



THE AVON VALLEY

FAIRY TRAIL

Avon Valley Nature Reserve
Salisbury, SP1 3JY





Wild Angelica

An annual or short-lived perennial growing to a maximum of 2.5 metres (8.2 ft), it has erect purplish stems and rounded umbels of minuscule white or pale pink flowers in late summer.



Marsh Marigold

A small to medium size plant and can grow 10-80 cm high. Native to marshes, fens, ditches and wet woodland in temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. It flowers between April and August, that dies down in autumn and overwinters with buds near the surface of the marshy soil.



Great Willowherb

A flowering plant commonly known as the great willowherb, great hairy willowherb or hairy willowherb. Local names include codlins-and-cream, apple-pie and cherry-pie.



Purple-Loosestrife

Can grow 1–2 m tall, forming clonal colonies 1.5 m or more in width with numerous erect stems rowing from a single woody root mass.

When the seeds are mature, the leaves often turn bright red through dehydration in early autumn; the red colour may last for almost two weeks.



Hemp-agrimony

Is a perennial herb up to 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) tall or more. It lives in moist low-lying areas in temperate Eurasia. It is dioecious, with racemes of mauve flower heads which are pollinated by insects from July to early September. The flowers are visited by many types of insects. The flower heads are tiny, fluffy and can be pale dusty pink or whitish.



Common Fleabane

Pulicaria dysenterica, the common fleabane, or, in North America, meadow false fleabane, is a species of fleabane in the daisy family.



Meadowsweet

Meadowsweet has delicate, graceful, creamy-white flowers clustered close together in irregularly-branched cymes, having a very strong, sweet smell. They flower from early summer to early autumn and are visited by various types of insects, in particular Musca flies



Gypsywort

Gypsywort is a rather straggly perennial plant with slender underground runners and grows to a height of about 20 to 80 cm (8 to 31 in).

Its carpels float which may aid dispersal of the plant and its rhizomeous roots also allow the plant to spread.



Bittersweet

Despite being a member of the nightshade family, Bittersweet (also known as 'Woody Nightshade') is one of the less toxic plants in this group. Found in hedgerows, gardens and even on shingle beaches, it has purple flowers.



Water-cress

Water-cress has green, divided leaves with rounded leaflets, and hollow stems which float on the surface of the water. Small white and green flowers appear in clusters



Water Mint

Water mint is a herbaceous rhizomatous perennial plant growing to 90 centimetres (35 in) tall, flowering is from mid to late summer. All parts of the plant have a distinctly minty smell.

As the name suggests, water mint occurs in the shallow margins and channels of streams, rivers, pools, dikes, ditches, canals, wet meadows, marshes and fens. If the plant grows in the water itself, it rises above the surface of the water.



Hemlock Water-Dropwort

The water dropworts, *Oenanthe*, are a genus of plants in the family Apiaceae. Most of the species grow in damp ground, in marshes or in water. Several of the species are extremely poisonous, the active poison being oenanthotoxin



Common Water-Crowfoot

This is an aquatic plant, growing in mats on the surface of water. It has branching thread-like underwater leaves and toothed floater leaves. In fast flowing water the floaters may not be grown. The flowers are white petaled with yellow centres and are held a centimetre or two above the water. The floater leaves are used as props for the flowers and are grown at the same time



Water Forget-Me-Not

It is an erect to ascending plant of up to 70 cm, bearing small (8-12mm) flowers pink in bud, becoming blue when fully open, with yellow canters and white honey guides. The plant is distinguished by its long style. It blooms from mid-spring to first frost in temperate climates.



Common Comfrey

Common Comfrey is a hairy plant of damp ground and is often found beside rivers, in fens and ditches, and on roadside verges and waste ground. It displays clusters of bell-shaped pinky-purple flowers from May to July and often grows in clumps. It has become an important plant for organic gardeners as its roots reach deep into the soil making it rich in minerals and its leaves can be used for slug control, as a fertiliser and as a composting aid.



Common Meadow-Rue

has fibrous roots and has wedge-shaped, dark green leaves, with a paler green underneath, they are divided into multiple sections. It blooms between June and August. The flowers are composed of short sepals and longer, erect stamens. The sepals are actually white, but the multiple erect, yellow stamens, give the flower a yellow appearance. Later, three fruits are formed from each flower head.



