

Our Vision:

A Parish and its people that are enriched by wildlife, where people enrich the natural world and help to safeguard it for the future.

Our aims are to:

Share knowledge of the wonderful wildlife in the Parish of Chudleigh.

Raise awareness through events and activities that involve and motivate the community.

Encourage positive action by local residents to attract and sustain more wildlife in the town and Parish of Chudleigh.

Conserve and enhance our existing wildlife and local habitats, features and species populations, through working together and with others.

Survey & record what we have, holding and sharing our wildlife records with others.

Advise groups and individuals on biodiversity and land management for wildlife.

Monitor development proposals that may result in damage to important wildlife.

Be environmentally and socially aware and responsible in what we do.

Interested in joining us?

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, are interested in joining the committee, or would like to volunteer, please contact chudleigh.wild@gmail.com

Spring is here and Chudleigh residents are rising to the challenge of Gardening for Wildlife.

The response to the project has been amazing and around 50 people have already claimed signs to promote 'Gardening for Wildlife'. Most of these Chudleigh residents had already fulfilled all the criteria, and many more are making changes to their gardens to attract wildlife.



Sue has been busy trying to keep up with the demand and the deliveries.

Jonathan has kindly been providing her with recycled wood which she then paints with wood preserving paint and varnish - so they should last the course!

Tess and Mary have been collecting seeds, many donated by our members, and are nurturing plug plants. All of these are free and you can find the 'Seed Buggy' outside the Town Hall each Saturday — **so please help yourselves.**

The Buggy also contains helpful leaflets and other information that will help you plan your planting.



Find out more about Chudleigh Wild on the Town Council website:

www.chudleigh-tc.gov.uk/chudleigh-wild/



Gardening for Wildlife

A reminder that if you can achieve just one thing from each of these columns we will give you a sign to put in your garden.

Food	Water	Shelter	Management
Bird feeders Food for Hedgehogs	Wildlife pond (without fish)	Climbing plants for nesting and feeding	Leave perennials standing until spring
Nectar rich flowers	Bog garden or permanent wet area	Mature trees	Compost garden and kitchen waste
Flowers, fruits, seeds available all year	Bird bath	Native shrubs or hedge	NO pesticides, including slug pellets
Shrubs and trees with nuts and berries	Water left out for hedgehogs and insects	Log piles or tree stumps	Long grass area or nettle patch
Wildflower meadow or nectar rich lawn	Save water and use rainwater butt	Bird, bat, hedgehog or bee/insect box	Allow hedgehog access into your garden

Jasper and his mum, Hayley, have been busy making their Hedgehog house warm and comfortable, so I'm sure some lucky Hedgehog will soon find it.

Well done Jasper—good job!

We would love to hear about things that your children are doing in the garden, so please let us know and send us your photos. Whether it's planting up their own corner, growing some vegetables or just making safe spaces for wildlife, they can claim a blank sign to decorate for their patch.

You will find some ideas for things they can make and other activities at:

<https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>



If you're just starting to think what you might plant in your garden to attract bees, butterflies and other insects, or if you're new to gardening and want to add a few pollinator-friendly plants, but don't know what to buy, here are 10 plants to consider. These plants will help you create a wildlife friendly garden and will also look fabulous.

Common Knapweed is a firm favourite of our pollinating insects, being a native wildflower and a source of good quality nectar. As well as supporting our bees, butterflies and beetles, its seeds provide food for many birds.

Lavender is a perfect plant for pollinators. It looks good all year, has an incredible scent that persists when dried and is rich in pollen and nectar for much of summer, so bees and butterflies love it.

Phacelia is a beautiful plant, ideal as a cut flower, beloved by bees and very attractive to lots of beneficial insects like lacewings and ladybirds. The hungry larvae of these insects then munch away on less welcome aphids.

Pot Marigold, or *Calendula officinalis*, is a must have. The variety 'Indian Prince' is a good one, deep orange with crimson backs which match the crimson centre of the flower. It attracts insects and is also edible.

Foxglove is one of the very best cottage garden plants of early summer. If you pick the 'king' flower – the main spire – you will create lots of 'prince' flowers and the plants will then go on flowering for longer.

