

Where have all the fish gone?

Many of you will have noticed that over the past few weeks something fishy has been going on, down at the pond. Our goldfish population has been dwindling rapidly to a point of almost nonexistence.

At first it was quite a novelty to see a Heron visiting our pond for his breakfast, but feelings soon changed towards him as he started to arrive every day for lunch and super too. And when he invited his mate along for dinner it just felt like he was taking the mick. The greedy sods ate the lot!

But as pretty as they were to see, the fish weren't supposed to be in there in the first place. The other pond life that in turn was getting eaten by the fish, can now recover, so that's a big positive.



Fish eat
frogs spawn
and

tadpoles - frogs eat insects - insects eat other insects and plants - birds eat insects - some birds eat frogs and fish....., the cycle is endless. At the end of the day biodiversity is the circle of life and that's what Loftus is all about. Sometimes though, wildlife can get a bit get confused with their own particular role in this vast

chain, like this frog who fell in love with a fish and it hugged it to death - literally. He clung on to it all day and the poor fish was floating on the surface the next morning.

To encourage this wonderful ecosystem at Loftus, we help by leaving some grass areas to grow natural. These areas around the pond and up the swales are left to grow wild for insect food, habitat, and cover for small animals. It may look neglected but the benefit to wildlife is invaluable. We do manage these areas by taking out any invasive plants that try and sneak in, such as bramble, but our interference in these areas is minimal. Our two wildflower meadows are only cut once a year which provides another haven for bees, butterflies and many other insects and the pockets of colourful annual flowers we plant here and there are as much for the pollinators as for our pleasure.



We all know native plants are the best to encourage biodiversity, but they can be very boring and troublesome to manage. So, at Loftus, we put in plants from around the world alongside the British natives for visual impact as we want our patch of urban countryside to look as pretty as possible.



Planting a good mix of trees, shrubs and plants that flower throughout the whole year is the best way to help our wildlife.



Loftus was designed with this in mind and its planting scheme provides a wide range of berries, fruit, nuts, pollen and nectar. A feast for all. The wildlife can live in beautiful surroundings with a takeaway right on their doorstep and we gardeners make sure we help by always taking the organic approach to pest control to keep poisons out of the food chain.

Each year that passes, the trees grow bigger, bushes become bushier, the plant mixture grows more diverse and the result are beginning to show, fabulous conditions to attract nesting birds. A nest full of hungry beaks to feed needs plenty of bugs and insects available on hand so a mother bird is not going to build her nest just anywhere. It is a privilege to see our little feathered friends deciding that Loftus is the place to raise their family, it's very satisfying to know the grand plan is working and we are getting things right.



I must point out though, It is possible to get a bit carried away with this biodiversity thing. If Wildlife could talk it would obviously say " don't prune that, leave those weeds ,we love an unruly mess." so let's not forget that although, biodiversity is very important , it's not the be all and end all, we humans are part of this chain too and most of us do like our surroundings neat and orderly to some extent. Long grass and weeds where they shouldn't be are definitely a "No No" at loftus, especially in front gardens.



Wildlife and humans can live side by side with a bit of give and take so it's about getting the balance right. Strict control over vegetation in some places and more relaxed in others and then we can all live in harmony together.

places to live where you have the best of city life while experiencing the joys of the countryside on your doorstep. We are all so lucky.



Loftus is unique, there are not many