Common Nettle

A very common plant, it can be found growing in gardens, hedgerows, fields, woods and many other habitats. Its preference for damp, fertile and disturbed ground makes it a good coloniser of places enriched by human activities such as agriculture and development. Stinging Nettles are great wildlife attractors: caterpillars of the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock Butterflies use them as foodplants; ladybirds feast on the aphids that shelter among them; and seed-eating birds enjoy their autumn



Primrose

A hardy little plant, the Primrose can flower from as early as December in mild years, appearing all the way through the spring until May. It favours woodland clearings, hedgerows and grassland habitats, and sometimes even gardens.



Brooklime

As the name suggests, Brooklime is a fleshy, succulent herb which grows in the wet margins of streams and ditches, and also in very damp soil. It is in bloom between May and September, producing spikes of bright blue flowers, but its leaves can persist all year-round. It is an ideal plant for wildlife pond margins as it is easy to control and provides cover for tadpoles and even sticklebacks.



Reed Sweet Grass

Reed Sweet-grass is a tall plant of shallow water and marshy ground, towering above other grasses and forming large patches around rivers, streams and ponds. It flowers between June and August. Although it can become invasive in some areas, large stands can provide good shelter for all kinds of wetland creatures.



Reed Canary-Grass

A tall grass to 200 cm, stout and smooth stemmed, reed-like. Forms dense stands by means of creeping rhizomes. Panicles 5 to 25 cm long, spikelets sometimes flushed purple.



Common Reed

The extensive, yellow-brown reedbeds that are formed by stands of Common Reed are a familiar sight of wetlands across the UK. They form important habitats for birds including rare and threatened species such as Bittern, Marsh Harrier and Bearded Tit. Because of their importance for wildlife, reedbeds are classified as a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



Cock's—Foot

Cock's-foot is an abundant, tussocky grass of grasslands, woodland rides and cultivated ground. It flowers between May and July, its rounded flower heads appearing on long stalks and giving the impression of a bird's foot, hence the common name.



Yellow Iris

The water-loving Yellow Iris can be found along the margins of waterways and ponds, and in wet woodlands, fens and saltmarshes. Often mingled among other reedbed plants, its large, bright yellow flowers appear between May and August and are thought to be the inspiration for the fleur-de-lis symbol which is used in heraldry and



Bulrush

Vigorous, tall clump forming plant to 2 metres. Stout and creeping. Leaves are a pale greyish green, long and strap shaped 8 to 20 mm wide. Flower stems slightly shorter than the leaves, female part is dark brown, blotched with white on ageing up to 3 cm in diameter. The male part is straw coloured and continuous with the female part. The whole of the flowering section is up to 15 cm in length.



Black Poplar Tree

mature trees grow to 30m and can live for 200 years. The bark is dark brown but often appears black, and is thick with numerous fissures and burrs. Twigs are lumpy and brown in colour.



Alder Tree

Common Alder is a common tree of riversides, fens and wet woodlands. The exposed roots of riverside Common Alders provide fish with shelter from predators or high flows, and their leaves provide food for invertebrates such as the larvae of caddis flies, stoneflies and water beetles. These, in turn, are preyed upon by fish including Salmon and Brown Trout. The wood of Common Alder does not rot under water, so was historically used for shoring-up canals and riverbanks. It was also used to make charcoal and clogs!

Hawthorn Tree



mature trees can reach a height of 15m and are characterised by their dense, thorny habit, though they can grow as a small tree with a single stem. The bark is brown-grey, knotted and fissured, and twigs are slender and brown and covered in thorns. It often hybridises with the UK's other native hawthorn, Midland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*). Both species are similar and can be hard to tell apart.

Bramble



bramble has long, thorny and arching stems and can grow up to 2m or more high. It has a very wide ecological tolerance and can grow almost anywhere, but tends to reach maximum growth and diversity on acidic soils. This species spreads by bird-dispersed seeds and by tip-rooting stems.

White Willow



mature trees grow to 25m and often have an irregular, leaning crown. The bark is grey-brown and develops deep fissures with age, and twigs are slender, flexible and grey-brown. Its name is derived from the white appearance of the undersides of the leaves.

Goat Willow



mature trees grow to 10m and can live for 300 years. The bark is grey-brown and develops diamond-shaped fissures with age. Twigs are hairy at first but become smooth, and can appear red-yellow in sunlight.

