

Issue 97 Autumn/Winter 2023

# Plantlife

magazine

## Identifying grassland waxcaps

Plants for  
your pond

Meet our new  
agricultural  
advisor

How Disabled  
people navigate  
nature

Working with  
Reverse the Red

**SPECIES  
FOCUS**

Tree Lungwort

Our Artist in Residence tours our nature reserves



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### ON THE COVER

Meadow Waxcap *Cuphophyllus pratensis* ©BobGibbons. You might see them on your autumn walks. Read our feature on identifying grassland waxcaps (on page 15).

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# WELCOME TO AUTUMN



Although cooler days and nights drawing in marks a seasonal change, autumn is such a rich and colourful time of year to look forward to. You may have noticed the abundance of heavy fruiting of blackberries, the size of the acorns, the red-laden hawthorn and abundance of hazelnuts already and without stretching a point... a similar abundance of features in this edition of Plantlife

Magazine. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. We introduce new staff and share the expertise of existing ones. We cover a wide range of topics from garden ponds to IPAs in Mozambique, from fungi to forests, from art to access, this is a rich edition for you to explore.

I am also thrilled to announce that Plantlife has recently assumed the assets and activities of the former Woodmeadow Trust, including the management of a 10-hectare (25 acre) nature reserve, Three Hagges Woodmeadow, near York. This strategic alignment of two conservations charities will allow Plantlife to secure the future of the Three Hagges Woodmeadow site, where wildflowers meet woodlands, and allow us to continue to build on the excellent work by the former Trust and the local community. Visit our website for more information and look out for full details in the spring 2024 issue of our magazine.

Finally, thank you, as ever we cannot deliver this impact this without you.

**Ian Dunn**  
CEO

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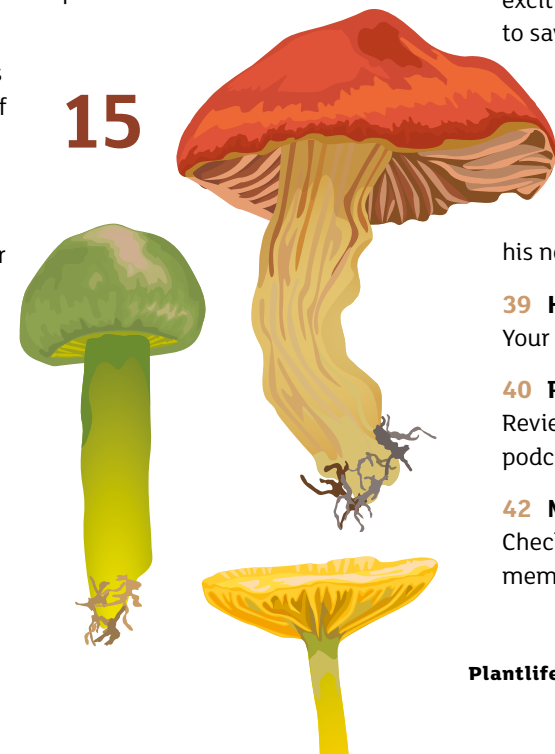
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Check out the latest news from our membership team



Photography by English Heritage, Hywel Morgan, istockphotos.com/Mittudomen. Illustrations by Andrew Evans

## NO MOW MAY: an update

Plantlife's annual claron call to join the No Mow May Movement was met with great success yet again.

You may have caught us on BBC *Springwatch* or seen public figures, such as *Dragons' Den's* Deborah Meaden and our Vice President Rachel de Thame lend their support to the campaign which urges all gardeners and green space managers not to mow, or mow less during May and beyond, liberating their lawns and allowing nature to flourish.

No Mow May has grown steadily since its launch in 2019, with many people this year sharing their pictures and messages about how #NoMowMay has not only benefited wildlife, but enhanced their health and wellbeing, through creating calm and natural spaces on their doorsteps.

Throughout the summer, Plantlife advocated for a fresh and more natural approach to managing gardens and green spaces for the benefit of wildlife and people. Many UK conservation bodies, Greenpeace in the USA and Canada, UK government bodies and organisations



Carol-Ann Robinson sent us this picture of her part-mown lawn

### Did you know?

- 7614 people pledged to liberate their lawns or manage green spaces for wildlife
- Over 90% of participants said they planned to not cut or cut their lawns less frequently until later in the summer
- We featured in more than 1600 news articles
- We took part in more than 25 broadcast interviews and countless Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts
- More than 50 local councils across the UK and Republic of Ireland signed up, with many releasing public commitments on why they were taking part.

representing gardening, outdoor recreation, community and a wealth of other interests, including Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, backed #NoMowMay and shared our messages and resources.

Information and practical tips on how to continue the #NoMowMay journey through the seasons can be found on our website. We're already working on plans for 2024, so look out for more details in the spring edition of *Plantlife* magazine.



Pollinators need a continuous supply of pollen in the summer

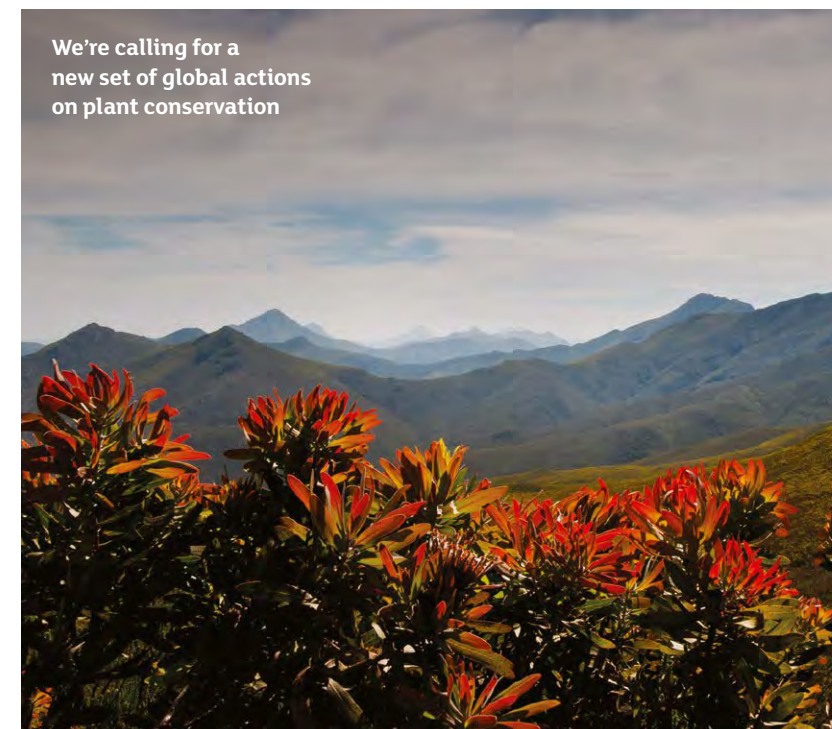
## New global actions for plants

Plantlife is working with partners around the world to secure new global actions for plant conservation up to 2030, as part of the Global Biodiversity Framework agreed last December. This new set of actions will replace the old Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which guided national and global initiatives from 2002 to 2020.

Plant species and their habitats often need specific conservation actions which are different from general actions for biodiversity and habitats. The new set of actions will focus the work of the plant conservation community and other partners in this critical decade for reversing the loss of plant diversity.

The actions will help governments tackle the most urgent threats and have a real impact on the ground, working alongside local communities and indigenous people. Key issues include the sustainable use and management of wild species, the control of invasive non-native species, the identification of areas important for plant diversity, and the use of native plant species for ecosystem restoration.

Plantlife is advocating for governments to put their stamp of approval on the actions when they are considered at the next Conference of the Parties (CoP) in late 2024.



We're calling for a new set of global actions on plant conservation

Photography by Lucia Chmurova, Bob Gibbons, istockphotos.com/FionaAgerst, Plantlife/Trevor Dines, Gwenda Diack, Carol-Ann Robinson, Eifion Thomas



We've updated your members' magazine

## Our new look

You may have noticed a few changes to the look of **Plantlife** magazine and our other publications, website and social media channels recently and, over the next few months, we'll be introducing a more impactful, accessible and consistently recognisable visual identity. This will help us stand out in the environment sector, where we are collaborating more and more with a wide range of partners and other organisations. It will help us achieve our mission of building momentum to create long-term sustainability for Plantlife as the leading voice across the world for wild plants and fungi. And it will help you, our dedicated and enthusiastic members and supporters, to spread the word more effectively about the vital work Plantlife carries out day after day for the future of our planet.



MEET

### Plantlife's new Head of Science

We're delighted to welcome Dr Rachel Warmington to Plantlife in a new role as our Head of Science. Rachel will be strengthening and expanding our research, data, learning and volunteering programmes. Rachel obtained her PhD from the University of Warwick, where she researched the biology and control of a soil-borne fungal plant pathogen. She's previously worked as Head of Strategic Programmes Delivery at the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and as the Science Team Manager at the Eden Project. A focus on science will enable Plantlife to add to our knowledge and evidence base of how to build resilient ecosystems, and protect and restore species and habitats. Rachel plans to expand our research collaborations and partnerships to produce accessible, science-based information and advice to support, inform and inspire impactful conservation of wild plants and fungi.

# Crymlyn's arch unveiled



Crymlyn Burrows is one of the last remaining pockets of wilderness around South Wales' Swansea Bay coastline and the sand dunes here are home to an amazing array of plants and wildlife. To celebrate the beauty and diversity of the area, a new handwrought sculpture has been created by Welsh Artist Blacksmith Eifion Thomas. It's designed as a gateway for the local community and students from Swansea University's Bay campus to enjoy this protected coastal landscape. The design reflects the wildlife and plant life here – Sea Holly *Eryngium*, Marsh Orchids *Dactylorhiza* and Morel fungi *Morchella* adorn the arch and they are just some of the plants and fungi visitors are encouraged to spot on their walks through the dunes.



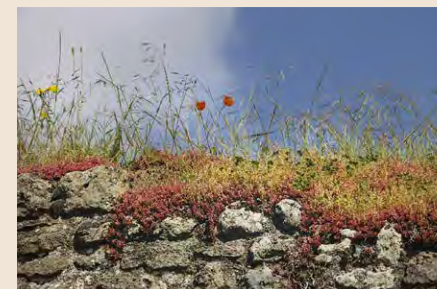
The arch at Crymlyn Burrows

## Plants protect heritage sites

Have you been to a heritage site and seen vegetation growing on the top of ruined walls? These plants may have taken up residence by themselves, but could have been deliberately planted there to form a 'soft cap', which acts like a blanket to protect historic material, such as stone and brick, from deterioration caused by temperature fluctuations, wind and rain.

Researchers at the University of Oxford and Plantlife botanists investigated how the plants in soft caps in the UK and Ireland might respond to changes in climate over the 21st Century. The results showed that if we follow a high emission pathway, Sedum-based soft caps in southern and central UK and Ireland will have few areas where the conditions are suitable for survival.

Next time you're out, take a look at the top of walls and see if you can spot any soft caps working their magic.



Vegetation growing on the top of ruined walls can help preserve historic materials

We've called for the UK Government to develop a grassland action plan for England



## Grassland Action Plan

In August, we launched our call for the UK Government to develop a grassland action plan for England, on a par with existing action plans for trees and peatland. We're looking for a similar strategic approach by Scottish and Welsh Governments, as permanent grasslands cover 40% of UK land, making them a key asset.

Grasslands have huge untapped potential to benefit nature and help tackle climate change, as well as producing food, but this is often overlooked.

