

## Nightingale Garden habitats for wildlife

# Stag beetle logs



In May 2017, the Community Payback team made us a stag beetle habitat of long logs half-buried in a very large hole. This is now surrounded by long grass.



July 2017: a *Dorcus parallelipedus* (lesser stag beetle) found in Nightingale community garden. Harmless to humans and to live wood, the larger and rarer *Lucanus cervus* stag beetles are a protected species. You can record sightings on the People's Trust for Endangered Species 'Great Stag Hunt' website.

The stag beetle is the UK's largest beetle - at up to 7.5 cm long. It is found in Western Europe, including in gardens, hedgerows and parks. There is also a, more common, lesser stag beetle (*Dorcus parallelipedus*), which is around 3 cm long.

Stag beetle larvae need old trees and rotting wood in which to live and feed. The larvae can take 3–7 years to develop before they make cocoons in the soil to pupate and turn into adults, which also live in the soil. The adults emerge in May just to mate and lay eggs. If you find one, they might eat soft fruit or sugar water.

In Summer evenings, you might see the males flying and the females walking on the ground. Male *Lucanus* beetles have huge jaws like antlers to display to females and also to fight other males. By the end of August, most adult stag beetles will have died, after laying eggs in suitable decaying wood.