

# Buriton's 2025 Renaturing Trail

Scores of people enjoyed a stroll around the village in July to see how families are helping nature.

There were eight venues to savour with a mix of inspiring gardens and public open spaces showing how everyone can help cater for wildlife.

Lawns, hedges, ponds, flower beds and vegetable patches were all featured on the annual Trail – and there were opportunities to learn how to help hedgehogs and birds, too.

Whilst everything was managed by humans (not just left to go wild), the owners' aims were to share their gardens with a wide range of living things, bringing added joy and delight to relaxation.

## **Di and Martin Mitchell provided information about how they manage their garden in Bones Lane:**

The most obvious feature is our **main lawn** which is left unmown from spring to autumn. It has developed a wide variety of colourful grasses and wild plants, including primroses, orchids and knapweeds. This attracts a range of insects including many butterflies and bees. We deliberately keep some areas mown to show that this is deliberate and not just because our mower is broken! Even the mown bits are done on a slightly higher setting to allow clover to flower profusely, which the bees love. We cut the summer growth back in the autumn once it has seeded and mow it a couple of times in the autumn and also in the spring. We've never used weed killers or fertilizers,

even when it was a 'proper' lawn, and this might have helped its fairly rapid conversion into a wildflower meadow.

The **vegetable areas** are fairly traditionally cultivated and we use lots of home produced compost. The brassicas and the soft fruit are netted so we don't have to spray against caterpillars or worry about birds. In dry weather we are thankful for a downstairs bathroom since most of our grey water is carried out into the garden.

In the **main flower beds** we rotate spring tulips and summer & autumn dahlias, providing enjoyment for bees. Other more permanently planted flowerbeds have rockery plants, lungwort and spring bulbs which are also useful for bees whilst our herb bed and two buddleja bushes are much appreciated by butterflies.

Our **pond** was formed with shallow edges and a deep centre, and deliberately dug in an open part of the garden. It has no fish on purpose but years ago we did import some frog spawn and started a frog colony. There are also common newts, water boatmen and pond skaters as well as a variety of dragonflies and damselflies. We only use native plants and cut them back every year to ensure they don't cover more than about 40% of the pond.

**Bird-life** is very important to us, and we have a shallow bird bath and also bird feeders which we can view from our windows. These attract a number of

species and we also have nest boxes for House Martins and Swifts, but Sparrows and Starlings often use them.

**Hedges** surround our garden, and we cut them back most years outside the breeding and fruiting seasons. As well as a few tall Silver Birches our hedges include Elder, Pussy Willow, Hazel, and lots of Ivy, Honeysuckle, Wild Rose and Bramble, many of which are good for pollinators, and as a food source for the birds. Within the hedgerows there is space for birds to nest and at the base we have planted crocuses which the bees enjoy in the spring.

Last year's unusually wet winter transformed our normally friendly soil into cold cheese. Outdoor germination was almost non-existent but snails and slugs

did well: providing much enjoyment for song thrushes and blackbirds. This year has also been challenging: the cool, wet start made it difficult to do anything and then the very hot dry spells baked the soil. We had to use a sledge hammer to put in bamboo canes!

We had a large old Ash Tree cut down for safety reasons but kept the ivy-covered trunks for nests for blackbirds, song thrushes and robins. We've also seen a rapid spread of common spotted orchids along both sides of our front path and into the main wild patch of the lawn.

We are thankful to be able to share this garden with so many other living things. We are always happy to share ideas with other people – we do not know everything by a long way!

let's get buzzing  
in Buriton