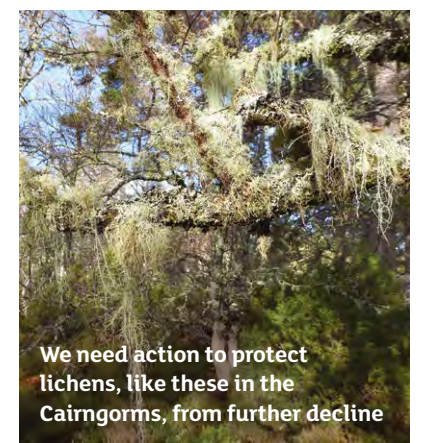
Our campaign is supported by a coalition of 22 farming and conservation organisations and we're in dialogue with the UK Climate Change Committee and other stakeholders to gain

their support. To back our call for government action, you can now find three new evidence reports and briefings on our website (under 'The Grassland Gap' page in the 'Grasslands' section). These highlight the multiple benefits of species-rich and semi-natural grasslands, in particular their underestimated role in capturing and storing carbon in their undisturbed soils. We also present the most up-to-date evidence on the huge losses in extent and ecological condition in grasslands over the past century. We'll use these to keep making the case to governments that species-rich grasslands need to be better valued, protected, managed, and restored at scale.

## STATE OF NATURE 2023 REPORT

A new stocktake of the UK's wildlife reveals continued declines in our biodiversity, prompting renewed calls from Plantlife and its partners for urgent action.

Published jointly by UK conservation organisations, research institutes and statutory agencies, *State of Nature 2023* is the most comprehensive set of reports on nature across the four UK nations, drawing on the latest data collated by thousands of skilled volunteers. The reports show that nature restoration projects such as those delivered by Plantlife, and the shift towards nature-friendly farming can have clear benefits for nature as well as for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and for people's lives – but they need to be rolled out at a much bigger scale. Plantlife and its partners are calling on all governments and political parties to prioritise nature's recovery in their policies.



We need action to protect lichens, like these in the Cairngorms, from further decline

## Conservation round-up



# Protecting threatened plants

The area around Mount Namuli in Mozambique is one of the most botanically valuable Important Plant Areas (IPAs) due to its many endemic and threatened species



**In July, Plantlife joined with Reverse the Red to celebrate 2023 as the Year of Action to reverse the threat of extinction for many of the world's plants. Nicola Hutchinson, our Director of Conservation, tells us more**

When thinking about species becoming extinct, most commonly we refer to well-known historical extinctions such as the dodo, the woolly mammoth or the marine megalodon. The chances are most people won't be able to think of any extinct plant species, but in fact plants are becoming extinct 500 times faster than they would without human interference, according to research by Science Alert. Plantlife teamed up with Reverse the Red to mark 2023 as the Year of Action, a global movement that ignites strategic cooperation and action to ensure the survival of wild species and ecosystems. The campaign highlights

conservation action to reverse the risk of extinction as measured by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List assessment. In July, the spotlight was on plants, when Plantlife focused on global Important Plant Areas (IPAs). With programmes in 50 countries around the world, IPA programmes use national Red Lists of threatened plant species and ecosystems to identify the very best sites to protect these endangered plants.

## Using the Red List

I took part in a webinar (see details, right) which told stories, from Mozambique, Guinea and the UK, of how IPAs help protect and restore the most threatened species. With our



Collecting seeds in Guinea

colleagues from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, we discussed how the Red List is used for identifying the IPA sites from which we can plan and implement species recovery.

The IPA programme in Mozambique assessed 373 plant species and found over half were threatened. In Guinea, around 8.5% of the known flora is threatened, so the IPA programme has started plans to enable their recovery and reintroduction to native habitats.

Local communities are very much engaged with the Guinean IPAs, for instance village plant nurseries have been established in three of Guinea's maritime IPAs to propagate threatened species and train local people and schoolchildren.

I spoke about Plantlife's IPAs in the UK, including our work at Waveney & Little Ouse Valley Fens IPA and Broads IPA in England, which help protect Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii*. After 14 years of concerted conservation action with our partners, the Fen Orchid has recovered to a population size which means that it no longer qualifies as threatened with extinction and, we hope, should mean it can be removed from the UK's Red List.



The Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii* has been saved from extinction



## WATCH OUR WEBINAR

You can view the webinar, hosted by Plantlife's CEO Ian Dunn, at [reversethered.org/events/important-plant-areas-protecting-threatened-plant-species](https://reversethered.org/events/important-plant-areas-protecting-threatened-plant-species) and find out more at [reversethered.org](https://reversethered.org)

## COMMENT

# Transforming our green spaces



**Improving the way we collect and dispose of grass cuttings is essential for our wildflowers and green spaces to flourish. Plantlife is leading the charge to change the way our road verges and green spaces are managed, says Plantlife's Road Verges Intern Andrew Doyle**

To manage green space for nature and increase its ability to be part of a climate solution, we need to mow less often and collect the grass cuttings. Mowing less often allows wildflowers to grow and set seed, and collecting the grass cuttings takes nutrients out of the ecosystem – it reduces high soil fertility levels and prevents the growth of vigorous dominant grasses – allowing wildflowers and healthy soil to thrive.

The collection and disposal of grass cuttings is an essential element in the management of wildflower-rich verges and green spaces but there are currently a number of barriers preventing this happening. These include the investment needed by green space managers in the right equipment, the cost of disposing of cuttings and the waste classification of the cuttings. Plantlife is working with a range of partners to address these barriers and enable the collection and removal of grass cuttings to become 'business as usual'.

Some local authorities, such as Dorset Council, have been trialling ways to tackle this, such as moving verge cuttings to the hedgerow base, leaving them to decompose at designated sites along the verge

or sending them to be composted.

But what if grass cuttings were seen as a renewable resource instead of a waste product?

It's possible that grass cuttings could be utilised in a bio-based circular economy, capable of generating heat, power, biofuels, fertiliser, peat replacement and bio-based construction materials.

## New technologies

Innovations in biotechnologies mean that grass cuttings can be used in processes such as anaerobic digestion, where bacteria break down organic matter in an oxygen-free environment to produce biofuels and organic fertiliser. The biofuel produced by the grass cuttings can provide double the amount of energy used by the mowers to cut the grass – and could actually be used to power the mower! Trials in Lincolnshire suggest that using grass cuttings in anaerobic digestion may be able to payback the costs of managing wildflower-rich verges. Studies have shown that cutting and collecting twice a year is the most energy efficient method to harvest biomass, and is also the

best mowing regime to increase wildflower richness in verges and green spaces.

It may be possible to go a step further, combining this approach to grass cutting with emerging technologies to produce a substance known as hydrochar, which can capture carbon and even form the basis of bio-asphalt for road construction.

These innovations offer an opportunity to rethink the value of grass cuttings and open the door for those who manage verges and green spaces to see them as an asset – capable of paying for their own management and providing a nature-based solution that contributes to meeting net-zero and nature recovery targets.

Plantlife is working with South Gloucestershire Council and West Sussex County Council to explore these possibilities in an innovative new project, Greenprint, funded by the Department for Transport.

● Learn more at [plantlife.org.uk/our-work/road-verges/](https://plantlife.org.uk/our-work/road-verges/)



A tractor-mounted suction flail cutting verges in Lincolnshire, allowing simultaneous cut and collection of the grass, ready to be sent to an anaerobic digestion plant

SPOTLIGHT ON...

# Tree Lungwort



The impressive, vivid-green cascades of Tree Lungwort are not only a feast for the eyes, they are an important ecological component of temperate rainforest ecosystems. Conservation Support Officer Meg Griffiths discusses Plantlife’s work across three different scales to safeguard this iconic yet declining species

**T**ree Lungwort *Lobaria pulmonaria* is a lichen. Lichens are composite organisms made up of at least two separate species – there’s always a fungus involved called the ‘mycobiont’, and a photosynthetic partner species called the ‘photobiont’. The photobiont can either be an alga or a type of photosynthetic bacterium, and in the case of lungwort, it’s both! In Tree Lungwort, the fungi, alga and cyanobacteria live together to make a symbiotic super organism.

The fungus cannot photosynthesise alone but by housing and protecting the photobiont it gains the incredible ability to create energy from sunlight. The bacteria in the lichen also allow it to absorb nitrogen and other nutrients directly from the atmosphere. This means lungworts play a vital role in forest ecosystems as nitrogen fixers, providing a nutrient rich food source for grazing molluscs and insects, which then support animals further down food chains.

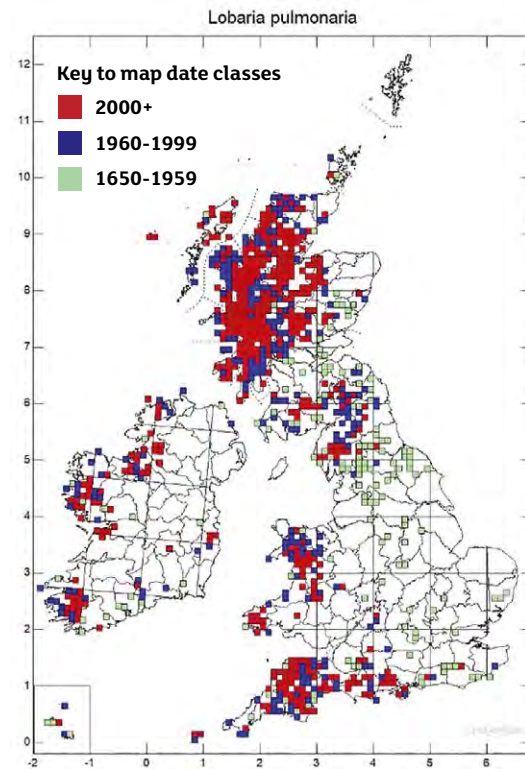
The impressive, leafy structure of Tree Lungwort also makes it an ideal microhabitat for invertebrates, with many species finding a home within the bright green ruffles and furrows of its thallus (the “body” of the lichen).

### Distribution and threats

Its ability to receive nutrients directly from the atmosphere makes lungwort especially sensitive to airborne pollutants. Although it once grew across much of the UK, atmospheric nitrogen and sulphur dioxide pollution, along with habitat loss, have pushed its distribution range west over the last few centuries.

The clean air and oceanic climate of the western seaboard create the perfect conditions for temperate rainforests, and the long continuity of these woodlands make them the perfect refuges for Tree Lungwort to survive.

Sites with continuous woodland cover are becoming rarer because of habitat degradation and fragmentation, which makes conserving these areas



Since the 1650s, Tree Lungwort populations have become increasingly restricted to the western extremities of the UK and Ireland

particularly important. Other drivers of lungwort decline include inappropriate grazing (too little as well as too much), competition with invasive species and loss of ancient trees.

Dramatic declines across Europe mean Tree Lungwort is now considered a species for which Britain has an international responsibility to protect, despite its current GB threat status being Least Concern (due to large populations thriving in the west of Scotland). In Wales however, lungwort is assessed as Vulnerable. ▶

Photography by Meg Griffiths, Dave Lamcraft. Map courtesy of the British Lichen Society



Tree Lungwort  
*Lobaria pulmonaria*

## Making a difference

At Plantlife, we're working across three different scales to protect this iconic species

### 1 The hands-on approach

Most populations of Tree Lungwort are found on trees, which means they are entirely dependent on the fate of their host. While there are a range of trees with base-rich bark which can support *Lobaria* species, ash is one the most important hosts for Tree Lungwort. The widespread loss of ash trees to ash dieback therefore presents even greater danger to this already vulnerable lichen.

In cases where dieback has directly threatened lungwort populations, Plantlife's 'emergency responder', Dave Lamacraft, has worked to transplant the at-risk specimens onto suitable host trees where they can form new colonies. This process is known as translocation and it involves taking fragments of thallus from a healthy individual, removing it from the 'donor' tree and securing it to a suitable 'receptor' tree with a mesh. We've now carried out successful translocations of lungwort across North Wales, and in Exmoor, where 25 specimens were transplanted from a compromised ash branch. Long-term monitoring of the translocated individuals is now showing signs of viability three years on, demonstrating the success that these types of intervention can have.

### 2 Restoring temperate rainforest habitats

Tree Lungwort is the flagship species for a whole community of lichens which grow on base-rich bark.



Tree Lungwort is said to resemble the tissue inside human lungs – hence the name

The *Lobarion* community is hugely important to the ecology of temperate rainforests, containing many ancient woodland indicator species, and many species which we have an international responsibility to protect. As this community requires healthy rainforest habitats, work done to improve rainforest conditions will allow the *Lobarion* community to thrive.

