

How You Can Help in Your Garden

Remember! Stag beetles need two things, deadwood and minimal disturbance.



Colin Hawes

Large log pyramid for parks and large gardens

Do's and Don'ts

- 1 Leave tree stumps in situ if possible; they can become garden features with plants growing over them.
- 1 Create a log pile (see over).
- 1 Avoid using polythene sheeting covered with bark chippings or garden fleece as a way of controlling weeds. Newly emerging adult beetles can get trapped beneath it in spring and die.
- 1 If you find larvae, in the base of rotten timber posts, for example, and need to move them, dig a hole elsewhere in your garden and put them in, together with some of the rotting wood from their original site. Cover loosely with soil.
- 1 If you find larvae in a compost heap, move them as above. Compost heaps often do not contain enough dead wood to see the larvae through to adulthood.
- 1 Try to leave some quiet, undisturbed areas in your garden. This will benefit other wildlife, too.
- 1 Try not to use insecticides.
- 1 Keep cats away from beetle habitat if you can.
- 1 Keep a lid on your water butts. Stag beetles are attracted to water and can drown.
- 1 Show this leaflet to your gardening friends.

Stag beetles are important because...

They are in serious decline on mainland Europe. We need, therefore, to especially look after those we have left here in Britain.

By targeting our conservation efforts on these spectacular insects, then many other less well-known insects will also benefit.



Colin Hawes

Small log pyramid (partially buried)

Further help and information

PTES keeps the national database of stag beetle records. Please let us (www.ptes.org) or your local Wildlife Trust (www.wildlifetrusts.org) know if you see any.

If you need any further help or information please get in touch. We will be pleased to help. Help is also available online at www.stagbeetlehelpline.co.uk

The ecology of stag beetles is being studied at Royal Holloway, University of London. To help with the work, it would very useful if you would send any dead stag beetles you find to PTES at the address below. Please include details of where you found them.

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Registered Charity No. 274206



Stag Beetle Friendly Gardening



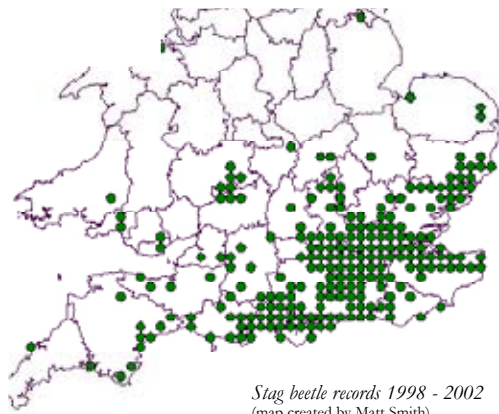
David Archer

Male stag beetle and larva

AS OPEN LAND increasingly comes under pressure from intensive agriculture and development for both industrial and housing purposes, private gardens become more and more important as safe havens for wildlife of all kinds. The results of our second National Stag Beetle Survey (2002) showed that 75% of sightings came from gardens and most of the rest from parks and built-up areas.

Stag Beetle Facts

Stag beetles are Britain's largest terrestrial beetle, named because the male's huge jaws look just like a stag's antlers. They spend about five years as grubs underground and emerge as fully grown adults in spring. Males can be up to 70mm (2.5 inches) long; females are smaller, without the characteristic male 'antlers'. Both sexes have a shiny black head and thorax (chest) and their wing cases are chestnut brown. They are quite harmless – their large jaws are designed to ward off other male stag beetles.



This map shows where they are found in England and Wales.

Seeing Stag Beetles

You are most likely to see males in flight on warm summer evenings between May and August, while they look for a mate. Females lay their eggs near decaying wood below ground and the developing larvae are large white grubs with orange heads, which feed on this rotting wood. It can take up to five years for them to develop into adult beetles. The majority of adults live for only a few weeks in the summer in order to mate, although a few may survive the winter till the following year. With such a long larval stage, you can see how very important it is to protect their habitats.

Interesting Insects

Look out for these deadwood insects on your log pile.



Lesser stag beetle

Roger Key



Female stag beetle

PTES



Deadwood hoverfly

Roger Key



Cardinal beetle

Roger Key

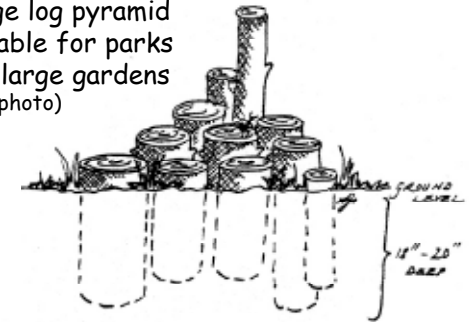
Log Piles are Good for Wildlife

Create a log pile in your garden to encourage beetles and other wildlife, too.

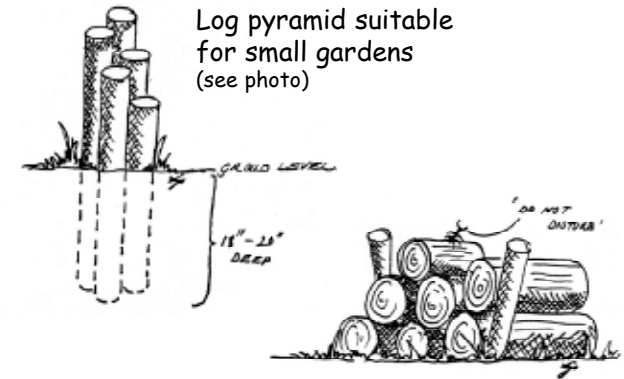
- * Use wood from broadleaved trees, especially oak, beech or fruiting trees such as apple or pear. These support the richest insect communities.
- * Site the logs in partial shade, if possible, to prevent them from drying out.
- * Fresh logs with the bark still attached provide better and longer-lasting habitats.
- * The logs should be at least the thickness of an adult's arm.
- * Partially bury the logs vertically in the soil so that they retain moisture and increase the numbers of visiting insects. Stag beetles need buried dead wood in which to breed.
- * Avoid making log piles too high, or the timber will dry out. Allowing plants to grow over them both retains moisture and provides shade for the stag beetles.

Log Pile Ideas

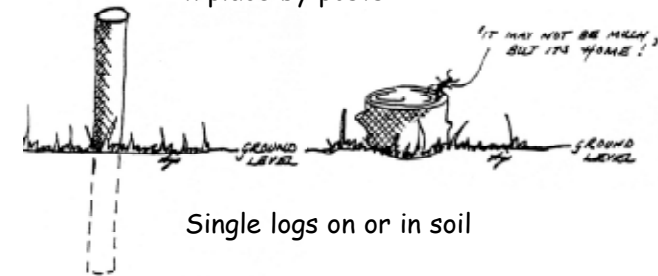
Large log pyramid suitable for parks and large gardens (see photo)



Log pyramid suitable for small gardens (see photo)



Log 'pile' - logs held in place by posts



Single logs on or in soil



PTES wishes to thank Colin Hawes for all his help and advice, and the organisations whose logos appear above.