

Winter 2021 News

Welcome

At the time of writing, autumn seems a little slow in getting started but the leaves are now changing and the mildness is gradually disappearing.

We've been continuing to enjoy the online talks that have been organised by the Trust's team at Lower Smite Farm but hosted by the different local groups across the county. We hope you'll join us for the final one of the year - a questions and answers session about rewilding. The evening will be hosted by the Trust's Director, Colin Raven and he'll be joined by guest panellists Helen Woodman, Johnny Birks and Brett Westwood. So book your place on the Trust's website, make a cuppa and look forward to an entertaining hour :

**Thur 16th December: Rewilding Q&A via Zoom.
Book now www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on**

We hope that it won't be too long until we can see you all in person in our usual venue. Until then, from all of us on your local group committee, we wish you a very Happy Christmas and a safe and healthy 2022.

What a treat

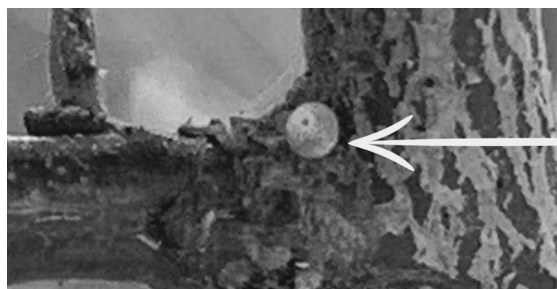
After spending the last few summers scouring the hedgerows around Morton Stanley Park in Redditch trying to catch a glimpse of the elusive brown hairstreak butterfly, I had one last chance. It was a pleasantly warm, early September Sunday, around midday. The sun was out and I decided to give it one last look before starting full-time work the next day.

Walking around the football field, with the blackthorn bushes in full sun, I was coming to the end of my walk and thought I saw a little brown leaf. Thankfully I gave it a second glance! A female brown hairstreak flitting around, just at eye level, and not only that...but she was laying eggs. With my phone in my hand, I was able to get some photos.



I was over the moon!

Claire Davies



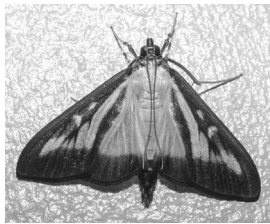
egg

Newcomers

It seems like every week someone is finding a 'new' species for Worcestershire and there can be no doubt that in our warming climate many different invertebrates are finding a home in our county. Finding new things is in itself nothing new but the speed at which many of these aliens are spreading is fascinating.

In recent years we have seen (and welcomed) the arrival of the tree bumblebee, the ivy bee, the hornet hoverfly to name but a few. Not all new arrivals are as welcome, however. Take the lily beetle, first found in Britain in 1900s but which has spread rapidly since the 1990s and is now a common garden pest, reducing lilies and their relatives to sad, nibbled twigs. Or the girdled snail, with a liking for flower petals, that was introduced into Britain in the 1950s and has now become a very common garden species.

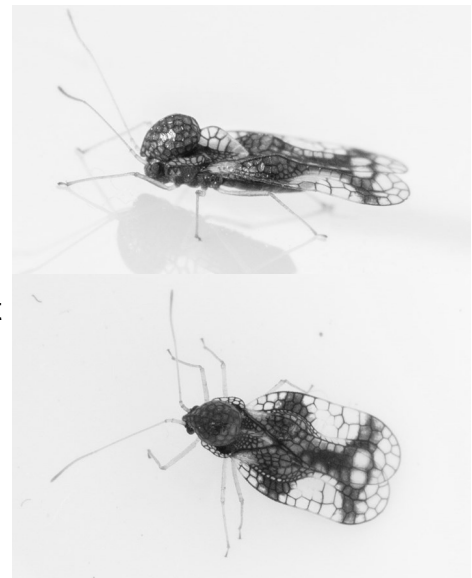
I have recently found two more troublesome newcomers. In my garden I have a small, clipped box hedge that I keep neat and tidy. It is, in fact, the only thing in the garden that gets so much attention so I was particularly distressed in September to find a



horde of marauding box-tree moth caterpillars munching their way through it. These attractive caterpillars were first found in Britain as recently as 2007 but have already spread across the country, leaving skeletal box hedges in their wake. The Trust has been asking for records of this species and more information can be found on their website (see below).



The second newcomer that I have found recently, and a most alien-looking species, is a little bug that has been given the name of the Andromeda lacebug *Stephanitis takeyai*. This little bug originates from Japan where it feeds on the evergreen shrub known as Japanese Andromeda *Pieris japonica*. It was first discovered in Britain in 1998 and has since spread along the south coasts of England and Wales into the Midlands. It also feeds on rhododendrons and azaleas and can be a pest in formal gardens. I was very surprised to find one of these at Ipsley Alders Marsh nature reserve in early October. Had it found plants on the marsh to its liking or had it just dropped in whilst moving between local gardens in search of *Pieris*? What will be the next 'new' species for Redditch I wonder?



Gary Farmer

What have you spotted?

If you've spotted a box tree moth or think you might have seen the latest newcomer, why not send a photo and submit a few details of what you saw, when and where

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wildlife-sightings