As part of the Building Resilience in Southwest Woodlands project, we carried out essential woodland conservation work to restore the conditions required by the *Lobarion* community at scale. Work involved clearing invasive species, increasing light levels through beech, holly and ivy management, and creating the next generation of veteran trees. The project has now directly managed 73 hectares (180 acres) of temperate rainforest and has trained and equipped land managers across the country with the skills to continue delivering this work into the future.

### 3 Tackling nitrogen pollution

The presence or absence of Tree Lungwort can be thought of as a signal from the forest telling us about the health of the ecosystem. Beyond critical nitrogen levels, these important lichens become out-competed and swamped in nitrogen-tolerant algae, which knocks the ecosystem out of balance.

We're working in collaboration with other NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to advocate for legally binding government targets to reduce nitrogen pollution, supporting actions by farmers to prevent ammonia emissions close to sensitive habitats, and encouraging on-site management to mitigate the impact of nitrogen deposition.

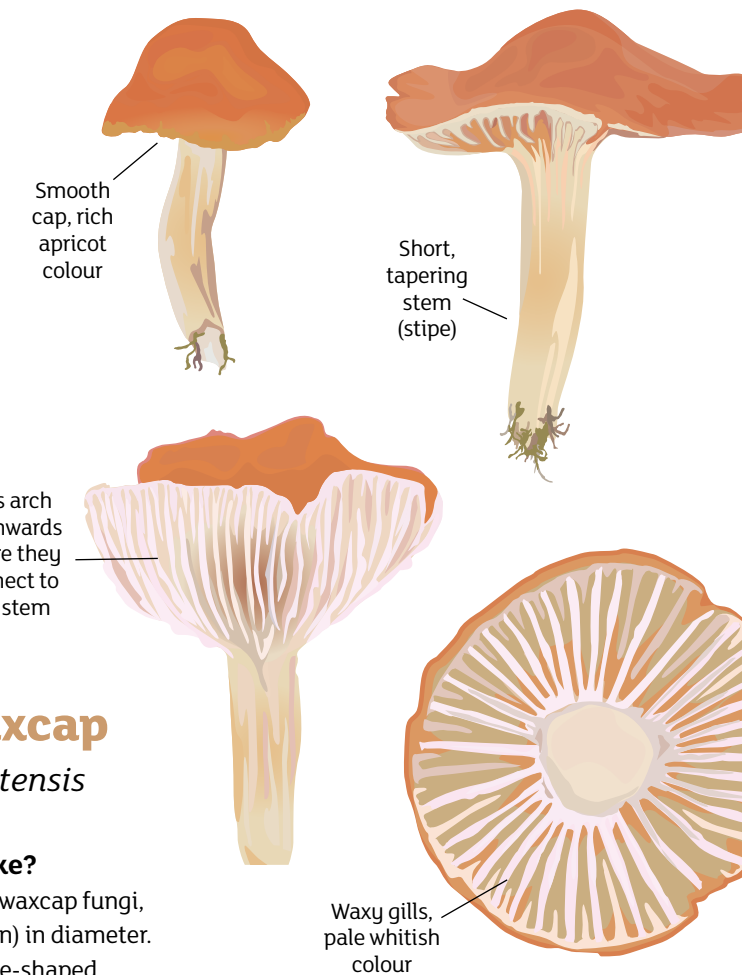
If and when we see populations of lungwort recovering independently, we can be reassured that our ongoing work across these three scales is having a positive impact, not only on Tree Lungwort, but on our temperate rainforests ecosystems as a whole. 🌿

## How to ID fungi

There are over 50 species of waxcap fungi in the UK and here we look at ways to identify three you might come across on your autumnal walks

The term waxcap was originally coined to describe fungi of the genus *Hygrocybe*, whose species have thick, waxy gills. *Hygrocybe* means 'watery head' and refers to the way the caps of these fungi can absorb water in damp conditions and become slimy or greasy to the touch. They appear in a rainbow of bright colours, from reds to indigos, although many others are less striking in tones of brown, grey and white. The vivid colours generally fade with age.

Waxcaps are one of the most important groups of grassland fungi. They are found mainly in areas of turf that have not been treated with fertilisers and which are low in nutrients. Just as our wildflower meadows have suffered great losses since the 1930s, so too have our Waxcap grasslands. The main body of a waxcap is the *mycelium*, composed of fine white strands (*hyphae*) that remain below ground within the substrate that it feeds on. The mushrooms we see nestled in the grass are the fruiting bodies, and only appear when conditions are favourable. Indeed, only a proportion of waxcap species present at a site may produce mushrooms in any given year.



### Meadow waxcap *Cuphophyllus pratensis*

#### What do they look like?

One of the largest of the waxcap fungi, with caps up to 10cm (4in) in diameter. The young caps are dome-shaped and a rich, apricot colour, darkest at the centre. As they age, they start to resemble a miniature soldier's shield (flatter with a raised dome at the centre), then finally a dish-shape. The colour fades to a pale, tawny pink as the cap ages, and the margin often becomes cracked and distorted. The stems are stout and up to 8cm (3in) in length, cylindrical and tapering towards the base. They are a whitish apricot colour, paler than the cap. The gills are a similar colour to the stem, quite widely spaced in their radial pattern and arching down the stem where they connect to it.

#### Where can you find them?

Although able to withstand some fertiliser application, this species is generally found in old, tightly mown meadows and churchyards where

fertilisers have not been used, and in sheep-grazed upland pastures.

#### When do they grow?

From late summer to the first of the autumn frosts, but most abundant in late September and October.

#### Are they rare?

Widespread and common in Britain and Ireland, particularly in upland areas.

#### Do they smell?

A mild, mushroomy odour.

#### EASILY CONFUSED WITH:

Pink Waxcap *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis* can be distinguished by its white stem, and its cap that is acutely pointed at first, splitting markedly as it opens and matures. ▶

## Crimson Waxcap

*Hygrocybe punicea*

### What do they look like?

This is the largest of the red-coloured waxcaps, with caps up to 8cm (3in) in diameter. The younger caps have an irregular conical shape, often lobed at the margin. As they get older, they become flatter, retaining a raised dome in their centre, and turning upwards at the edges. They have a dull, leathery appearance, and their colour is deep blood-red at first (except their extreme margin which is often yellow), developing orange or yellow patches as they mature, and gradually fading to a pale yellow. The stems are robust, up to 10cm (4in) in length, with a scaly texture, and a yellow colour, flushed with an orangey-red, but whitish towards the base. The gills are yellow with a waxy texture and broadly spaced in their radial pattern. They are attached to the stem, but do not arch down in the way that they do in Meadow Waxcap.

### Where can you find them?

They favour old, nutrient-poor and closely-cropped meadows, pastures, and churchyards, commonly growing in small or large clusters and often in rings. Their presence is indicative of a high-quality grassland likely to be important for a diversity of other waxcap species.

### When do they grow?

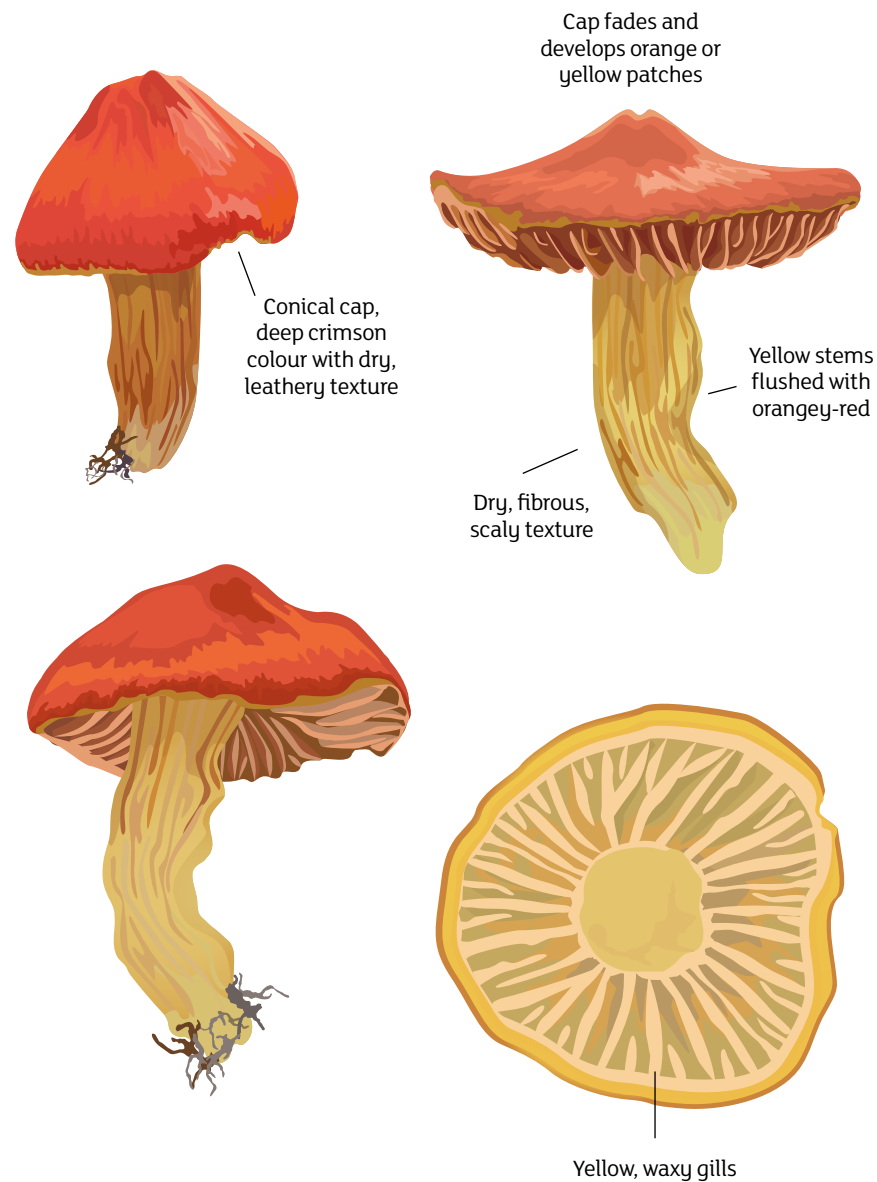
Late summer to autumn, first appearing later than some of the other waxcaps.

### Are they rare?

Widespread but not common in Britain and Ireland, although more frequent in upland areas.

### Do they smell?

No discernable odour.



### EASILY CONFUSED WITH:

Scarlet Waxcap *Hygrocybe coccinea* is similar but is smaller and has a brighter, scarlet cap and orange gills. Splendid Waxcap *H. splendidissima* has a cap that is a deep red colour, but does not fade to yellow as it matures, and a stem that is often twisted, producing a spiral pattern around it. Meadow Waxcap looks similar to faded specimens of Crimson Waxcap, but the former can be distinguished by its gills that arch downwards where they connect to the stem.

Plantlife has its own waxcap elearning course. Called **Introduction to Waxcap Grassland Fungi Identification and Management.**



SCAN THE QR CODE HERE TO LEARN MORE

## Parrot Waxcap

*Gliophorus psittacinus*

### What do they look like?

The Genus is from the Greek 'Glio', meaning glue, and 'phorus', meaning 'bearing'; a reference to the slimy, slippery texture of the cap and stem that is characteristic of Parrot Waxcap. Smaller than the other two species featured here, the caps are generally 2-4cm (1/2-1 1/2in) across, a striking emerald green when young, turning yellow with age and sometimes developing a pinkish-purple tinge when exposed to cold temperatures or heavy rainfall. The stems are slender around 2-7cm (1/2-2 1/2in) long and have

a greenish-yellow colour that usually persists in the shaded upper part, but fades to yellow in the lower section where exposed to sunlight. The gills have a waxy texture that is sometimes tinged green in younger specimens.

### Where can you find them?

They favour old grasslands, grassy areas in heathlands and lawns that have not been treated with fertilisers.

### When do they grow?

Late summer to late autumn.

### Are they rare?

Fairly frequent and widespread in Britain and Ireland, particularly in Wales and in upland areas.

