



Wild About Barrow

July 2021

Tree of the Month

This month's tree of the month, the beech tree in Holy Trinity Memorial Garden, is certainly worth a mention here as it an important food source and home for many species. Over 20 different moth and butterfly caterpillars love munching the leaves. The seeds – beech nuts – are food for mice, voles, squirrels and birds. As beech trees are long lived, the deadwood also provides a habitat for hole-nesting birds and wood boring insects as well as fungi, mosses and lichens. Birds also eat insects living on the trees. Beech nuts are edible for humans and livestock too. For centuries they were fed to pigs in autumn to fatten them up.



Wild Celebration

Here is some wildlife seen on a walk down to our beautiful River Soar recently.



Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)

Ox eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)

Fox and cubs (*Pilosell aurantiuica*)

What is more lovely than an English rose? The simple dog rose is ideal for visiting insects as it is an open flower, making it easy for insects to find the nectar and pollen. The fox and cubs was introduced to Britain in the 17th century and is one of the top 400 species named by the RHS as a perfect pollinator.



Brandy bottle (*Nuphar lutea*)



Grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*)



Seven-spot ladybird larvae
(*Coccinella septempunctata*)

The yellow water lilies with their young flowers held high above the water have a faint smell of brandy, hence their common name of brandy-bottle.

Did you know that herons can fly 40 miles from their heronry in search of food? However, they probably do not have to search so far at this time of year. They eat a range of food including fish, amphibians, insects, small mammals and juvenile birds such as ducklings. They are one of our largest birds weighing in at between 1 – 2 kg, are up to 1m tall and have an impressive wing span of 155 – 195cm.

The strange creature pictured to the right of the heron is not immediately recognisable as one of our most loved insects as it is in its larval stage. This is one of our 46 native ladybirds. However, only 26 are the classic red and black polka dot variety. The others are rather drab in appearance. They eat ten times the aphids the adults eat!

The harlequin ladybird is a recent introduction, arriving on our shores in 2004 and is now widespread. It is highly variable in appearance as a mature ladybird but is larger than 5mm in length and has legs which are almost always brown. It is a voracious predator eating aphids, larvae of butterflies and moths as well as other ladybirds. It's effect on our native ladybirds is being studied but it is not likely to wipe them out.



Harlequin ladybird
(*Harmonia axyridis*)

What have you seen? Send your pictures to wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com for inclusion next month. There's no need to identify, we'll try to do that. Just tell us where you saw it so we can look first hand.

What to see/hear

1. Challenge yourself to see **how many types of ladybirds** you can find.
2. **Enjoy time outside and unwind** listening to the buzz of insects, the warm wind rustling in the trees and birdsong. Store up memories to carry you through the winter!

What to do

1. In hot weather **provide water for hedgehogs** as they may find difficulty in finding natural sources of water.
2. **Provide a water and sugar solution** for hard-working bees which may lie exhausted on the ground. This will give them a boost to help them fly back to their hive.
3. It's worth mentioning again, let ladybirds and other animals eat pests and **avoid using slug pellets, insecticides and herbicides** that poison our precious world.

Think global: Act local