Crack Willow



the crack willow is hard to tell apart from the white willow. Mature trees grow to 25m. The bark is dark brown and develops deep fissures with age, and twigs are slender, flexible, shiny and yellow-brown.

Little Grebe



The little grebe is a small, dumpy grebe which often appears to have a 'fluffy' rear end. It readily dives when disturbed, surfacing unseen some distance away. In summer it has a bright chestnut throat and cheeks and a pale gape patch at the base of the bill. It can be noisy, with a distinctive whinnying trill

Mute Swan



The mute swan is a very large white waterbird. It has a long S-shaped neck and an orange bill with a black base and a black knob. It flies with its neck extended and regular, slow wingbeats.

The population in the UK has increased recently, perhaps due to better protection of this species. The problem of lead poisoning on lowland rivers has also largely been solved by a ban on the sale of lead fishing weights. Some birds stay in their territories all year, while others move short distances and form winter flocks. In cold weather, some birds arrive from Europe into eastern England.



Moorhen

Moorhens are blackish with a red and yellow beak and long, green legs. Seen closer-up, they have a dark brown back and wings and a more bluish-black belly, with white stripes on the flanks.

Coot



All-black and larger than its cousin, the moorhen, the coot has a distinctive white beak and 'shield' above the beak which earns it the title 'bald'. Its feet have distinctive lobed flaps of skin on the toes which act in the same way as webbed feet when swimming. It patters noisily over the water before taking off and can be very aggressive towards others.

Swift



The swift is a medium-sized aerial bird, which is a superb flier. It even sleeps on the wing! It is plain sooty brown, but in flight against the sky it appears black. It has long, scythe-like wings and a short, forked tail. It is a summer visitor, breeding across the UK, but most numerously in the south and east. It winters in Africa.

Kingfisher



Kingfishers are small unmistakable bright blue and orange birds of slow moving or still water. They fly rapidly, low over water, and hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface. They are vulnerable to hard winters and habitat degradation through pollution or unsympathetic management of water-courses. Kingfishers are amber listed because of their unfavourable conservation status in Europe. They are also listed as a Schedule 1 species under the Wildlife and

Barn Owl



With heart-shaped face, buff back and wings and pure white underparts, the barn owl is a distinctive and much-loved countryside bird. Widely distributed across the UK, and indeed the world, this bird has suffered declines through the 20th century and is thought to have been adversely affected by organochlorine pesticides such as DDT in the 1950s and '60s.

Nocturnal birds like the barn owl are poorly monitored by the Breeding Bird Survey

Cuckoo



The cuckoo is a dove-sized bird with blue grey upper parts, head and chest with dark barred white under parts. With their sleek body, long tail and pointed wings they are not unlike kestrels or sparrowhawks. Sexes are similar and the young are brown. They are summer visitors and well-known brood parasites, the females laying their eggs in the nests of other birds, especially meadow pipits, dunnocks and reed war-

Swallow



Swallows are small birds with dark, glossy-blue backs, red throats, pale underparts and long tail streamers. They are extremely agile in flight and spend most of their time on the wing. They are widespread breeding birds in the Northern Hemisphere, migrating south in winter.

Swallow numbers in the UK have fluctuated over the last 30 years with pronounced



Green Woodpecker

The green woodpecker is the largest of the three woodpeckers that breed in Britain. It has a heavy-looking body, short tail and a strong, long bill. It is green on its upper parts with a paler belly, bright yellow rump and red on the top of its head. The black 'moustache' has a red centre in males. They have an undulating flight and a



Greater Spotted Woodpecker

About blackbird-sized and striking black-and-white. It has a very distinctive bouncing flight and spends most of its time clinging to tree trunks and branches, often trying to hide on the side away from the observer. Its presence is often announced by its loud call or by its distinctive spring 'drumming' display. The male has a distinctive red



House Martin

The house martin is a small bird with glossy blue-black upper parts and pure white under parts. It has a distinctive white rump with a forked tail and, on close inspection, white feathers covering its legs and toes. It spends much of its time on the wing collecting insect prey. The bird's mud nest is usually sited below the eaves of buildings. They are summer migrants and spend their winters in Africa. Although still numerous and widespread, recent moderate declines earn them a place on the



Yellow Wagtail

The yellow wagtail is a small, graceful, yellow and green bird, with a medium-length tail and slender black legs. It spends much time walking or running on the ground. As its name implies, it wags its tail from time to time.