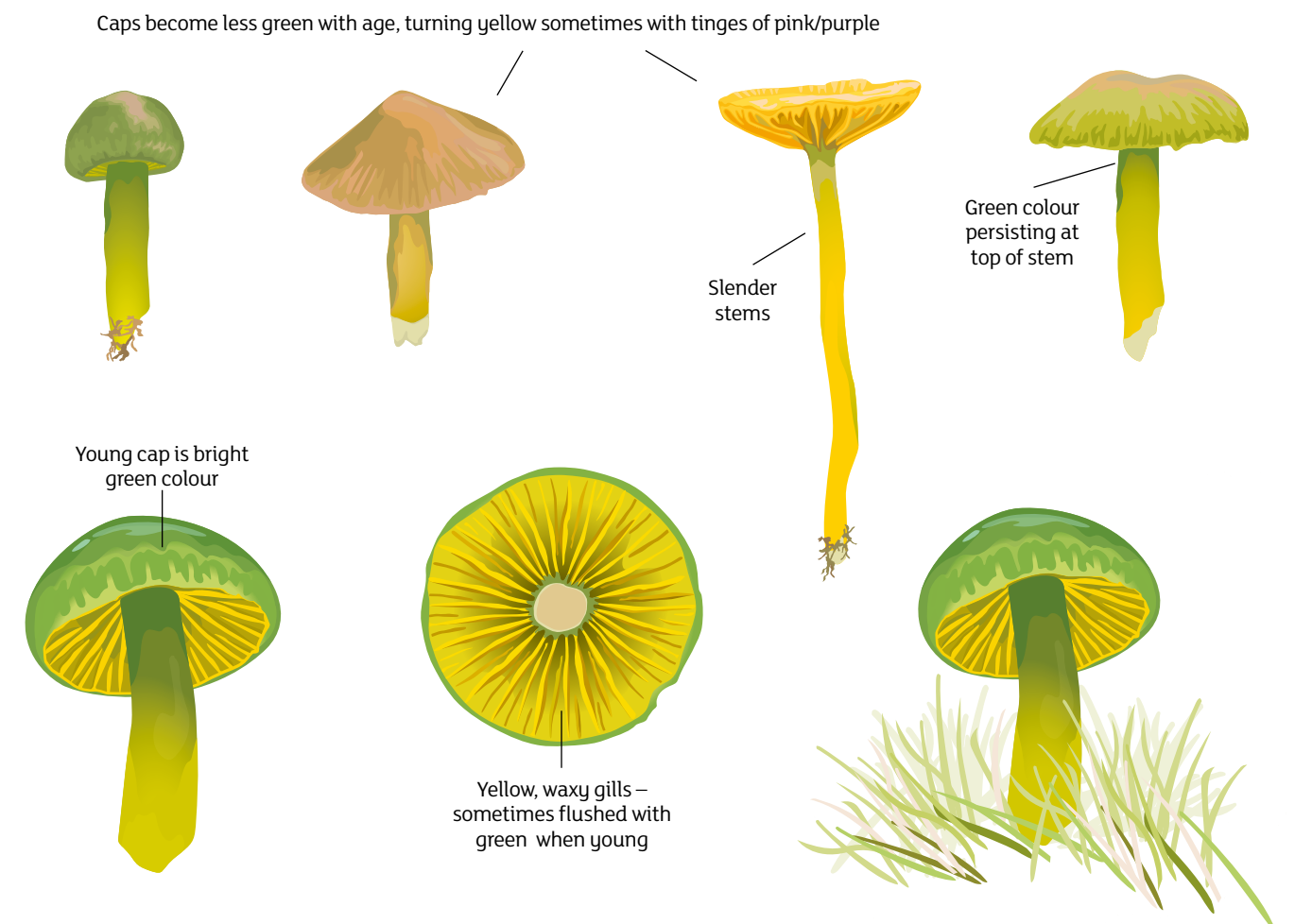
### Do they smell?

No distinctive odour.

### EASILY CONFUSED WITH:

Golden Waxcap *Hygrocybe chlorophana* and Butter Waxcap *H. ceracea* both have a yellow colouration similar to the yellow specimens of Parrot Waxcap. However, the younger caps lack the green colouration. Golden Waxcap often has a flattened, grooved stem and Butter Waxcap is generally smaller and with a drier texture.

● If you feel inspired to take part in our Waxcap Watch this autumn, visit [plantlife.org.uk/waxcapwatch](http://plantlife.org.uk/waxcapwatch) for more details.



# Pond life

Creating a pond in your garden is a wonderful way to attract wildlife and an opportunity to learn about aquatic plants and watch them flourish. Our wildlife gardening experts give some guidance on the best ways to go about it

If you're looking to bolster the biodiversity of your garden, put in a pond. The phrase 'build it and they will come' should have been made for garden ponds. Within weeks you might attract everything from bathing birds, darting dragonflies and amorous amphibians, to marvellous minibeasts worthy of the most imaginative sci-fi films. You will no doubt wonder why you waited so long to put one in!

While it's worth learning the dos and don'ts of pond construction, we think the plants deserve equal attention. Without them (from single-celled algae all the way up to towering rushes) your pond would lack the foundations upon which life depends.

**Ben Middleton and Ellie Mitchell are professional organic gardeners based in Nottingham. They were one of the first fully organic garden maintenance companies to launch in the UK. They only use organic products and methods, combined with the latest horticultural expertise and know-how to help gardens flourish naturally. Their aim is to attract wildlife into garden spaces, which benefits not just the garden but its owners too! They host *The Wildlife Garden Podcast* where you can pick up tips on how to make your garden space totally wildlife friendly.**



## Intrepid algae

Algal life will probably be the first strand of your pond's burgeoning web of life. In a new pond you might see an initial flush of algae arriving to take advantage of nutrients in the water. This can happen at an alarming pace but hold your nerve – the cavalry's coming! A lot of critters, including some species of highly mobile fly, like the non-biting Chironomid flies, sniff out algae to be a feast for their hatching larvae. Within a few more weeks algae-grazing worm species ►

You might attract a common frog





**Ones to avoid:** Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (left) and New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii* (right)

## PROBLEM POND PLANTS

Plantlife is concerned that some pond (aquatic) plants are Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). These plants can escape into the wild and cause problems, not just for our ecosystem but for our communities and our economies. Here are the ones to avoid for the health of your pond and the wider countryside

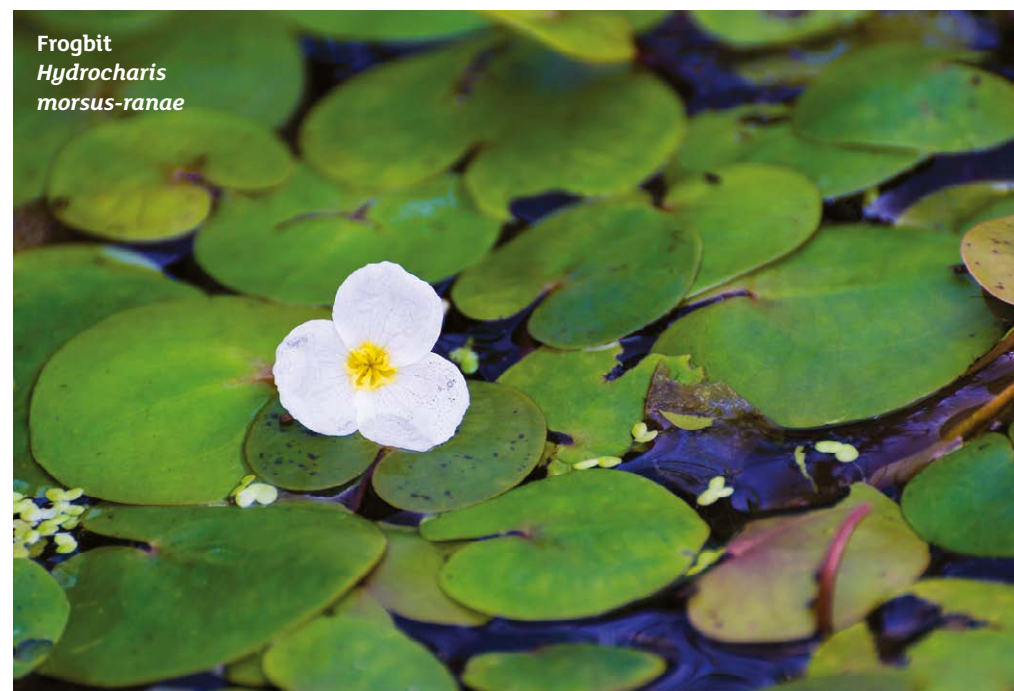
- Australian Swamp Stonecrop or New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*, *Tillaea recurva*, *Tillaea helmsii* (often sold under one of these names)
- Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*
- Curly Waterweed *Lagarosiphon major* (sometimes mislabelled as *Elodea crispata*)
- Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*
- Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*
- Floating Pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*
- Water Fern or Fairy Fern *Azolla filiculoides*

It is important to note that some UK native plants, such as White Water Lily *Nymphaea alba*, have found their way to the ponds and lakes of other countries, such as Canada and the USA, and pose a threat to their native species, too.

could arrive and we absolutely have to mention water fleas as their rapid breeding and penchant for algae can clear up a spring-time algal bloom in a matter of days.

The combination of algae alongside these smaller pond inhabitants are precisely what amphibians look for in a breeding site, so given time you will hopefully be serenaded by chirring frogs and croaking toads looking for a mate. Incorporating a submerged, warmth-absorbing rock edge on the sunniest side of your pond will gently encourage algae, and growing tadpoles will also enjoy basking there in the spring sunshine.

Letting more complex vascular plants (that have xylem and phloem to transport water and nutrients throughout them) colonise your pond naturally is an option if you're very patient and live near a body of water. For most though, planting up your pond as if it were a border is not only faster, but also fun, creative and a great way to learn about the UK's aquatic plant diversity. Remember that as for a border, some plants may do better than others depending on



**Frogbit**  
*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*



**Purple Loosestrife** *Lythrum salicaria*

the conditions, but there are a lot to try for ponds large or small.

### Smooth transitions

A variety of water depths gives the biggest array of plant choice. Permanent bog conditions can be created along part of the edge, giving the opportunity for beautiful and dense planting that visually transitions into an adjacent garden border or, even better, a wildflower

meadow. This provides vital cover for emerging amphibians who want to avoid predators or being baked in the summer sun. You have a huge choice here, but one of our favourite plants for boggy areas is the statuesque Purple Loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*. This towers up to 2m (6ft), with vibrant purple flowers in late summer. For smaller or shadier spaces why not try Bugle *Ajuga reptans*; its 10-15cm (4-6in) tall spikes of deep blue flowers cover the ground in April-June. Both provide a bounty of nectar, and Purple Loosestrife is even one of the food plants for the caterpillar of the punky Elephant Hawkmoth.

### Life on the edge

The sloping edge of your pond and the shallows provide a mind-boggling number of niches just waiting to be exploited by wildlife. There are many species of native plant that will do well here, that are known as marginals. Slow-growing Amphibious Bistort *Persicaria amphibia* can grow in moist soils and in deeper water, giving cover for wildlife under its broad oblong floating leaves and among its creeping fleshy roots. Its beautiful small pink flower spikes provide pollen and nectar in late summer. In larger ponds, try also adding some height with plants like Flowering Rush *Butomus umbellatus*. It's not actually in the rush family Juncaceae; instead it comprises the only species in its own family Butomaceae. Damselflies and dragonflies can perch on the tall stems of scented, rosy-pink flowers, watching out for unsuspecting prey.

### Diving deeper

Wading into deeper water, the physical structure of floating and submerged plants is what gives this area its habitat value.

Rising from the depths, the



**Flowering Rush**  
*Butomus umbellatus*

mere mention of floating leaves immediately brings to mind the water lilies. One being the White Water Lily *Nymphaea alba* which possesses the classic and beautiful flower valued by a myriad of wildlife. Or perhaps you'd rather go for the wonderfully named Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*? This has very similar lily-pad shaped leaves, and cheery three-petalled white flowers with egg yolk-yellow centres, held aloft in July and August. Like many of the floating plants, both can be vigorous, so do make sure you have room for them.

