



Wild About Barrow

November 2021

Sowing the Seeds of Success

Last month wildflower seeds were sown in the Millennium Park on the bank facing Fishpool Way near the junction with Branston Avenue. So, in a few months we should all be able to enjoy the display as it begins to develop.

First the turf was rotavated and then there was the muscle-building job of raking out thatch before sowing with 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' wildflower seed mix which is designed to encourage butterflies and bees.

Last year a similar mix was sown in the Park but the dry weather in spring did not allow germination. The weather this time though has been perfect, so fingers crossed for a bounty of bugs and blooms next spring and summer.



Veg Pledge

Cancer Research is challenging us all to go vegetarian for the month of November. Not only will this raise money to save lives, it will also help save the planet from climate change and habitat loss. So, a win-win! Find out more at the Cancer Research website:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/support-us/do-your-own-fundraising/veg-pledge>

One of my favourite veggie recipes is the Halloumi Bean Stew on the BBC Good Food website. It would go down very well with some hot crusty bread and a few fireworks!

Do you have any vegetarian recipe suggestions for inclusion next month? Send them to Wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com, post on Barrow in Bloom Facebook page or send to 15 Ennerdale Road. You might just persuade someone to eat less meat and so help the planet.

Marvellous Mushrooms

A short walk along North Street and Nottingham Road verges will show several of this month's Wild Celebration fungi, although they can be found in spots all over the village.

The most easily recognisable types of fungi are the mushrooms and toadstools which have radiating gills found underneath a cap. The spores are produced on the outer wall of the gill and fall to the ground between the gill sheets. To allow this, the gills must always grow plumb vertical no matter what happens to the cap. The fallen spores will be blown away by the slightest breath of wind as they are so tiny.

One feature of identification is the spore print. Simply lay a toadstool cap face down on a black or white sheet of paper (depending on the colour of the spores) and carefully remove the cap the next morning. The print can be preserved by spraying with lacquer. Many fungi produce spores in the autumn since they need moisture to germinate. Plants mostly germinate earlier in the year as they need sunlight to grow but this is not the case with fungi. Look out for fairy rings which are produced by a single fungus as it grows radially outwards.



Did you know that we have a common basic requirement with the fungi kingdom? We both need food for nutrition as we cannot produce our own: we are both heterotropes. We are not too closely related though as our last common ancestor with the fungi kingdom swam in the distant prehistoric oceans a billion years ago!

Fungi can be a nuisance causing our food to rot or causing diseases in ourselves and plants but they are also one of nature's great recyclers. And life would be poorer without fungi to make bread and beer!

Wild Celebration November



Fairy ring champignon
(*Marasmius oreades*)



Field mushroom
Agaricus campestre



The grey knight
(*Tricholoma terreum*)



Weeping widow
(*Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*)



Blackthorn
(*Prunus spinosa*)



Autumn hawkbit
(*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*)

There are many wonderful names given to fungi such as The Prince, Destroying Angel and Scarlet Elfcap. It is tempting to gather a few wild mushrooms to throw in the pot for supper, especially Field Mushrooms and Fairy Ring Champignons which are great tasting. However, experts warn of look-alikes that are at best inedible and at worst could be deadly poisonous.

On the other hand, the sloes of blackthorn, although too tart to eat, do make great sloe gin. Blackthorn is also a valuable source of nectar and pollen for bees in spring. Its foliage is eaten by many moths and butterflies and birds nest in its dense, thorny thickets and feast on the sloes.

What have you seen? Send your pictures to wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com, post on Barrow in Bloom Facebook page or to 15 Ennerdale Road 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

1. **Enjoy this colourful time of year.** With some trees just beginning to changing colour, there's more to come. Also the fruits adorning plants make this a wonderfully rich, ripe and mellow season.
2. **Stroll through autumn mists** and conjure up images of mystical and legendary tales. Very Tolkienesque!

What to do

1. **Feed birds.** Birds require high-energy (high-fat) foods during the cold winter weather to maintain their fat reserves to survive the frosty nights. Only use good-quality food and scraps.

2. **Help hedgehogs.** This is the prime time of year that hedgehogs need help to put on weight before hibernation. They will thank you for putting out a bowl of water, some wet cat or dog food (or specialist hedgehog food) and some shelter.

3. **Look for plastic- free Christmas presents,** wrapping paper, crackers etc. Manufacturers are increasingly doing their bit to help the environment so this should be easier than in previous years.

Think global: Act local