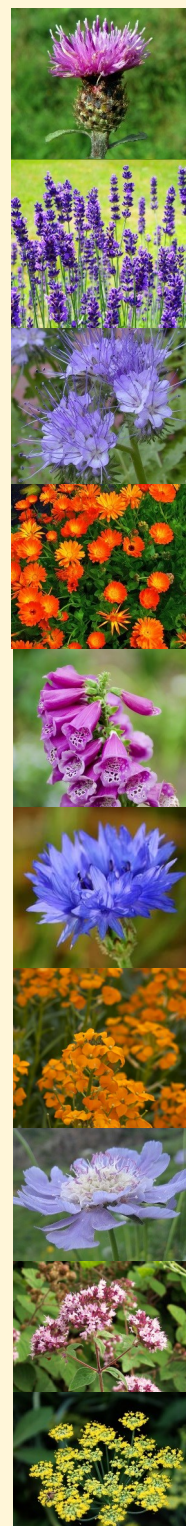
Cornflowers are magnets for beneficial insects that feed on many pest insects. These garden helpers include lacewings, parasitic wasps, tachinid flies and hoverflies. They provide free pollination services too. Cornflower is one of the prettiest wildflowers, used to populate entire fields with its lovely blue hue.

Wallflowers flower in the spring and come in the most wonderful rich colours. With one of the best ever scents, they are great for bees.

Scabious flowers constantly throughout the summer months, making it the perfect plant for when little else is flowering. It's a great choice for any wildlife garden, with a steady supply of nectar-rich flowers attracting pollinating insects, like butterflies and bees.

Marjoram has pretty pink flowers and is an excellent food source for all kinds of insects, as well as a herb that lends itself to many dishes.

Fennel is rich in nectar and pollen and attracts many kinds of bees, including yellow-faced, mining, honey and bumblebees.





Open Gardens 2021

Chudleigh Wild are thrilled to have been asked to host 'Chudleigh Open Gardens' this year.



We will running the 'Chudleigh Open Gardens' for [chudfest](#) on

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th of June.

We would like to include plenty of wildlife-friendly gardens, as well as a range of attractive, productive, formal and flower gardens. Gardens of any size are welcome.

Garden owners will get a share of the ticket money to donate to a charity of their choice. If you also choose to sell plants, crafts or refreshments, your takings will go to your chosen charity. You may also like to include a display of art or some live music as part of your garden!

There is only one qualification to join in: there must be a way into the garden that isn't through your house or garage, e.g. a back gate. This is for insurance purposes.

We are looking for up to 12 gardens to open. You can choose to open either day or both. Gardens are usually open from 10am to 4pm.

**If you would like to invite others to enjoy your garden for a day or two, please email us by
1st May**

info.chudleighwild@gmail.com



Let's look after our Hedgehogs!

Already this spring there have been several sightings of dead Hedgehogs on our roads. As a town we have been trying really hard to protect our Hedgehogs by putting up signs to slow traffic and by putting out food and shelter for them in our gardens. There is one more important thing we could consider ...

Hedgehog Highways

Hedgehogs need to travel from garden to garden to find enough food, especially in colder weather. Providing food for them helps enormously, if the local moggy doesn't eat it first! What would make their life much easier and allow them to move around our gardens freely is a small hole in your fence or wall that joins up our gardens to form a **Hedgehog Highway**.



We now know that one of the main reasons why Hedgehogs are declining in Britain is because our fences and walls are becoming more and more secure, reducing the amount of land available to them.

A hole 13cm by 13cm (5" by 5") is sufficient for any Hedgehog to pass through. This will be too small for nearly all pets.

You could even label your Hedgehog Highway with this cool sign.

These snazzy labels are laser cut from recycled plastic and can be pinned above your Hedgehog hole to ensure it is not blocked by anyone accidentally.

<https://shop.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/product/2-x-hedgehog-highway-signs-5/>

Special



Offer

2 for £5

Did you know that we have a page on the Town Council website?

www.chudleigh-tc.gov.uk/chudleigh-wild/



Co-op Community Fund

We are incredibly grateful to be one of Chudleigh Co-op's local causes until November 2021. If you haven't already chosen which cause to support with your points, please consider choosing Chudleigh Wild.