Plants with horizontal floating leaves on the water's surface provide shade from the summer sun, which helps to lower temperatures and subsequent over-enthusiastic algal growth. To maximise the space further, you could add another aquatic high-rise with Water Soldier *Stratiotes aloides*. Now a rare plant in the wild in the UK, it spends most of the year underwater,

where it provides excellent shelter for pond invertebrates like the larvae of caddisflies. In June and August, a rosette of protruding sword-like leaves comes to the surface and white flowers that offer food for pollinators.

Submerged plants are often lumped together as 'oxygenators'. They fulfil this role in addition to providing creatures with crucial hiding and egg-laying spaces. Being plant lovers, we encourage you to also take stock of their beautiful leaf shapes when choosing species. Those of Fennel Pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus*, for example, resemble its land-loving namesake's delicate feathery leaves, floating gracefully in the water.

With this tantalising treasure trove of colourful aquatic plants to choose from, we hope we've inspired you to get digging this winter. If we have, just remember one final thing: a place to sit comfortably and watch the amazing explosion of life that your efforts will guarantee. 🌿



# My wildflower treasure hunt

Lisa Gardner, our Artist in Residence, shares extracts from her summer diary as she travels across the UK visiting some of Plantlife's nature reserves and partner sites, immersing herself and her art in the flora in these beautiful locations

**A**s an artist, my work is embedded in the natural world. For me, it's the seed that allows my paintings to grow. As part of my Artist Residency for Plantlife (supported by Arts Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice Fund), this summer I set off on a wildflower treasure hunt across the UK. I had the privilege to see many rare, endangered species and was blown away by their fragility, strength and beauty. My aim throughout my journey was to step out of the 'big picture', sit in the moment, observe and reflect. I wondered, too, how this would impact my creative work and my own sense of self...

**11 May 2023**  
**Ranscombe Farm, Kent**

My summer journey begins at Plantlife's flagship nature reserve where I'm introduced to the rare and endangered Man Orchid *Orchis anthropophora* on a roadside verge inside the reserve. Their milky lime-yellow petals with stripes of burgundy and tongues like snakes are utterly divine. The juxtaposition of this rare, beautiful flower with the hum of traffic feels like a metaphor for human nature: how much do we miss because we're simply too busy?

Strolling through Ranscombe's woodlands, I'm met by exquisite pops of colour – from the violet Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* to the zesty Wood Spurge *Euphorbia*

*amygdaloides*. I even come face to face with my first Yellow Archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* with its heart-shaped halo. This subtle plant is bursting with personality; something I've found more and more with every wildflower I meet.

I soon find myself in a clearing

lined with fallen logs that are now covered in a blanket of moss and lichen. Beside the logs, clusters of Early Purple Orchids *Orchis mascula* grow in busy bundles, vibrant and powerful. Next to them are bluebells and varieties of thick grasses. Here, I simply sit, breathe, absorb and listen. As much as I want to grab my paintbrush and record this masterpiece, I know that I need to let nature peel back the layers so I can drink it all in.

I also connect with a rare and endangered Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea*, towering high at the end of a small, naturally trodden path. She's been blossoming for over 15 years and has become somewhat ▶



**Bluebells, Green-winged Orchids and Cowslips at Joan's Hill Farm**

Portrait by Colin Willsher. Photography/paintings by Lisa Gardner



of a pilgrimage for visitors. There's something compelling about her ability to keep flourishing year after year. It makes me think about the orchids that haven't been so lucky. A theme I'm playing with in my paintings: a representation of the wildflowers that have now become a memory.

16 May 2023

### Joan's Hill Farm, Hereford

As I walk up to the site, I notice how unassuming and understated it is. Yet, as I push through the squeaky gate onto the Coronation Meadow, there's nothing I can do but simply stop and stare. This extraordinary meadow is engulfed in wildflowers; hundreds and hundreds of Green-winged Orchids *Anacamptis morio* interspersed with buttercups *Ranunculus* and the Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* all dancing across rolling dips. Green-winged Orchids are particularly important to this site. They are a vibrant plum-jam purple, a colour so delicious I can almost taste them. I'm told you can also find the odd pale pastel pink one among the crowds – they all have amazing deep green veins that streak from the hoods of the orchid and spotty tongues poking out to say hello.

I sit with them as they sway in full bloom alongside bluebells and Cowslip *Primula veris*: something which is enchanting, but also unusual and troubling. What's the impact of all three of these species vying for nutrients at the same time? They stand centimetres apart, as if embracing and protecting one another. Beauty and despair, all in one image.

Another plant that catches my eye here is the Cuckooflower (also known as Lady's Smock) *Cardamine pratensis*, a delicate, thinly stemmed flower with multiple blossoms. It has deeply veined trench marks drawn across the petals



Painting in a wildflower meadow at Kenfig

and the ability to knot its roots through unstable marshy meadows while also getting caught in the softest of breezes. This is one of the many reasons I adore wildflowers: they represent the yin and yang of being wild and free, strong yet delicate, many with the superhero ability to rise through rubble. Here now, but perhaps not for much longer.

There's another wonderful example of this on a fallen oak tree that's now starting to root back down into the woodland. In a small pocket of moss are a cluster of five, bright pink Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* flowers: the tiniest detail against this gentle giant. The punchiness of the pink is a sign of how, while the oak had gone over, this seemingly miniscule flower has still managed to thrive.

25 May 2023

### Fivehead Arable Fields, Somerset

My journey continues as I reach Fivehead Arable Fields, a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). Here I revel in watching Holly Blue butterflies play, and witnessing the Great Bush-cricket in its nymph stage as it rustles among the plants. And yet,

the most mesmerising sight comes in the form of the smallest plants that hold the highest conservation significance: the rare Broad-fruited Comsalad *Valerianella rimosa* and the Shepherd's Needle *Scandix pecten-veneris*. Both exhibit tiny flowers, barely the size of my fingertip. I love the idea of the micro becoming macro: this is why I now take my hand lens with me everywhere.

I also find Hemlock Water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* which have huge



Scottish Primrose  
*Primula scotica*

dome-like umbrellas growing high up away from the ground, bobbing in the wind and casting intricate shadows across my blank page, just waiting to be filled with swirling marks. My visit here is proving to be a special experience.

2-10 June 2023

### The Scottish Highlands

The biggest part of my trip is my eight-day tour of the Highlands, to see some of Plantlife's Species on the Edge project work. The colours in this region are like a symphony; vibrant pops against a rugged landscape. All the colours merge against the textures of the flagstone rocks and I have to work hard to find the rare species among this incredible palette!

At one point, I lean over a cliff side to spot the tiniest deep pink Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica*; it's so small and fragile – around 5cm (2in) tall but I'm so glad I made the effort. The Scottish Primrose is only found in Orkney and on the northern coast of Scotland. If it disappears from these sites, it's gone forever. Our discovery, therefore, feels enormously poignant.

I slide down (yet another) cliff three

times to get up close to the Purple Oxytropis *Oxytropis halleri*; a species on the very brink of extinction. This silky leaved plant has arms reaching up towards the sun, with pink flowers that turn to purple with age, all covered with fine silver threads that shine in the light. The fragility of this plant – that's quite literally living on the edge – speaks to my soul.

The impermanence of life and the cyclical nature of the plants we desperately want to save is showing up in my work already. As I experiment with natural pigments, I'm aware the ink won't necessarily last. The colours will fade and change and the image I first poured onto the paper won't be the one that sits there after the passage of time. Does that make it less valuable? Or more valuable?

4-6 July 2023

### Kenfig, Wales

My wonderful journey across the UK ends in Kenfig, part of Plantlife's Green Links Project in Bridgend and the Dynamic Dunescapes initiative. Here, I collect sketch shadows of the Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, and seed pods from Yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and Willowherb *Epilobium spp.* I get close to the ground, feeling the earth against my skin, absorbing the fresh scent of Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* and connecting to nature's roots as I allow images to appear through the shadows that spiral across my canvas. At one point, the world around me becomes so still that a newt crawls onto my painting. I didn't take a photograph; I didn't do anything. Life is so demanding and hectic, but when we allow ourselves to get comfortable with nature (rather than trying to use it for anything) it can become a soothing balm. Every cell in my body felt nourished and held in that moment.



### Reflections

I came into this experience hoping it would unleash new inspiration for my work; which it has, tenfold. My paintings are far more raw and honest, but it's the personal journey that's been the most surprising. With every new site, my confidence has grown and my connection to nature has deepened.

I was struck by the hidden pauses in between 'real life' that can all too easily pass us by. It's this that I yearn to capture in my art. As someone who's struggled to share her voice with confidence and pride, this was a big one for me but gradually, I've found my voice: a voice that's determined to speak up for and protect these incredible plants.

It's my deep belief and passion that the arts have a duty to support conservation. We are, after all, nature. Every painting begins with a conscious breath; a reminder that our inhale is nature's exhale, and – in turn – our exhale is nature's inhale. The arts have the power to inspire this sense of connection, helping weave the emotional threads that draw people closer and closer to nature's needs.

● You can follow Lisa on Instagram at @irishill. Lisa works under her nan's name in tribute to her.

# Restoring ancient woodland



Ben Sweeney, our Reserve Manager at Ranscombe Farm, on a new project starting at our flagship nature reserve in Kent this winter

Above: The woodland ride at Ranscombe Farm, after Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* stumps were removed in 2011, is now easily mowable each year and is alive with wildflowers and insects in the spring and summer

We are undertaking an exciting project across extensive areas of Ranscombe Farm this winter, thanks to the support our members gave to this year's nature reserves appeal and an additional grant of over £60,000 from the Veolia Environmental Trust. It will boost our ongoing work to increase the diversity of the ancient woodlands here.

Although much of the interest at Ranscombe, understandably, tends to focus on the site's important arable and grassland flora, approximately half of the 260-hectare (640 acre) reserve is woodland. A large proportion of this is ancient woodland which was traditionally dominated by Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* and managed by coppicing.

## Changing the landscape

The Sweet Chestnut may have been introduced here by the Romans, but during the 18th and 19th centuries it was planted extensively within existing woodlands in southeast England. A



Ranscombe Farm's ancient woodland has been dominated by Sweet Chestnut

major driver for this was the brewing industry; the trees were coppiced on a short rotation to produce long, straight poles for use in hop gardens. But as a highly versatile and durable material, chestnut was soon established as the dominant tree species across woodlands in Kent, existing as a monoculture across much of Ranscombe's woodland by the 1940s. Many of our plants and associated wildlife had to adapt to it.

However, woodland dominated by Sweet Chestnut has its drawbacks, particularly as it isn't coppiced at the same frequency now. Its large leaves cast dense shade, so very little will grow under its canopy, plus chestnut coppice shoots grow incredibly fast, two metres (six feet) in the first year being common. So, for many wild plants, only the first two to three years following coppicing provide a

viable window for their growth. As a non-native species, the value of even a veteran chestnut for wildlife is limited.

## Interventions

Most of Ranscombe's mature and veteran trees (such as Oak *Quercus spp* and Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*) are concentrated on the southern edge of the reserve and along a one-kilometre (½ mile) track running east to west through the woods known as the 'Town Road'. The remainder are dotted sparsely throughout the coppice, vulnerable to being out-competed by surrounding chestnut trees.

When Plantlife started managing Ranscombe in 2005, a major priority was re-establishing the coppice cycle, and this was achieved between 2007 and 2012, with most of the wood being harvested for fencing.

An extensive network of wide rides and glades was also created to provide a connected, permanently



Removal of the large, Sweet Chestnut (on the left) would allow more of the Town Road to be managed as an open ride and enhance the woodland biodiversity

'open' habitat consisting of bare ground, grass, and scrub of different size and age. This has proved highly effective at increasing the overall plant richness and we welcome the reappearance of woodland butterflies such as White Admiral, Silver-washed Frithillary and Purple Emperor.

## Tree management

It was evident that if chestnut coppice re-growth could be prevented then it wouldn't be long before the woodland would be restocked by natural regeneration. So, from 2010 we undertook trials in small areas where re-growth was controlled. This is a simple, but resource-intensive task but our efforts paid off and over ten years on where there would have been monotonous stands of chestnut, there are now thickets of trees including Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Hazel *Corylus avellana* amongst others.

