

Magnificent Meadows



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Species-rich meadows have often never been ploughed nor treated with fertilisers, pesticides or other chemicals; they have escaped the ravages of agricultural intensification. Hay was traditionally cut in summer and animals were put on to graze during autumn and winter.

Grazing livestock are essential to maintaining the diversity of plants and wildlife in a meadow. They tear out or nibble the coarser grasses, which allows the more delicate wildflowers to thrive. Their manure also provides a home for a number of important nutrient-recycling invertebrates.

England has lost approximately 97% of its lowland meadows; about 20% of those that remain are right here in Worcestershire. Floodplain meadows like Hardwick Green Meadows are rarer still.



Rich in wildflowers

When we purchased the fields in 2018, they were already rich in wildflowers. In time we expect the number of plants and insects to increase even further and we'll be helping by strewing green hay. This involves taking freshly cut hay from local fields and spreading it onto the fields here.

Local people remember Hardwick as a network of smaller fields bound by many more hedges than now. Pit Field held the last wild daffodils in Eldersfield. Once common, wild daffodils are now found in good numbers in just a few places such as our Duke of York meadow at Birtsmorton. We have planted wild daffodil bulbs here.

Helping Wildlife

Why not get involved as a volunteer and help us to look after your local wildlife and places. You're guaranteed a warm welcome! Give us a call on 01905 754919 or visit our website for more information.



Corky-fruited dropwort – the flowers of this scarce member of the carrot family are densely packed into its umbellifer-head. It gets its memorable name from the swollen 'corky' base of its roots.



Marbled white – these chequerboard beauties are heavily associated with wildflower-rich meadows. The females flick eggs into the grasses and when hatched, the larvae fall into hibernation until the following spring.



Great burnet – a typical plant of floodplain meadows, the first part of its scientific name *Sanguisorba officinalis* means to 'absorb blood' and it has been used as a remedy for nose bleeds, wound, burns and haemorrhoids.

Did you know...?

...the presence of certain plants on floodplains is determined by water levels in the soil. We are monitoring this using a series of dip-wells – perforated tubes sunk into the ground that fill up with water – to discover how these plants respond to long-term changes and how we can increase their coverage.

Please remember...

These are rare and sensitive meadows. Except for the public right of way, there is no access except for special events and permit-holders.

- When open, please keep to the paths
- Please take your litter home with you
- Dogs are not allowed

The Trust relies on the support of volunteers, members and on donations and grants. For more information on how to help please visit our website.

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