We are working to improve the management of our verges and green spaces, supporting and increasing our local wildlife. We plan to use the money raised to create a nature trail around Chudleigh's green spaces, using rubbing plaques and information boards to educate and connect our community with local nature.



We're part of the
Co-op Local Community Fund

Select us as
your cause

coop.co.uk/membership

coop

You can select us as your local cause by visiting <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/52914>.



Chudleigh Wild Bat Group

Members of the Bat Group met for the first time via a Zoom meeting and presentation in March.

On April 1st we ventured out to see what we could find. Despite the cold temperatures, everyone was able to use the bat detectors, kindly funded by Devon Mammal Group, and to hear both Greater Horseshoe Bats and Common Pipistrelles. We are planning to go out regularly as a group to learn to identify more bats species.



Chudleigh's Colourless Plants (parasites and saprophytes)

Not all flowers are gaudy, and some plants aren't even green! Parasitic and saprophytic plants lack chlorophyll. Parasites tap into the roots of other species and steal nutrients, while saprophytes feed on rotting vegetation with the aid of a fungus partner.

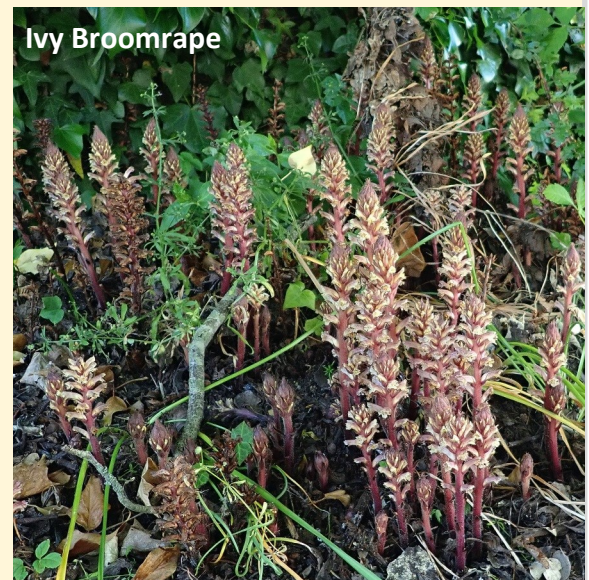


Toothwort

A notable parasitic plant that flowers in early spring around Chudleigh is **Toothwort**, an 8-20 cm tall plant that usually lives off the roots of Hazel bushes. 'Wort' usually indicates a plant with traditional food or medicinal properties, but it seems that toothwort got its reputation because the flowers merely looked like teeth! And Toothwort is not the only parasitic plant that we have locally.

Toothwort belongs to the same family as broomrapes. Although Greater Broomrape does parasitize Broom (and Gorse), the species we see most often around Chudleigh is **Ivy Broomrape** – which, as

you might guess, is found growing out of patches of Ivy. There's a nice patch of it at the top of Oldway and another beside the permissive path from the kissing gate in Rock Road to Chudleigh Rocks. They can be seen for most of the year, with the purple and



Ivy Broomrape

cream flower spikes appearing in June, after which the senesced brown remains can be seen for some months afterwards.



Bird's-nest Orchid

Another plant lacking any green colouring (or indeed any leaves) is **Bird's-nest Orchid**, which is saprophytic. Like all orchids, it comes and goes, appearing in some years and not others. It has been found in recent years at the top of Puttshills Wood (that's the one by the River Teign) and in the shadier parts of the orchid-rich verges at Harcombe Split, near Holman's Wood. Its common name comes from its coarse roots, which resemble a bird's twiggy nest.

Dave Smallshire

For more information on Chudleigh's wild plants and other wildlife, see the annotated checklists on the Town Council website: www.chudleigh-tc.gov.uk/chudleigh-wild/



Chudleigh's raptors

Chudleigh is a particularly good area for birds of prey, reflecting the variety and quality of habitats in the Parish. Some, like Osprey and Red Kite, have only been seen passing through on rare occasions, although



both are increasing in Britain. Buzzards, on the other hand, are often visible, especially when they rise up on thermals to hunt or defend territory. Sparrowhawks do the same, although their hunting technique is rapid, low flight to pounce on unsuspecting birds. One successful attempt was witnessed recently by Dave Offiler, who photographed this female with a Collared Dove that was too heavy to fly away with! Female raptors are much larger than males and can take larger prey, but a dove is quite large prey for a Sparrowhawk. Among the rarer raptors, the powerful but secretive Goshawk has been seen displaying in recent weeks. Early in the year, Fraser Rush camera-trapped a female eating a Pheasant – now that's a good meal!