Since natural regeneration from seed is a slower process than coppice re-growth, this also has the effect of prolonging the early stages of woodland succession, allowing time for plants to exploit niches where they would otherwise become rapidly shaded out by fast growing coppice shoots. One beneficiary of this is the endangered Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea* which increased its range into these areas of former chestnut coppice.

Based on the success of these early trials, five years ago we decided to reproduce this effect over a larger area, to ultimately remove chestnut from 10 hectares (25 acres). Target areas were selected based on their proximity to existing concentrations of native trees, including mature and veteran trees, and their botanical richness.

It is neither feasible, nor desirable, to completely remove chestnut from the woodland; it would be simply too costly in time and money, plus chestnut would and indeed should continue to provide a valuable resource as a sustainable woodland product. But along with the concurrent ride and glade management, our aim is to increase the overall woodland diversity, significantly reducing the overall dominance of chestnut within the woodland ecosystem. 🌿



## WHAT WE'RE DOING

The work being delivered this winter (by our contractors and volunteers) includes:

- Further cutting back of chestnut re-growth from over two hectares (five acres) of woodland already undergoing conversion.
- Felling of chestnut across three hectares (seven acres) to convert to mixed native broadleaves.
- Completing the widening of a woodland ride that supports the only surviving wild population of Hairy Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla filicaulis* (above) in Kent.
- Removing 25 large chestnut trees along the Town Road to further open the woodland ride and relieve pressure on neighbouring veteran hornbeams.
- Felling chestnut coppice in a 'halo' around 18 mature oak trees to help prolong their life and enhance their condition.
- Employing a heavy-duty forest mulching machine to grind out large numbers of tree stumps (including many chestnut coppice stools) to facilitate more efficient and effective annual management.
- Establishing 100 new oak standards to provide mature and veteran trees of the future.

Photography by Ben Sweeney

# Designed out of nature



Bethany Handley, a Disabled writer and activist from South Wales, asks why Disabled people

struggle to access nature and what changes need to happen

Since becoming a wheelchair user, I've felt an even greater sense of awe in nature. When I can access outdoor spaces, the chirping of crickets in meadows and the calming ancient oaks I roll beneath help me to nurture a sense of presence and freedom greater than any I had felt when I could walk. Sadly, these experiences are rare because as a Disabled person, barriers exclude me from many outdoor spaces. I've become all too aware that nature is not equally accessible to everyone. However, since the barriers for Disabled people have often been consciously created, I believe they could be removed.

## Access denied

Neglect of a space, or the failure to consider the needs of all communities accessing that space, often leads to exclusion from that space for many people. For example, the Brecon Canal in South Wales, where I live, has level and clearly marked paths that are accessible and easy to follow, including for many people with mobility impairments, people who are visually impaired and people with learning



Boardwalks are a simple solution

impairments. However, the introduction of small gates and poor maintenance has meant the path is harder to access in places, with unkempt plants overhanging the path creating trip hazards and narrowing the width of the path, making it difficult for wheelchair users to navigate.

These are just some of many (conscious and unconscious) ways the Disabled community are excluded from the great outdoors.

## Tackling negative attitudes

However, attitudes can also exclude people from a space just as much as physical design.

When I'm outdoors I experience the intrusions of strangers' comments and stares. While propelling myself down paths I'm often confronted by speed limit jokes or asked: 'What happened to you?' Strangers' reactions may be well-intentioned, but they challenge Disabled people's existence in that space. Disabled friends with a range of mobility, sensory and learning impairments have shared similar experiences. It's hard to enjoy the beauty of a landscape when you're forced to advocate for your presence there.

## Physical barriers

The fallacy that Disabled people don't want to access outdoor spaces inevitably creates physical barriers. Narrow gates and stiles, and larger gates that are padlocked exclude many Disabled people from access to green spaces. There are so many deliberate and accidental obstacles like these that exclude the Disabled community from the outdoors. Disregarding a range of access requirements denies communities the potential to enjoy and preserve that space.

The myth that being outdoors equates to 'conquering' the extremes of our landscape such as mountains, dense forests or beaches, also excludes many from outdoor spaces. Instead, nature must be understood through personal engagement. Many of our interactions with nature may be through our houseplants, gardens or inner-city parks. Over 80% of the UK population is located in urban areas. Prioritising environmental and social sustainability is equally important in urban areas as rural, ensuring everyone can access and enjoy nature. We can only protect nature if everyone values it.

Bethany believes everyone should have equal access to nature



## What can be done?

Here are my top five solutions for improving access to nature for Disabled people

### 1 Accessible footpaths

When creating or maintaining footpaths, a surface that reduces trip hazards and is smooth to navigate, such as boardwalks, is a necessity. Compacted dirt or mowed paths can provide better access than many materials we make footpaths from, such as gravel. Paths should also be clearly marked and any low hanging branches trimmed. Well-maintained, clearly marked footpaths improve access for everyone and ensure habitats are preserved by encouraging people to stick to the path.

### 2 Accessible parking spaces and toilet

While rural car parks may have more space, if another car parks close to mine I will not be able to get into or out of my car. Accessible spaces must

be marked and sign-posted. We also need more accessible toilets in rural locations.

### 3 Map access

Disabled people won't know whether a route is accessible if access hasn't been mapped. An Ordnance Survey map, for example, does not tell me whether I can access a route as a wheelchair user. Information on the route, including the terrain, gradient and width of the path, whether there's accessible parking and toilets, information about any gates and how clearly the path is marked, needs to be shared. Tactile maps, with clearly defined routes, should be placed at the start of a route to improve accessibility.

There are some great resources for finding accessible routes such as Euan's Guide (euanguide.com) or The Outdoor Guide

(theoutdoorguide.co.uk) but they're not comprehensive and Disabled people shouldn't have to turn to specialist sites to discover whether we can access a space.

### 4 Moving around

Help with funding assistive technology and transport for Disabled people is vital. This includes accessible transport and assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices such as mobility, communication and sensory aids. For example, like many Disabled people I had to self-fund my lightweight wheelchair and my off-road electric attachment, without which I couldn't access many outdoor spaces.

### 5 Who's missing?

When you're in an outdoor space, question who's missing and why. What can you do to reduce the barriers that are excluding people from the space? Disabled people shouldn't hold the responsibility for access to nature. 🐾

## PLANTLIFE SAYS:

One of our four strategic aims is to ensure everyone has the opportunity to connect with nature. The right to enjoy the mental and physical benefits of engaging with green spaces is a human right. We acknowledge that some of our nature reserves aren't accessible to all and that's something we're working on. All the research proves that spending time in nature improves our mental and physical health and we believe these benefits should be open to everyone. Plantlife wants everyone to be inspired to help save wild plants, fungi and their habitats and secure a future for our planet.

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# Plants of the Qur'an

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Botanist and author Shahina A. Ghazanfar, an expert on Middle Eastern plants, delves into the fascinating stories behind some of the ancient plants mentioned in one of the world's oldest texts

I've always loved plants, but my passion doesn't lie in growing them. It lies in seeing the minutest details in their morphological structure, adaptations of their aerial parts and internal structure, their growth habits, and, of course, their fragrance (even if it's unpleasant to the human sense of smell!).

Living in the Old World desert regions, as I have done for the major part of my career as a plant taxonomist, I am fascinated by the different ways plants adapt to the one main limiting factor – water. From absorbing dew through aerial parts to having mucilaginous coverings on roots, succulence, spines, leaf reduction, and opening stomata at night, all to reduce transpiration and conserve water. It's also fascinating to observe how some desert annuals have adapted to short life cycles and long seed dormancy. This is the best way to utilise the short spells of rain in deserts, from seed germination to flowering and fruiting in a matter of a couple of months or less. ▶

Illustrations reproduced with kind permission @SueWickison

## Arabian Peninsula IPAs

Important Plant Areas (IPAs) focus attention, protection and care on the sites where the most endangered wild plant species and habitats are still hanging on, as well as the areas of the most abundant plant diversity.

On the Arabian Peninsula, 100 IPAs have been designated so far reflecting the diversity of vegetation and habitats, from Saudi Arabia's Uruq Bani Ma'arid, the largest sandy desert on Earth, to the mangrove forests lands of the Farasan Islands and the sandstone canyon of Jabal Qaraqir, which provides a cool moist refuge for plants which survived the climatic change of the Pleistocene era.

For a largely desert country, Oman has a surprisingly rich and varied flora. Its IPAs protect several globally unique vegetation types, including the fog woodlands of Dhofar and the juniper woodlands of the Western Hajar.

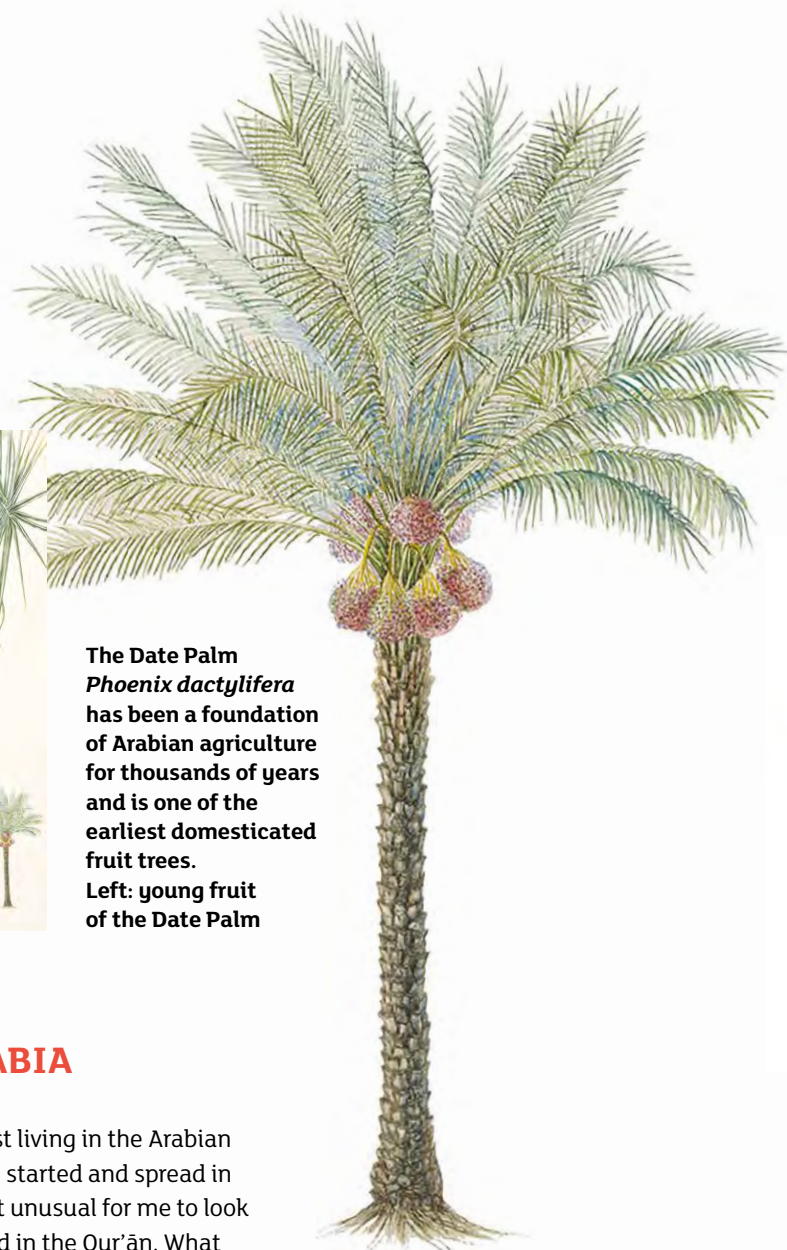
The Socotra Archipelago, which lies off the coast of Yemen, is the most famous plant biodiversity 'hotspot' in the Arabian Peninsula. Of its 825 plant species, 37% are not found anywhere else in the world.