It is a summer visitor, migrating to winter in Africa. It breeds in a variety of habitats in the UK, including arable farmland, wet pastures and upland hay meadows. Serious declines in breeding numbers across all of these habitats place the yellow wagtail on



Wren

The wren is a tiny brown bird, although it is heavier and not as slim as the even smaller goldcrest. It is dumpy, almost rounded, with a fine bill, quite long legs and toes, very short round wings and a short, narrow tail which is sometimes cocked up vertically. For such a small bird it has a remarkably loud voice.

It is the most common UK breeding bird, although it suffers declines during pro-



Blackbird

The males live up to their name but, confusingly, females are brown often with spots and streaks on their breasts. The bright orange-yellow beak and eye-ring make adult male blackbirds one of the most striking garden birds. One of the most common UK birds, its mellow song is also a favourite.



Reed Bunting

Sparrow-sized but slim and with a long, deeply notched tail, the male has a black head, white collar and a drooping moustache. Females and winter males have a streaked head. In flight the tail looks black with broad, white edges.

Fieldfare



Fieldfares are large, colourful thrushes, much like a mistle thrush in general size, shape and behaviour. They stand very upright and move forward with purposeful hops. They are very social birds, spending the winter in flocks of anything from a dozen or two to several hundred strong. These straggling, chuckling flocks which roam the UK's countryside are a delightful and attractive part of the winter scene.

Cetti's Warbler



A small, rather nondescript bird, Cetti's warbler (pronounced chetty) is a skulking bird and can prove very difficult to see. It usually makes its presence known with loud bursts of song and the first glimpse will probably be of a dark, rather stocky warbler with short wings and a full, rounded tail, diving for cover.

This Schedule 1 species is one of the UK's most recent colonists, first breeding in Kent

Sedge Warbler



The sedge warbler is a small, quite plump, warbler with a striking broad creamy stripe above its eye and greyish brown legs. It is brown above with blackish streaks and creamy white underneath.

It is a summer visitor, and winters in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. Its song is a

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Chiffchaff



The chiffchaff is a small olive-brown warbler which actively flits through trees and shrubs, with a distinctive tail-wagging movement.

Although not always the case, chiffchaffs often have dark legs and a short pale eye stripe, whereas the willow warbler - a very similar looking species - has pale legs and a long yellow eye stripe. It is readily distinguished by its song, from where it gets its name.

Brown Fish



A medium to large fish, the brown trout lives in fast-flowing, stony and gravelly rivers. Brown trout are predatory fish, feeding on insect larvae, small fish and flying insects such as mayflies and damselflies. Spawning occurs between January and March when females (accompanied by a number of males) lay their eggs on gravelly beds. Fertilised externally, the eggs are buried in the gravel. The young fish (fry) hatch and feed on the nutritious yolk sac before moving on to feed on invertebrates



Minnow

Minnows are small fish that sometimes gather in large shoals. They are found in freshwater streams and rivers and, less frequently, in lakes. Minnows feed on insects, molluscs, crustaceans, plant debris and fish eggs. They spawn several times between April and June, making short migrations upstream to shallow, gravelly beds. Predators of the Minnow include brown trout and birds.



Grayling

The grayling prefers cold, clean, running riverine waters, but also occurs in lakes and, exceptionally, in brackish waters around the Baltic Sea. Omnivorous, the fish feeds on vegetable matter, as well as crustaceans, insects and spiders, molluscs, zooplankton, and smaller fishes, such as Eurasian minnows. Grayling are also prey for larger fish, including the huchen



Water Vole

The European water vole or northern water vole, is a semiaquatic rodent. It is often informally called the water rat, although it only superficially resembles a true rat.



Otter

Otters are carnivorous mammals in the subfamily Lutrinae. The 13 extant otter species are all semiaquatic, aquatic or marine, with diets based on fish and invertebrates



Daubenton's Bat

Daubenton's bat is a Eurasian bat with rather short ears. It ranges from Britain to Japan and is considered to be increasing its numbers in many areas



Banded Demoiselle

Only two species of damselfly in Britain have obviously coloured wings. They both belong to the genus Calopteryx. In this species the wings of the mature male have a dark blue-black band across the central portion and those of the female are iridescent pale-green. The body colour is metallic blue-green in the male and green with a bronze tip in the female. The flight is fluttering, butterfly-like and the male often perform a fluttering display flight in front of females.