'Our' Peregrines nest in Palace Quarry, as Kestrel used to, although the latter has been very scarce in recent years, probably as a result of eating poisoned rats (please remove dead and dying rats quickly when you use rodenticide). In the next month we should see Hobby returning from Africa. Often feeding on insects, like dragonflies, in summer they feed their young on House Martins, Swallows and even Swifts, sometimes caught over the town. For a few years there were Honey Buzzards breeding on Haldon, although there have been only a few sightings of this rare summer visitor in recent years.

Astonishing as it may sound, Chudleigh recently received its first ever visit from an eagle. Yes, a huge White-tailed (Sea) Eagle – but nobody saw it! It was released on the Isle of Wight last year, fitted with a radio transmitter and tracked around much of southern England after release. Known as 'G461', it flew through Chudleigh airspace on February 8th: at 11:01 a.m. it was 763m above sea level over Exeter Racecourse and next located near Prawle Point an hour later. A direct route would have taken it over Harcombe and Ugbrooke, but probably too high to be visible to the human eye. After spending nearly a month in the South Hams, it returned on March 7th, flying directly over Chudleigh town to roost in a wood near Exeter; next morning it left for Somerset. There have been sightings of other released eagles in Devon this winter, including this one photographed near Dawlish Warren. Maybe one day we might be able to see White-tailed Eagles flying over Chudleigh, as they may have done centuries ago – do let me know if you see something like a flying barn door!



Dave Smallshire



Chair's Chat

Well, spring has finally sprung: the first Chudleigh Swallow, an early one, appeared on 30 March. The songs of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps had already been audible for a few days before that and a host of other migrants will be arriving over the coming weeks. I love the fresh greens and blaze of colours as spring flowers burst forth. The bright yellow of my pond's Marsh Marigolds put all the nearby Lesser Celandines in the shade, and it wasn't long before the (much maligned) Dandelion flowers started to open.



Chudleigh seems to have gained a new breeding bird species: the Rook. Most or all of six nests in the top of a large Oak tree off Coburg Crescent have Rooks in attendance, and probably now sitting on eggs. Their calls bring to mind the wonderfully evocative sound of the country churchyard, a very typical location for a rookery. It's possible that these Rooks have been evicted as a result of Ash Die-back, a widespread disease that's going to have a major impact on our landscape, because Ash trees are very common in both hedgerows and woodland. Perhaps the Rooks' traditional nesting trees have collapsed, or more likely been felled, forcing them to look for alternative trees.

Ash Die-back rots the inside of the trees, so their collapse can be a health and safety hazard. Some have already been felled pre-emptively to reduce the risks of damage. However, those that can safely be left to die in no-risk areas will contribute greatly to the grossly inadequate amounts of dead wood in British woodlands. Dead and dying wood is essential for a whole community of beetles, fungi and other deadwood specialists.

We owe a big thank you to our volunteers, who work tirelessly for the good of Chudleigh and its wildlife. Litter has become more obvious around the Parish during lockdown, so litter picking forays have become more necessary. Trees and wildflowers have been nurtured and distributed. Brush-cutting and general management of the Oldway Batfields Reserve has been carried out. Verges have been raked and planted up. Bats and other species have been surveyed. These are just a few of the many jobs that volunteers carry out on a regular basis. Special thanks are due to Jonathan, who has been inundated with requests for Hedgehog houses and feeding stations; he has also made dormouse boxes and has provided and cut up much of the wood for our 'Gardening for Wildlife' signs.

Chudleigh Wild members will also be doing some botanical surveys of potentially valuable habitats. If you are already a proficient botanist or would like to learn more about plant identification, and are willing to commit a few days to help, please let me know.

Have a good spring everyone!

Dave Smallshire davesmall@btinternet.com