IPAs are protecting some of the traditionally protected areas (known as *himas* in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and *hamiyah* in Oman) established as a means of protecting grazing resources during times of drought. Islam promoted *himas* as resources for the wellbeing of the community and, as a result, these locally protected areas were widespread throughout the Arabian region though sadly are currently in decline.

**KAREN INWOOD, Plantlife's International Strategy Lead**



**The Date Palm *Phoenix dactylifera* has been a foundation of Arabian agriculture for thousands of years and is one of the earliest domesticated fruit trees. Left: young fruit of the Date Palm**



## FLORA OF ARABIA

Being a Muslim botanist living in the Arabian Peninsula, where Islam started and spread in all directions, it was not unusual for me to look at the plants mentioned in the Qur'an. What interested me most was that many of the plants featured originated elsewhere in Asia and from as far away as Eastern Africa, but were known to the peoples of the Arab World who have both consumed and cultivated them since ancient times.

Twelve plants mentioned in the Qur'an are everyday food plants such as onions, garlic, grapes, dates, ginger, olive, and pomegranate. Others are mentioned as a reference to their fragrance (basil, myrtle and camphor), their colour (henna), or with reference to being a tree of the utmost boundary, a cursed tree, or a tree with bitter fruits. The Date Palm *Phoenix dactylifera*, an iconic tree of the Middle East, is mentioned 20 times in the Qur'an with reference to its trunk, fruit, fronds, date stone, pollen, and fibre, indicating that it was one of the most important trees of the time, and used for various purposes.

Evidence suggests that the Date Palm is native to the Arabian Peninsula and was one of the first trees to be domesticated in the Old World. Rock carvings dating to c.8000 BCE in Saudi Arabia show fruiting Date Palms, illustrating their prominence in prehistoric Arabia. Date Palms are also mentioned in Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform sources dating to 3000 BCE, as well as established date groves and supply of dates.

## IDENTIFICATION

One of the challenges in writing about the plants of the Qur'an was to get the correct identification of the plant for its Qur'anic name; some of the plant names in the Qur'an are not as we know them today.

The classical Arabic names such as *zaytun*, *tin*, *khardal*, *zangabil* and *rummān* (olive, fig, mustard, ginger, and pomegranate, respectively) were easy, and tracing their origins, domestication and etymology was straightforward but it became difficult where the name was mentioned once or used in context only.

For these, I had to go back to their native environment and domestication, the names used there, how these plants were used, and whether they matched the context mentioned in the Qur'an.

Again, some Qur'anic plant names are used for more than one plant. I decided to describe all relevant ones that could be the plants mentioned in the Qur'an.

For example, the Qur'anic name *talh* is used for several species of *Vachellia* Acacia in Arabia, the most relevant being *V. nilotica*. However, according to some interpretations, *talh* is banana. But, as I researched, I found that bananas have only appeared in texts in the Middle East in the 10th or 11th century CE, mentioned by Al Birūnī (b. 973–d.1048); the banana is also not recorded in the Akkadian dictionary and is not mentioned in Biblical texts; so the most likely plant for *talh* is *V. nilotica*.

**Talh, *Vachellia nilotica*, is one of the major trees in southwest Asia and is used in traditional medicine across the Arabian Peninsula**



## MANNA

One of the most interesting parts of my research was looking for plants that would qualify as manna (a divine food substance). As mentioned in the Qur'an, 'And we gave you the shade of clouds and sent down to you manna and quails...' it refers to the food provided by God to the tribe of Moses when they were in the Sinai desert.

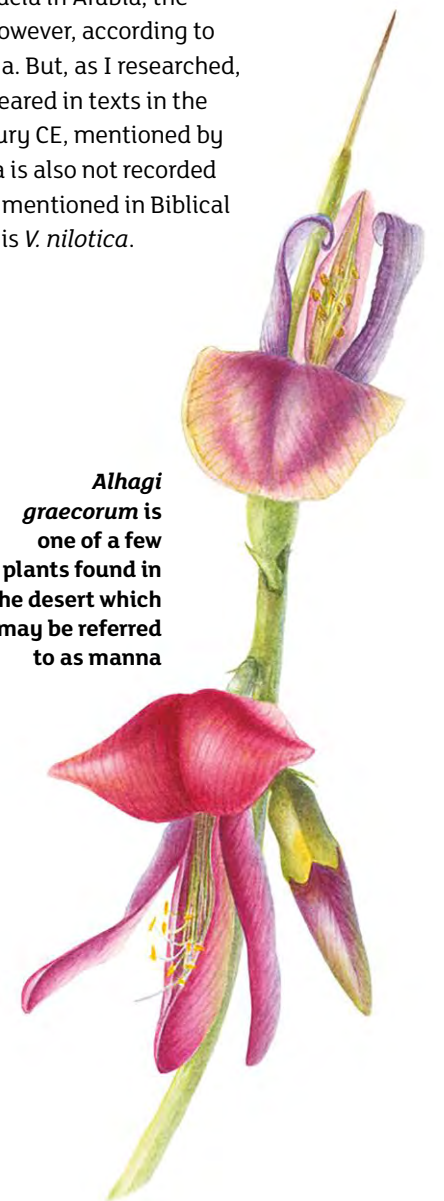
Looking at all plants possibly associated with manna and found in the Sinai were *Alhagi graecorum*, *Artemisia sieberi*, *Capparis cartilaginea*, *Haloxylon salicornicum* and *Tamarix* spp.

Several Muslim texts reference manna from *Alhagi graecorum*, a small thorny shrub found in desert habitats that secretes a sweet substance. This is considered an

economically important product in Iran that is used in traditional medicine and preparation of sweetmeats. Other authorities believe *Tamarix nilotica* is the tree that produces manna (it drops from the Tamarisk tree upon fallen twigs and leaves and is collected before sunrise). As this aspect was inconclusive, I included all plants that could be the manna-producing.

My book, *Plants of the Qur'an: History and Culture* (Kew Publishing, £25 shop.kew.org), is not a religious book, only in as much as I study the plants that are mentioned in it – but a book that promotes the pleasure of learning about plants we know so well and use in our everyday life.

***Alhagi graecorum* is one of a few plants found in the desert which may be referred to as manna**





# The King's Meadows

Tintagel Castle, Cornwall

Words by Anna Pattenden. Photography by English Heritage, Plantlife/Matt Pitts

with English Heritage to offer advice, resources, skills development and expertise on a new project to mark HM King Charles III's coronation back in May, we wanted to be involved. It felt like a great chance to give some key meadows and grasslands at some of England's most historical significant sites the chance to flourish.

Plantlife's grassland experts delivered a two-day training course for English Heritage staff covering the principles of meadow creation and management. Topics ranged from wildflower ID to going hands-on with meadow management machinery. We're continuing to support staff through one-to-one technical advice, site visits and surveys. Plus, providing logistical support to help source local seed to restore meadows at these historic sites.

Some of the key sites in the project, which will create or restore 100 meadows over 100 English Heritage sites over the next decade, include the prehistoric stone circles at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, London's Jewel Tower, Charles Darwin's home at Downe in Kent, Whitby Abbey in North Yorkshire, Carlisle Castle in Cumbria, Battle Abbey in East Sussex and Tintagel Castle in Cornwall.

Meadows and species-rich grasslands support a huge range of wildlife including wildflowers, fungi, bees, flies, beetles, spiders, moths, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, bats and birds. They are also important for storing carbon, soil health and for our own wellbeing. Culturally, grasslands and meadows have



Colleagues gather for a talk on meadow creation

inspired artists and writers, such as Constable and Shakespeare for centuries. They have been the landscape setting for some of our most important historical battles, many village greens have long been the hub of rural community life, and many a common day phrase take their origin from grasslands, such as: 'off to pastures new!'

Matt Pitts, Plantlife's Grassland Specialist, says: 'Our main role in this exciting new project is to inspire our colleagues at English Heritage to have the confidence to make changes to benefit wildflowers in the long term.'

● For more information, and a list of the 100 sites, search for 'The King's Meadows' at [english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)

Plantlife has undertaken an exciting new partnership with English Heritage to provide advice, expertise and resources to help restore and create 100 meadows across 100 historical sites over the next decade

Meadows are a fundamental part of our natural and cultural heritage and it's vital we do all we can to protect and restore them. They've been part of our landscape for thousands of years, but since the 1930s we've lost around 97% of our meadows and species-rich grasslands. This was largely due to changes in agricultural policy following the Second World War, which incentivised intensive farming practices, such as ploughing, reseeding and the over-use of fertilisers. Other contributing factors include the development or change in land use, tree planting and neglect or abandonment. What survives of these wildflower meadows is often in small fragments and at risk of being lost.

So, when Plantlife had the opportunity to partner



Stonehenge, Wiltshire



Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire



# Hywel Morgan

Hywel is a nature-friendly farmer and Plantlife's new Agricultural Advisor for Wales. He's connecting with farmers around our Cae Blaen-dyffryn nature reserve to help us work together to build new conservation projects to benefit everyone

## Q Welcome to Plantlife! Tell us about yourself and your farm...

Thank you. Well, I come from a long line of Welsh farmers – actually, I think I'm about the 10th or 11th generation! I'm lucky to live and farm in Esgairllaethdy, Myddfai in Carmarthenshire, a beautiful part of Wales on the western edge of Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons National Park).

I have an upland beef and sheep farm and, thanks to my grandfather, who expanded the farm after the Second World War, I now have over 93 hectares (230 acres), plus eight hectares (20 acres) of rented land and 20 hectares (50 acres) of conservation grazing. I also have grazing rights on the adjoining common land, known as Mynydd Du, and I manage 10 hectares (25 acres) of native woodland.

## Q What made you turn to nature-friendly farming?

It's really been over the last five years that I've started my journey working with nature. Before that, I was a conventional farmer doing things that I wouldn't do now, like spraying my fields with fertiliser or buying in feed for the animals. It's sad to say, but I honestly didn't give much thought to nature back then.

I remember having a conversation with a fellow farmer many years ago who tried to convince me to go organic but it took a chance meeting with

none other than Prince Charles, now HM King Charles III, who had bought a farm about a mile away from here, to make me think seriously about it. I met him a couple of times and he was passionate about it and convinced me working with, not against, nature was the way to go. That was in 2010 but I still didn't feel confident enough to do



Meeting farmers at the Royal Welsh Show

it immediately. Then I was offered the chance to go on a Welsh-Government funded management exchange study trip and spoke to a friend of mine who had done a Nuffield Scholarship studying regenerative farming, which I found really interesting. I also joined a group run by the Nature Friendly Farming Network and met some inspiring people who were farming with nature. From then on, I knew it was the right way to go.

## Q What are the plans for your new role with Plantlife?

It's early days, but I'm meeting lots of local farmers and having discussions with them. I'm trying to learn more about how they farm and why. Some of them are on board with the idea of farming with nature and others might take a bit longer to decide. I'm asking questions on issues such as their use of nitrogen-based fertilisers and whether they're aware of the damage they causing to the soil and air. I'm hoping our discussions will, at least, make them think.

I feed back all the conversations I'm having to Plantlife, helping to gather data and evidence to inform the way we work. I'm also advising on what's happening in agriculture generally, helping to keep Plantlife up to date on what's new in farming activity and policy, and whether these developments are sustainable or not. A lot of my time (I work 14 hours a week for Plantlife alongside managing my farm) is also taken up talking to civil servants and politicians, conservation organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). I am working closely with the Wildlife Trust and am also chair of the Nature Friendly Farming Network in Wales – their work has a lot of cross-over with what we do at Plantlife.

Photography: Hywel Morgan, Lizzie Wilberforce



My farm in Carmarthenshire

## Q What are the biggest opportunities and challenges for the future of farming in Wales?

Farmers play a key role in society and are guardians of our land, so it's important we support them. I'm passionate that everyone should have access to healthy food and think we need to start growing more food for humans, such as vegetables, and fewer crops, like barley and oats, as animal feed. I believe there's a real opportunity now to change farming for the better while creating better habitats for our wildlife and looking after the environment, climate, and biodiversity.

