

Troopers Hill – a 5 star Local Nature Reserve

It has been a long wait since a judge visited Troopers Hill in July last year but a great result was announced at the Royal Horticultural Society South West in Bloom Spring Seminar Troopers Hill was awarded the highest level of five stars in the “Pride in Parks” category. The judge’s feedback included, “A wonderful “wild” area in the heart of Bristol which is well managed by volunteers and Bristol City Council who work well in partnership”.

Friends of Troopers Hill were very pleased that the judge had noted, as an area for development, “New paths for better disabled access where possible”. The Friends have raised £62,500 for exactly this and hope work will be carried out this summer. This is part of the Troopers Hill “Ways to Nature” project, more information can be found on www.troopers-hill.org.uk/waystonature

The colours on Troopers Hill are changing almost daily, bird song is increasing and more insects are starting to appear. During March wild plum trees have been covered in white blossom and the grey furry male buds or catkins on pussy willow have turned golden with pollen. Through April we will see more and more yellow blossoms as the broom comes into flower and hawthorn trees will bloom into a mass of white flowers. The changing flowers provide sources of nectar and pollen to the 78 species of bee that have been recorded on Troopers Hill.



Male pussy willow (sallow) catkins .

A good way to learn more about the names of plants and wildlife is to take part in the City Nature Challenge. This is an event involving cities across the world. Bristol and Bath took part for the first time last year. The idea is to record as many species as possible during the period of the event. Last

year the Bristol and Bath entry came 7th in the world, an amazing achievement considering the small area of land compared to some of the other entries. You do not need to be a plant or wildlife expert to take part. You can download the app iNaturalist to your phone and it will offer an identification of the photo you take.

The City Nature Challenge runs from Friday 26th to Monday 29th April. You can find out more on the Bristol Natural History Consortium website <https://tinyurl.com/cncbb2019> The information collected will increase knowledge and ability to protect our region's amazing wildlife. There are also events leading up to and during the challenge to help increase your knowledge.

You can learn more about more about what it is to be found on Troopers Hill by coming on a conservation work party. There are always new finds to discuss. We have even been "supervised" by a common lizard.

There is a conservation work party on the 1st Saturday and 3rd Thursday of every month, starting promptly at 10am and finishing at noon. The volunteers meet by the red slide on Troopers Hill Field.