic knock-on consequences for ecosystems. With bug numbers falling at alarming rates it is vital we reduce all man-made pressures on them.

Small changes for us can mean huge differences to our smallest creatures and any improvement in current lighting is welcomed.

Natural

Aim for natural darkness, and avoid artificial light at night where and when possible



Need

Do you need to light up an area at night? Only use artificial lighting where there is a specific purpose or need.

Amount

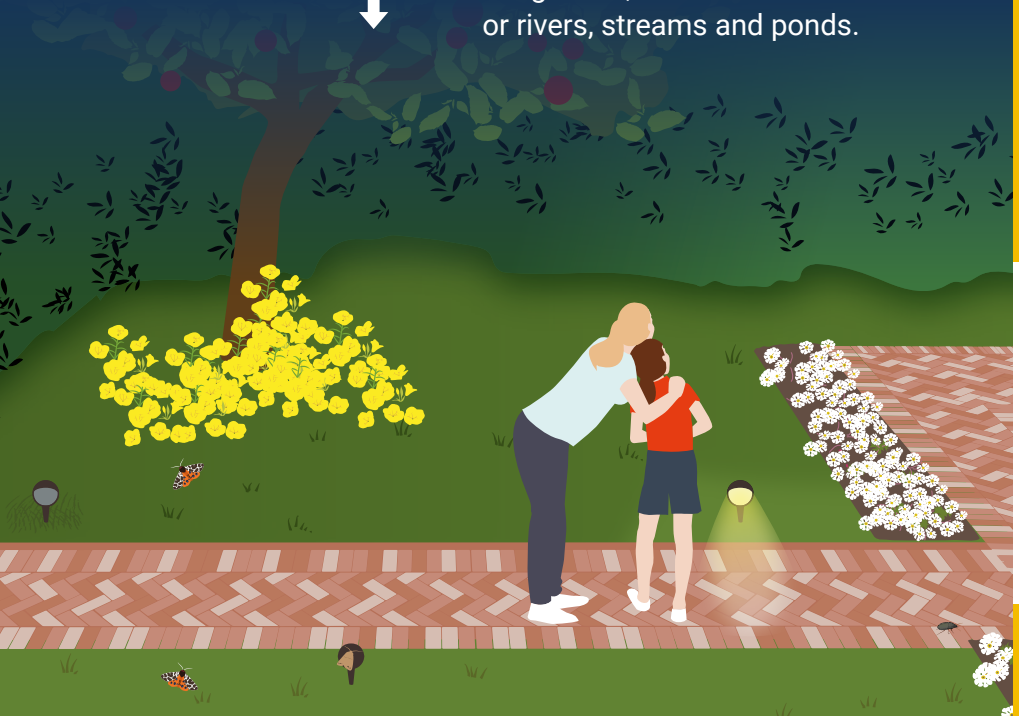
Use the minimum lighting required to meet the needs of users, especially in wildlife-friendly areas.

Time

Lights should be turned off when not in use (automatically via timers and sensors, or manually).

Direction

Lighting should be directed away from wild areas such as trees, hedgerows, wildflower meadows or rivers, streams and ponds.



What about colour?

There is a lot of debate about what is the best colour of light for wildlife. Unfortunately, there is not a single colour that will benefit all wildlife. We recommend limiting the amount of light rather than focusing on changing to a single colour of light.

What we do know is that cooler 'blue wavelengths of light' reflect and brighten the sky more than any other wavelengths, so should be avoided in favour of warmer wavelengths such as reds and ambers.

It is thought that lights with a Correlated Colour Temperature (CCT) of less than 2,200 Kelvins will provide the least impactful conditions for the widest range of organisms, while still providing adequate lighting needs for human activity. Look for lights described as 'warm' when choosing light bulbs.

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