The biggest issues for farmers are the rise in costs, which have doubled over the last six years. European subsidies run out on 31 December (2023) and no one seems to know how much government money farmers will receive, which makes it difficult to plan. Lizzie Wilberforce (Plantlife's Cymru Lead) and I met

with representatives of the Welsh Government at the Royal Welsh Show in July. We're hopeful that there will be news on this soon.

For me personally, I'm hoping my son, who's currently farming in Scotland, will take over the farm in the future and all I can hope is that he can use it to make the world a better place for my grandchildren to live well and give them opportunities and hope. 🌱

### READ MORE

To learn more about nature-friendly farming, check out the Nature Friendly Farming Network [nffn.org.uk](http://nffn.org.uk) which aims to connect farmers who want to work sustainably to support nature.



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## PARK LIFE

Inspired by Joshua Styles' article (*Plantlife magazine*, Summer 2023), I wanted to share how a patch of my local park, Greaves Park in Lancaster, has been lovingly transformed into a wildflower meadow.

In the autumn of 2018 (1), the park's Friends' Group stripped the 20 x 10m (65 x 33ft) turf by hand, which I can tell you was quite labour intensive! We then sowed a mixture of native perennials and a native general cornfield annual mix (2) and waited... By the Spring of 2019 (3), we had a beautiful display from the cornfield annuals and visitors stopped in their tracks to take photos! Now we're in our fifth year and have so many wildflowers growing here. The area also attracts at least six species of bumblebee, and around 12 species of butterfly as well as numerous other insects, including dragonflies. We're so proud of our little patch of meadow and we hope this inspires others. Get your local council on board to have a go.

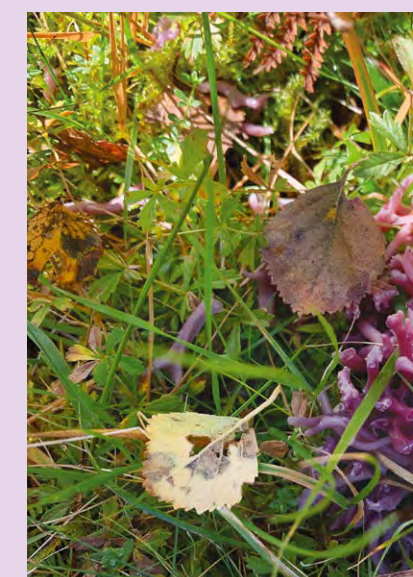
We've recently finished a second patch and are now onto our third!  
**Steve Bullen** *via email*

● For everything you ever wanted to know about creating and restoring meadows, check out our Meadows Hub at [meadows.plantlife.org.uk](http://meadows.plantlife.org.uk)

Photography by Steve Bullen, Ceri Crossland

## Fungi find

I was staying on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula in the Scottish Highlands in October 2021, and merrily taking pictures of all the fungi I came across. When my mother passed me her copy of *Plantlife magazine* from Autumn 2022 and I read the article on fungi in the Cairngorms I couldn't believe it. I checked my photos and realised I had a photo of the rare Violet Coral Fungus! And here it is...  
**Ceri Crossland**, *via email*



Violet Coral Fungus *Clavaria zollingeri*

## WRITE TO US

Share your news, views, stories and photos with other *Plantlife* members. Either drop us a line to the address on page 3 or email:  
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## DYING WYE. WHY?

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# Read on and listen in!

Our pick of the top books and podcasts around

## Be a Birder

by Hamza Yassin  
(Octopus, £16.99)

Wildlife cameraman, CBeebies TV presenter and *Strictly Come Dancing 2022* winner Hamza Yassin is certainly a man of many talents but despite all of these achievements his real passion is studying birds. So much so, he's now authored a book to engage others in the joys of birdwatching.

Hamza started observing birds as a young boy growing up in Sudan and continued when he came to the UK, aged eight. He recounts his inspiring story through a dyslexia diagnosis as a teenager and how he managed to graduate from university, gain a master's degree and realise his dream of becoming a wildlife cameraman.

The book is divided into six habitats, including urban parks, mountains and farmland, and gives details about 50 of the birds you're most likely to spot. His aim, he writes, is to get everyone else as excited about birding as he is and he definitely hooked me in. Pass me the binoculars... (AP)

Hamza's publisher has kindly given us 10 copies of *Be a Birder* to give away. Please email: [editor@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:editor@plantlife.org.uk) with your name, address and membership number before 6 November 2023 (not open to *Plantlife* staff). Please put *Be a Birder* in the subject line. Ten email addresses will be picked randomly by a number generator after the closing date. Winners will be notified by email. Read our privacy notice at [plantlife.org.uk/privacy-notice](http://plantlife.org.uk/privacy-notice)



## The Forest Guide SCOTLAND

by Gabriel Hemery  
(Bloomsbury Wildlife, £22)



You could visit a woodland every day for a year with this book in your pocket. It takes you across Scotland, visiting all kinds of woodlands – whether they're made up of native trees, exotic conifers or even the tree collections of arboreta.

For convenience, the book is divided into 14 regions and gives a summary about what you can do and see at each site, with handy maps

showing where they are located at the back. It starts with a useful introduction to Scotland's forests and scattered among the pages you'll find articles on interesting topics such as temperate rainforest, red squirrels and the Scottish plant hunters.

A commendable amount of research has gone into this book and it's just the thing to consult when you're planning your next trip, but due to the sheer number of places described, the information can be rather brief so it would be wise to supplement with additional research, including maps, before venturing out. (JS)

### WHAT I'M LISTENING TO

#### Editor Anna Pattenden tells us what she's been tuned into

I'm a massive fan of podcasts. My latest discovery is *Our Broken Planet*, the new podcast from the Natural History Museum released every Tuesday. It focuses on the problems humans have created in the world and welcomes scientists and activists to present solutions. My favourite episode to date was *Rainforests: How to Restore Earth's Lungs*.

While researching our Fungi ID feature (on page 15), I stumbled across the velvet tones of Merlin Sheldrake reading his seminal book on fungi, *Entangled Life* (now available on Audible). He takes a deep dive into fungi and their role in understanding everything that happens on our planet. It's fascinating.

And finally, since gardening writers Ben Middleton and Ellie Mitchell joined the magazine (see page 18), I've become hooked on their monthly podcast *The Wildlife Garden Podcast*. It's packed full of ideas and tips on how to garden for wildlife and, of course, *Plantlife* often gets a mention.

● Do you have a favourite nature-related listen? Let me know! Email: [editor@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:editor@plantlife.org.uk)

## Ranscombe

by Richard Moyse  
([kentfieldclub.org.uk](http://kentfieldclub.org.uk),  
£13 inc p+p)



When Richard Moyse joined *Plantlife* in July 2011, initially to deliver Ranscombe's Heritage Lottery Fund project, and as my new line manager, it was the best outcome possible. As a former resident of neighbouring Cuxton, it was a special place for him. Over the following decade, until his retirement, his knowledge of botany and natural history increased our understanding of Ranscombe immeasurably, and this knowledge and passion is brilliantly captured in this book.

It is the perfect balance between technical detail and readability, which should appeal to both experts and newcomers to plants and nature conservation. A generous number of (mostly his own) photos show off Ranscombe's highlights. Richard's in-depth knowledge of its history (and prehistory), is key to a good story, but it is also peppered with plenty of wider cultural references as diverse as *Only Fools and Horses*, William the Conqueror, and Steven Spielberg, which make this book as entertaining as it is factual. (BS)

## Reflections

by Mark Avery  
(Pelagic Publishing, £20)



'Our wildlife NGOs [non-governmental organisations] have grown stale and are now less effective than they once were.' It's a stark and uncompromising statement to make, but Mark Avery backs it up in his latest book with cold hard facts, and a clear-eyed examination of the state of nature conservation in the UK today. Although it doesn't pull any punches, *Reflections* is ultimately an optimistic book. It's a celebration of the good things that wildlife conservation has achieved, and it's heartening to see *Plantlife*'s efforts featured prominently in the 'successes' chapter, with No Mow May getting a special mention. But it's also an urgent call to arms to do more. Ultimately, it points to the collective power of membership organisations as a potential force for huge change. Read this book and be inspired that, if we all do our bit, we can indeed save our wildlife. (AW)

### GIVEAWAY WINNERS

The winners from our Summer 2023 *Wild Isles* book giveaway were: JP from York; JS from Congleton; RH from Stroud; GD from Sheffield and HL from Cheadle. Don't forget to enter our giveaway to win a copy of Hamza Yassin's new book. Good luck!

## Young conservationists' corner



### My Nature Trail

by Rachel and Paul Lawston  
(Pikku Publishing, £10.99)



With endorsements from conservationists Chris Packham and Meg McCubbin, this beautifully illustrated children's book has kudos and rightly so. It's packed with lots of wonderful ideas for activities to connect children to nature, organised into the four seasons. It is, as the authors' claim, the 'perfect boredom buster' with lots of facts about plants and other wildlife to keep young children engaged. (AP)

### Global

by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin  
(Hachette Children's Books, £14.99)



This book explores how the lives of two children, living in different parts of the world, are affected by climate change. My opinion on this graphic novel is that it is heart-warming, enthralling and above all, hopeful. It has helped me see that the world is in terrible danger, and it is our duty to repair and save it. The illustrations were captivating and effective. I was particularly struck by the picture of Sami aiding the injured turtle. We need to come together, no matter where we are, and unite to protect our Earth.

Reviewed by Olive Moore, aged 11

### Journey to the Green Roof

by Jenny Bailey  
(Tales from Mother Earth, £11.99)



This children's book hits the mark by being both educational and fun. It raises awareness of the benefits of having a green roof for wildlife and nature. The story of Freya, a hairy-footed bee, and Sarah, a seven-spotted ladybird, on their journeys to find a safe place to live is powerful and finishes with some activity pages and facts. There's also the bonus of a QR code, to download the audio version too! (NE)



Leyton, aged nine, whose mum works at *Plantlife*, said: 'This book was amazing. I learnt that if you make your roof a green-roof garden, you give animals and insects a safe home to live. I think more buildings should have a green roof.'

# Making a difference

Celebrating the impact you're having on wild plants and fungi



In honour of National Meadows Day in July, we launched our summer appeal focusing on the importance and beauty of grasslands. So far over 700 of you have donated and become Grassland Guardians. Together you've raised over £60,000 which will help continue Plantlife's work to rebuild a world rich in plants and fungi. You can see how your donations have been making an impact in your members' magazine, on our website and through our email newsletters. We couldn't do the work we do without the support of our members and supporters, so thank you.



## GENEROUS DONATION

We'd like to say a huge thank you to textile artist, designer and quiltmaker Pauline Burbidge, who has made a generous donation from the sale of her Before the Dinosaurs quilt (see above). Pauline created the quilt during lockdown and decided to use some of the proceeds to support Plantlife. 'Plants were so important to my wellbeing,' says Pauline. 'Drawing them gave me hope. And your organisation gives me hope for the plants for our future.'

To see more of Pauline's quilts, visit [paulineburbidge-quilts.com](http://paulineburbidge-quilts.com)

Photography by Matt Pitts

## Christmas gifts



We're excited that, along with your magazine, you'll also receive our colourful Christmas brochure. This year, we're grateful to botanical illustrator and long-term Plantlife



supporter Christina Hart-Davies who has designed our twin-pack Christmas cards and created two unique tea towel designs (see Christina's fungi design, right) for us. 'For many years, I have admired Plantlife's dedication in protecting our wonderful native flora,' says Christina. 'And I am delighted that my paintings can be used to help Plantlife's work.'

See more of Christina's work at [christinahartdavies.co.uk](http://christinahartdavies.co.uk) Our range of Christmas gifts also includes our pretty 2024 Calendar (above) and many other gifts. Order using the brochure or on at [shop.plantlife.org.uk](http://shop.plantlife.org.uk)



# Make your mark on the world

Give a gift in your will. Write your will for free online today at: [gawill.uk/plantlife](http://gawill.uk/plantlife)

Or call the Guardian Angel team on 0800 773 4014 and quote Plantlife to make an appointment to write your will over the phone or in person with a solicitor/will writer.

**Plantlife**

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