



Hello and happy spring!

We made it...spring is here and the abundance of life is apparent everywhere we look. Lower Smite Farm is bursting with catkins and early spring flowers, birdsong and the tracks of animals that have been out exploring the farm in all its new, spring light. Our nature reserves are also waking up to spring. After the hard work of our reserve officers, trainees and volunteers who have been busy with winter land management projects, the sites are in the best shape to see new life spring forth and welcome migratory and hibernating species back.

The transition from winter to spring is truly the best time to see what a difference vegetation and wildlife can make to a space. How are you encouraging patches of wilderness in your garden? Visit our wildlife gardening webpages for tips to get you started this spring www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wildlife-gardening. Take a look overleaf for a year in the life of the Lower Smite Farm wildlife garden, beautifully managed by our team of volunteers. The garden is open for you to pop in and get some inspiration for your own green spaces – during office hours (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) you’re welcome to park in our car park and a layby is available at other times.

Elise

Senior Membership Officer

elise@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org

Local Events

Please note that some events require booking
Most events are free or have a small entrance fee

For full details and more information about locations, please visit
www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on

Sun 16th March 10am–12noon **Wildlife Watch Group (ages 5-11)** Lower Smite Farm

Thur 3rd April 7.30pm–9.30pm **Orchid conservation** Lyttleton Rooms, Malvern (Malvern Local Group)

Wed 9th April 7.30pm–9.30pm **Spotting wildlife near you** The Friends Meeting House, Bromsgrove (Bromsgrove & NE Worcs Local Group)

Sun 13th April 10am–1pm **In search of wood anemones** Severn Valley Country Park (Wyre Forest Local Group)

Wed 23rd April 10am–2pm **Spring Family Nature Day** Lower Smite Farm

Fri 16th May 7pm–9pm **Photographing wildlife** Avon Meadows (SE Worcs Local Group)

Sun 18th May 10am–12noon **Wildlife Watch Group (ages 5-11)** Lower Smite Farm

A year in the life of Lower Smite Farm's wildlife garden

by Mary Bendall



© Wendy Carter

January-March

As the days lengthen, invertebrates that have overwintered in hollow stems are on the move, so these stems can be cut back and popped into a hidden corner. Last year's prunings have been used to make a hibernaculum (underground shelter) for the grass snake, newts and toads that we know live in the garden. It is time to review and adjust plans for the gardening year ahead and to enjoy the snowdrops, primroses, early bees and insects - signs that warmer, longer days are on their way.

April-June

Hopefully, risk of frost is now gone so vegetable seeds and any seedlings can be planted out into their final growing position. Setting up support structures now is much easier than later in the season. We start cutting the grass but leave areas at different heights as refuge and habitat for ground nesting bees, grasshoppers, reptiles and mammals. Time spent weeding now is time well spent, remembering that some 'weeds' are just flowers in the wrong (and sometimes the right) place.

July-October

Time to harvest and enjoy the edible crops. Vigorously growing plants can be tied into their supporting structures. Take time to sit and enjoy the garden. We especially recommend making a list of all the wildlife that you see. In late September / October the compost bin can be turned again (check for slow-worms or even hedgehogs as you go) and mature compost spread or saved for spring. The compost is an ideal spot for invertebrates to overwinter.

November-December

Unless they have flopped right over and are in the way, we leave seed heads and long stems standing as food sources for birds and overwintering places for invertebrates. It's a good time to audit the garden; could we put in another winter berry-bearing shrub? Fallen leaves are added to the leaf mulch or spread over the vegetable patch to help conserve soil nutrients. Wind-blown twigs are added to the log pile or dead hedge. Wrap up well, take time to notice the different animals visiting your garden in the cooler months and enjoy being outside.