

Bee Orchid

(Ophrys apifera)



Family: Orchidaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: June to July

Habitat: Grasslands

Threats and Conservation:

Destruction of grassland habitat and increased competition from grasses and scrub species. They are protected under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)



- The bee orchid gets its name from its main pollinator - a species of bee. In order to attract the bees that will pollinate the plant, it has flowers that mimic the female bee's appearance
- The right species of bee doesn't occur in the UK, so bee orchids are self-pollinated here, transferring pollen from the male to the female parts of the same plant
- Bee Orchid seeds germinate in the spring and can take as long as six years before they reach a flowering stage which may only happen once in their lifetime

Bluebell

(Hyacinthoides non-scripta)



Family: Asparagaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: Mid-April to late May

Habitat: Ancient woodlands, Broadleaf woodland, fields, edge habitats like along hedgerows

Threats and conservation: habitat destruction, Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) making it illegal to dig up the plant or the bulb



- Over half of the world's population of bluebells are found in the UK
- Bluebells can take up to 7 years to flower after being planted as a seed
- Bluebells provide a vital early spring nectar source for pollinators like bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies
- During the Elizabethan period the bulbs of bluebells were crushed and used as glue to fix feathers and arrows for archery as well as to bind books
- In British and Irish folklore bluebells are often referred to as 'fairy flowers' and it was believed that bluebells would ring at dawn to call fairies to the woods

Common Daisy

(Bellis perennis)



Family: Asteraceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: All year round

Habitat: Common daisies are an adaptable plant and can grow anywhere from grasslands and woodland to urban towns

Threats and conservation: Daisies are a widespread plant that aren't threatened in the UK.



- Daisies produce a large amount of pollen and nectar making them an important food source for pollinators like bees, hoverflies, butterflies and da-flying moths
- The plant also provides food for caterpillars, snails, larvae and small mammals like rabbits
- Each Daisy is made up of more than one flower! They are made up from a combination of disc florets (tiny flowers that make up the yellow centre) and the surrounding white ray florets that look just like petals
- Their name comes from Old English spelling of day's eye due to the fact that they close their petals at night and then open them again at dawn

Common Field Speedwell

(*Veronica persica*)



Family: Plantaginaceae

Origin: Non-Native

Flowering season: All year round

Habitat: Gardens, Lawns and Arable Fields

Threats and conservation: Common Field Speedwell is not threatened in the UK and is classified as Least Concern



- There are over 20 species of Speedwell in the UK (Common Field Speedwell is the most widespread)
- Common Field Speedwell is thought to have been introduced and first recorded in 1825 and it was probably dispersed with clover and other crop seeds
- The average number of seeds that this plant produces is 2000 but it can produce up to 7000!
- It provides an important early nectar source for bees and insects as well as providing habitat for ground dwelling invertebrates due to the way that they create mats of green

Crocus

(*Crocus*)



Family: Iridaceae

Origin: Non-Native

Flowering season:
February

Habitat: Lawns and
Gardens

**Threats and
conservation:** Urban
development and habitat
destruction



- As they bloom in early Spring, crocuses are vital for providing one of the first food sources of the year to pollinators like bees
- Crocuses are able to close their petals at night and on cloudy days to protect their pollen
- Saffron, the most expensive spice in the world, is produced from the saffron crocus by hand harvesting the stigmas (the very end of the stalk like part of the centre of the flower)
- It takes approximately 150 - 200 crocus flowers to produce just 1 gram of dry saffron

Daffodil

(Narcissus pseudonarcissus)



Family: Asparagaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: March to April

Habitat: Grasslands, Meadows and Ancient Woodland

Threats and conservation: habitat loss, hybridisation with cultivated varieties



- Daffodil bulbs can survive in the ground for over 100 years
- Daffodils are the national flower of Wales
- In the UK another name for daffodils is ‘Lent Lily’ due to the time of year that they flower always being around Easter
- A single daffodil is considered a sign of misfortune but a bunch is considered to bring joy and good luck
- Daffodils have evolved to be toxic to all mammals in the UK to avoid being eaten

Dandelion

(*Taraxacum officinale*)



Family: Asteraceae

Origin: Non-Native

Flowering season: All year round

Habitat: Lawns and Gardens

Threats and conservation: Dandelions are a very resilient plants however the increase in the use of weed killers is leading to a reduction in the presence of dandelions in some areas



- Dandelions are a crucial early nectar source and support over 50 insect species including bees and moths
- They also help to improve soil health as their roots help to break up compacted areas of soil
- Dandelion seeds are also a food source for birds like goldfinches and greenfinches
- The name dandelion is derived from the French ‘dent de lion’ as the toothed leaves were thought to resemble the teeth in a lion’s jaw
- During the Second World War, dandelion roots were roasted and ground as a substitute for coffee

Greater Stitchwort

(*Stellaria holostea*)



Family: Caryophyllaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: April to June

Habitat: Grassland, Woodland, Farmland, Towns and Gardens

Threats and conservation: Cutting back their shoots too early in spring as well as the spread of aggressive invasive plants like Himalayan Balsam can be a threat to Greater Stitchwort



- When their seed capsules are ripe they pop explosively to disperse the seeds (loud enough that we can hear them!)
- Greater Stitchwort is beneficial to many flying insects including Orange Tip Butterflies and is the food plant for several moth caterpillars including the Yellow Underwing
- Greater Stitchwort was traditionally used as a herbal remedy for a stitch (the pain in the side sometimes felt during exercise) hence the name 'stitchwort'
- In Cornish Folklore it was believed that Greater Stitchwort was the property of the pixies and picking it would anger them!