Golden-Ringed Dragonfly

A striking, black insect with yellow rings along the length of the abdomen. The female is the UK's longest dragonfly because of her long ovipositor. The bright green eyes meet only at a point on the top of the head.

Common Blue Damsel

In many ways this could be considered to be the most typical British damselfly. It shares its blue and black colouration with several other species. It can be distinguished from the others by its broad ante-humeral stripes and all blue side to the thorax.



Male: segment 2 has a characteristic mark of a spot linked to the inter segment suture by a short line. Segment 8 and segment 9 are entirely blue.



Female: occurs in two colour forms, one blue, as in the male, the other dull green. The mark on segment 2 is thistle shaped and there is a "Christmas tree" shaped stepped triangle on S8. They often perch gregariously on emergent plant stems, all facing the same way.

Garden Bumblebee

A relatively large bee. Lengths, queen 17-20 mm, workers 11-16 mm, male 14-15 mm. *Bombus hortorum* has a long head and a slimmer body than some other *Bombus* species. The collar, scutellum and 1st abdominal segment are yellow, the tail is white. A rather scruffy looking long haired species. Pollen basket with black hair.



Buff-Tailed Bumblebee

Possibly the earliest bee to be seen and the largest to visit gardens. The queen is 2 cm or more, the workers and drones are of a more common bumblebee size: 14 to 17 mm in length. Whilst similar to *Bombus lucorum*, queens can be distinguished by the more golden yellow bands, compared to the lemon yellow of *B. lucorum*. However workers are generally indistinguishable in the field. Sometimes British specimens have a buff or orange tail, which helps with identification.



Seven-Spot Ladybird

The very common Seven Spot Ladybird is usually red, occasionally yellow. Its seven black spots are arranged three on each wing case or elytron and one at the back sitting across the two elytra.



Garden Spider

The Garden Spider is the UK's commonest 'orb web spider' and is abundant in gardens, grassland and woodland - it can be found almost everywhere, in fact. They build their typical spider webs (spirals with radial threads) out of sticky silk. They sit in the middle of the web, waiting to feel the vibrations of a struggling insect caught in the web, at which point they rush out and wrap it tightly in silk. Once immobilised they will kill their victim with a venomous bite. Adults appear from June to November and the young emerge from their silk egg-sac the following spring.



Red Admiral Butterfly

A fairly large black, white and red butterfly, the Red Admiral is an impressive visitor to our gardens where it can be spotted feeding on Buddleia and other flowers. Adults sometimes hibernate, and may be seen flying on warm days throughout the year, although they are most common in the summer and early autumn. The caterpillars feed on Common Nettles.



Brimstone Butterfly

A fairly large, pale yellow butterfly, Brimstone adults hibernate through cold weather, so may be seen flying on warm days throughout the year, although they are most common in the spring. Usually seen in ones or twos, they are never very common but are widespread.



Peacock Butterfly



The peacock butterfly has brownish-red wings, each with a single, large peacock-feather-like eyespot – used to scare predators. It rests with its wings closed, showing the almost black, well-camouflaged underside.

It is one of the commonest garden butterflies, found throughout lowland England and Wales. It is rarer in Scotland.

Scarlet Tiger Moth



Wingspan 45-55 mm. The rather variable adults of this species usually have a metallic green sheen on the blackish areas of the forewing. It is one of the few tiger moths with developed mouthparts, allowing it to feed on nectar.

Cinnabar Moth



The Cinnabar is a common moth of rough grassland and hedgerows, gardens and waste ground, where the black- and yellow-banded caterpillars feed on Common Ragwort, other ragworts and groundsel. Adults are on the wing during the summer, flying in the sunshine, but also at night. They are easily disturbed, fluttering up from their feeding plants. The caterpillars pupate in autumn, spending the winter as cocoons on the ground, before emerging as moths the following summer. The bright colouring of the adults and caterpillars warns predators that they are unpalatable,

Information correct at time of printing and taken from the following websites:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

www.wikipedia.org

www.rspb.org.uk

www.wildlifetrusts.org

www.British-Wild-Flowers.co.uk

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

www.naturespot.org.uk

www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

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