



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

Spring 2014

Number 50

THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

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RSPB BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH

The 2014 results are now in from the RSPB National Garden Birdwatch and the top 10 birds recorded in gardens across the UK are listed below. Are they a close match to what you see in your garden?

- 1 House sparrow
- 2 Blue tit
- 3 Starling
- 4 Blackbird
- 5 Woodpigeon
- 6 Chaffinch
- 7 Goldfinch
- 8 Great tit
- 9 Collared dove
- 10 Robin

For full details of the results, please visit the RSPB website
www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

What we sometimes think of as the most common garden birds have suffered a decline over the years.

The once-common starling is in trouble. Numbers recorded in the annual Big Garden Birdwatch have fallen by 84% since 1979. To help, keep some areas of your lawn short; starlings love to feed on creatures in the soil around the roots of grass, and can't get to them easily when the grass is too long.

Greenfinch numbers have fallen by 44% since 1979 and there have been heavy declines since around 2003 due to Trichomonosis. We can help combat this disease by keeping feeders clean and by moving them around the garden to reduce the build up of droppings. Waste bird food should also be removed regularly.

The house sparrow has declined in numbers by 62% since 1979. These little birds need to gather insects and grubs for their young. So let a small patch of your grass grow long or plant some shrubs which will provide an excellent habitat for all ground-feeding birds.

The song thrush's beautiful song is sadly becoming rarer across the UK. Their numbers have fallen by 81% since 1979. To encourage them back into our gardens, we can grow more fruit trees as they love to feed on apples.

TVT PLANT SALE

Please make a note in your diaries for our Plant and Craft Sale on Saturday 17th May from 10am to noon. There will be plants, craft stalls, bric a brac and cakes. Tea and coffee will also be available. Any donations of plants, bric a brac and cakes would be most appreciated. We look forward to seeing you there.

Thorncombe Village Trust is currently affiliated to three organisations. The C.P.R.E., Dorset Wildlife Trust and The Ramblers.

Below is a synopsis of the aims of these organisations.

**C.P.R.E. – Campaign to Protect Rural England
Protecting and shaping the English countryside**

The CPRE considers the countryside to be unique, essential, precious and finite – and in danger. Every year, a little more is lost to urban sprawl, new roads, housing and other developments. Rural shops and services are closing, and increasingly intensive farming is changing the character of the countryside. Climate change will also have serious impacts on the rural environment. The CPRE works locally and nationally to stand up for the countryside: to protect it from the threats it faces, and to shape its future for the better. It has been doing so for over 80 years and has helped to influence and apply planning laws that have, against the odds, preserved the special beauty and character of the English countryside.

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Dorset Wildlife Trust is the largest conservation charity in Dorset with over 25,000 members. It is committed to ensuring that there is a secure future for Dorset's nature - its distinctive wildlife and natural spaces. It has 42 nature reserves which provide havens for wildlife and except for Brownsea Island, they are open throughout the year and are free of charge. It also offers wildlife events every month and volunteering opportunities.

The Ramblers

The Ramblers is a charity whose goal is to protect the ability of people to enjoy the sense of freedom and benefits that come from being outdoors on foot. Over the last sixty years the Ramblers have played a pivotal role helping secure the footpath network in England and Wales. By law, Ramblers in England and Wales need to be consulted on changes to paths and their volunteers inspect thousands of miles of paths each year. Eighty volunteer teams work with local authorities doing hands on maintenance and improvement work, for example, putting in new gates and making sure paths don't become overgrown.

The Ramblers also promote walking and give current and potential walkers a helping hand. They enable and organise group walks led by walk leaders across Britain.

For more information on any of these organisations, please visit their websites.

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/>

<http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/>

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

PLANTS FOR BEES

Every garden needs pollinators and bees are among the best. Without them there would be limited flowers and even fewer fruits and vegetables. Bees are basically looking for 2 things when they visit your plants:

1. **Nectar** - nectar is loaded with sugars and it's a bee's main source of energy.
2. **Pollen** - pollen provides the balanced diet of proteins and fats.

Many popular flower varieties are hybridized for features that are valued by the gardener, like disease resistance, flower size or color and bigger, longer blooms. Unfortunately much hybridization has reduced the production of nectar and pollen and sometimes leaves the resulting plant completely sterile and useless to bees and other pollinators.

Here are some simple tips to help attract bees to your garden:-

1. **Don't use pesticides.** Most pesticides are not selective. You are killing off the beneficial bugs along with the pests. If you must use a pesticide, start with the least toxic one and follow the label instructions to the letter.
2. **Use local native plants.** Research suggests native plants are four times more attractive to native bees than exotic flowers. They are also usually well adapted to your growing conditions and can thrive with minimum attention. In gardens, heirloom varieties of herbs and perennials can also provide good foraging.
3. **Chose several colours of flowers.** Bees have good colour vision to help them find flowers and the nectar and pollen they offer. Flower colours that particularly attract bees are blue, purple, violet, white, and yellow.