Lesser Celandine

(*Ficaria verna*)



Family: Ranunculaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season:
January to April

Habitat: Woodland,
Grassland and Gardens

Threats and conservation: Lesser Celandine is a resilient plant that is able to spread effectively however, the increased use of herbicides such as glyphosate can pose a threat to this plant



- Lesser celandine provide an important nectar source for queen bumblebees and other pollinators emerging from hibernation due to their early flowering period
- The early flowering time of lesser celandine lead to its nickname ‘spring messenger’
- In the language of flowers, the lesser celandine signifies joys to come
- It was once thought that you could use lesser celandine to predict the weather as they close their petals before it rains

Red Campion

(Silene dioica)



Family: Caryophyllaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: May to September

Habitat: Meadows, Grasslands, Hedgerows and Woodland

Threats and conservation: Cross pollination from cultivated varieties of Red Campion can reduce the genetic diversity of the wild varieties which can lead to them being less resilient



- The flowers of Red Campion only open during the day to attract butterflies and bees
- Red Campion is an ancient woodland indicator species
- In the Language of flowers Red Campion Symbolises gentleness
- In British Folklore it is told that Red Campion closes its flowers at night to protect fairies from being discovered!
- The roots of Red Campion contain saponin which is a natural soap-like compound

Red Dead-nettle

(*Lamium purpureum*)



Family: Lamiaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: March to October

Habitat: Farmland, Woodland, Towns and Gardens

Threats and conservation: Red Dead-nettle is a common, widespread plant that is not generally considered threatened



- Red Dead-nettle is traditionally known as the bumblebee flower
- Many long-tongued insects (bumblebees, moths and butterflies) feed from Red Dead-nettle flowers
- The leaf of Red Dead-nettle also provides food for the caterpillars of many moth species including garden tiger moths and angle shades
- They are related to stinging nettles however these plants have no ability to sting (which is where the 'dead' in their name comes from!)

Scarlet Pimpernel

(*Anagallis arvensis*)



Family: Primulaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: May to September

Habitat: Gardens and Grasslands

Threats and conservation: Intensive agricultural practices have led to the decline of Scarlet Pimpernel on agricultural land



- Scarlet Pimpernel flowers close when atmospheric pressure falls to protect itself from bad weather
- Its genus name, *Anagallis*, is derived from Greek and means 'to delight again' likely because the flowers reopen when the sun comes out
- After flowering, the plant produces a seed capsule that can release 30 - 40 seeds and a single plant can produce up to 12,000 seeds
- Their seeds are able to remain viable in the soil for at least 10 years before germinating

Selfheal

(*Prunella vulgaris*)



Family: Lamiaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: June to October

Habitat: Farmland, Grassland, Towns and Gardens

Threats and conservation: Selfheal is a widespread perennial herb with no major threats



- As a part of the mint family, Selfheal has a high capacity to spread across lawns by growing close to the ground and self seeding
- Selfheal has a long tradition of being used in herbal medicine for stopping bleeding, treating sore throats, healing wounds, all the way to reducing blood pressure and treating heart disease
- Selfheal has evolved so that the shape of the flowers means that they would be best suited to being pollinated by bees - especially bumblebees as well as having a thick wall of hairs inside the flower to prevent less effective invertebrates from being able to access the nectar
- It is an important late nectar source for pollinators like bees, wasps and butterflies

Snowdrop

(*Galanthus nivalis*)



Family: Amaryllidaceae

Origin: Non-native

Flowering season:
January to March

Habitat: Woodland, Parks,
Gardens, Grassland

Threats and

Conservation: Common snowdrops are threatened in the wild due to habitat destruction caused by land-use changes and over-collecting for the horticultural trade. All snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.) are listed in CITES Appendix II



- The scientific name *Galanthus nivalis* means ‘milk flower of the snow’, which refers to both the common snowdrop’s flower colour and early flowering time
- Snowdrops have adapted to be able to survive the cold. The tips of their leaves are especially hardened for breaking through frozen ground and their sap contains a form of antifreeze that prevents ice crystals from forming
- Snowdrop seeds are dispersed by ants. The seeds are surrounded by an oil-rich structure called an elastiome, which attracts the ants. The ants carry them into their nests, eat the elastiome and discard the seeds, helping to distribute them

Wood Anemone

(*Anemone nemorosa*)



Family: Ranunculaceae

Origin: Native

Flowering season: March to May

Habitat: Ancient Woodland

Threats and Conservation: Habitat loss and woodland destruction both pose threats to wood anemones. They struggle to colonise new or degraded woodlands to rely on the protection of ancient woodland



- It is a very slow growing species, growing only around six feet in a hundred years which makes it is a good indicator species of ancient woodland
- They are an important food plant for hoverflies as well as other pollinators early in the season
- Wood Anemones are sensitive to environmental degradation like soil compaction and high phosphate levels their health can be used as an indicator of woodland soil quality
- They are thought to have been named after the Greek wind God Anemos who was said to have sent his namesakes (the anemones) in early spring to spread the news of his appearance