

MY GARDEN JOURNAL – TWO YEARS AND COUNTING

As it was a lovely warm summer's morning, I decided to enjoy my cup of coffee in the garden, just for a change.

I was quite surprised at the number of birds that I saw so I decided to start a head count (or should I say species count) and it wasn't very long before I'd totted up six different species, which included this handsome Robin.



And that's where it all began....with my curiosity raised I wondered how many other species called my garden home? From birds to bumblebees, flowering plants, shrubs, trees, insects, lichens, mammals and more I photographed them all. But how could I collate all of this information? That's when I discovered the Garden Journal.



Two years on and although my garden journal still isn't finished, I have spent many happy hours watching and photographing the biodiversity in my garden. Citizen science projects with the Buzz Club have taught me so much more about the nature on my doorstep and now I'm even creating my own projects.

Although not huge, my garden is large enough to accommodate mature shrubs and trees which are ideal for feeding, sheltering and nesting birds and invertebrates. There is also a pond which is fed by a natural stream (and we still have no idea where the stream starts from!) The boundary hedges are mostly mixed species with ivy, hazel, birch and dog rose alongside neater flower beds, containing foxgloves, globe thistle, aquilegia, comfrey to name just a few.



We never clear the debris of leaves that fall from our hedges to the ground underneath them and are constantly reminded noisily by blackbirds as they rummage through the debris for grubs, spiders and larvae, that this was the right decision.

Things are a little 'wilder' at the bottom of our garden with a log pile, bug house a leaf mulching area which is never used except to house a new collection of leaves gathered from the lawn in the Autumn. Yellow deadnettle and periwinkle grow feely alongside tall deciduous trees. The grass is left to grow long here with brambles rambling around its edges to encourage wild flowers for insects and nesting sites.



I've planned a couple of my own projects this year and will be adding to the mix of flowers by planting Yellow Rattle, Sunflowers and Teasels. I've removed my bird feeders and want to see if supplying natural food next winter will increase the variety of bird species that visit my garden.

In addition, I also love photographing Bumblebees. With that in mind I'm going to see if I can encourage them to nest in my garden this year. I always spot 6 or 7 Buff Tailed Bumblebee Queens in the garden in early February as they emerge from hibernation so I'm curious to see if they take to one of my nesting sites. (My husband loves creating things so he has made a Bumblebee nest box for me).



The upturned flower pot (far right) is lovely and snug with kapok at its centre. We also have a number of vole holes alongside a bank which borders a stream so I will also keep an eye on those as well.



My solitary bees are tucked up in their Bee Hotel in the garage where it's nice and dry away from this wet weather. I will be placing them back outside in their original spot on 1st March and waiting to see the new bees emerge and forage for food.

Perhaps, one day I might complete my garden journal but for now, I'm just enjoying learning more about the species that call my garden 'home'.