

Bumblebee notes for December 2019

Are you looking for a New Year's Resolution? There is a limit to what we can do as individuals to arrest global warming but we can help animals and plants to cope with the consequences. Joining a protest group is fine as long as you are bringing positive suggestions to solve a problem rather than just destroying a system that is imperfect. So, consider becoming an active member of a conservation charity and supporting it for the whole of 2020. Learn as much as you can about its aims and then talk to your friends so that they can understand what needs to be done. There are hundreds of people living in this borough who want to do something to help wildlife but who do not really know where to begin.

In case you are wondering what you can plant to provide nectar and pollen throughout the year, there is a list of shrubs at the end of this article that will do the job. Shrubs need little maintenance, provide colour and structure and some flower in the colder months when annuals and perennials are bare. Next year I will add similar lists of wild flowers and of garden flowers to ensure a chain of gardens that pollinators will learn to visit regularly.




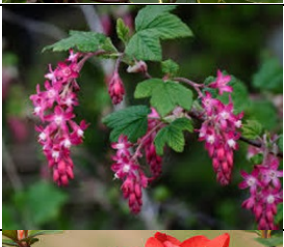

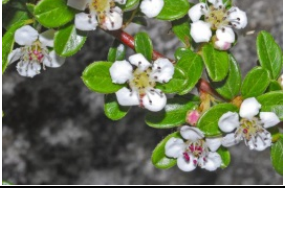
One of the biggest hurdles faced by wildlife is a lack of knowledge about how it is coping with the modern world. For example, the nation-wide survey of bumblebees, the BeeWalk, is telling us how some species are doing better than others and what their circumstances are. You do not need more than the basic knowledge before you can report a result saying "No bumblebees" which is likely to be the case in December and January, or "6 bumblebees" which is more likely in June. The numbers will change from month to month and year to year as a result of planting practices and the UK weather patterns. It is only when several years have passed when these numbers have been added to the national database that population changes can be linked to possible causes. The information is more useful when the species and gender can be identified but it is not essential to start with.









Next summer we hope to recruit members of WildCookham and WildMaidenhead into the scheme by conducting guided surveys in this area. You can prepare yourself now by joining the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, looking at their identification guides, and immersing yourself in the wonderful world of these furry pollinators. ...and remember, a bumblebee is not just for Christmas.

Adrian Doble (December 2019) (e-mail; buzz@bumblebee.myzen.co.uk)

Blossom all year with shrubs – only use open-flowered varieties

Month	Important shrubs	Super shrubs
January	Salix caprea pendula Clematis cirrhosa (Winter)	
February	Erica Darleyensis (Winter heather)	
March	Daphne odora aureomarginata	
April	Ribes sanguineum	
May	Chaenomeles japonica, Weigelia Rosmarinus officinalis Philadelphus delavayi	
June	Cotoneaster simonsii Erica darleyensis (Summer heather) Ceanothus burkwoodii Pyracantha watereri	

July	Rosa canis Lonicera Americana (Summer honeysuckle) Syringa vulgaris		
August	Lavendula hidcote Potentilla fruticosa		
September	Buddelia davidii		
October	Salvia fulgens Hebe "E A Bowles"		
November	Abelia grandiflora		
December	Mahonia japonica Lonicera fragrantissima (Winter honeysuckle)		

Other shrubs can be added, particularly open-flowered garden roses.