

# Worcester Group News

December to March 2022



**Worcestershire  
Wildlife Trust**

## Lichen Safari

During a recent visit to Dawyck gardens in Scotland we spotted our first 'Lichen Safari'. They have over 1,600 lichen species thriving in the clean air.

The trees within the arboretum were covered in lichen. Lichen are often overlooked in our daily lives and yet they are more numerous than you think. Lichen are made up of two or more different species living together in a mutually beneficial or symbiotic relationship - fungi and algae, where the fungi is the body and the algae generates the food via photosynthesis.

Lichen can be found on all sorts of surfaces such as trees, soil, wood, metal, plastic, glass, rocks and fabric.

The lichen body comes in three main forms with self-descriptive names such as crusty, leafy and bushy. My favourite is the bushy hair-like variety that drapes down from twigs and branches looking elegant and artistic.

Lichen reproduces in two ways, asexually and sexually. With the former, both algal and fungal partners break off to create a new lichen. For the latter, the fungal spores finds an algal partner to produce a new lichen.

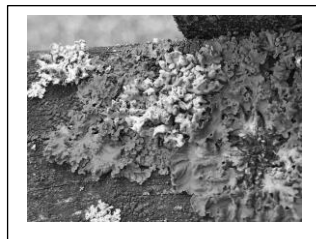
So next time you are out keep your eyes peeled (or even take a hand lens with you) and see if you can spot the different lichen.

Bushy (fruticose)



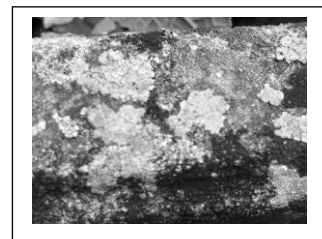
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Leafy (foliose)



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Crusty (crustose)



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## New project comes to Worcester

Thanks to funding from the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, the Trust is embarking on a new project - Wilder Worcestershire – Nature's Recovery For All. Whilst this enables the Trust to work across the county, much of the focus will be in six areas of Worcester to engage and inspire residents to help nature to recover. The project was getting underway as we went to press so visit [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/team-wilder](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/team-wilder) for more information.

Online meetings via Zoom are ongoing so check [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk) for the most up to date information and book yourself onto our fascinating talks.

## Tips For Making Your Garden Hedgehog Friendly

### **Link your garden**

Hedgehogs roam 1-2km each night to find food. It's critical they have access to as many gardens as possible. Making 13cm x 13cm (5 x 5") holes in walls and fences lets them through but are too small for most pets.

### **Make your pond safe**

Hedgehogs are good swimmers but if they can't climb out of a pond they'll drown. Use a pile of stones, piece of wood or some chicken wire to provide a ramp to let them get out.

### **Create a wild corner**

Let a corner of your garden 'go wild' to create a nesting area and don't cut it back in winter in case they're hibernating there. One of the best features for creating nesting opportunities and encouraging all kinds of wildlife is a log pile.

### **Remove netting and litter**

Hedgehogs are prone to getting tangled. Replace netting with rigid structures or make sure netting has thick cords and is kept taught. Pick up any plastic litter or elastic bands they could get tangled in.

### **Put out food and water**

Hedgehogs really benefit from extra food. Meaty cat or dog food, hedgehog food and chopped unsalted peanuts are suitable. Water is the only thing you should give them to drink.

### **Stop using chemicals**

Lawn treatments reduce worm populations. Pesticides, insecticides and slug pellets are toxic and reduce hedgehogs' prey. They're all unnecessary in a healthy and well managed garden.

### **Check before strimming or lighting bonfires**

Hedgehogs don't run away from the noise of a lawnmower or strimmer and often use log piles to nest or hibernate in. Check before cutting taller grassy or overgrown areas and move piles of rubbish before lighting a bonfire. It's easy enough to move a single hedgehog with gloves on but best to leave a family undisturbed.

### **Become a poo detective**

Hedgehog poo is quite distinctive, between 1.5–5cm in length, sausage-shaped and may be tapered at one end, usually black in colour with a shiny appearance.

### **Set up a trail camera**

Locate a trail camera somewhere near the feeding area or where you've spotted some poo and see if you get any video footage of the hedgehogs.



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Find out more:

[www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/hedgehogs](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/hedgehogs)