

Yellow/Orange

Lady's Bedstraw

A mass of fluffy yellow flowers in summer. Used to be used to stuff lady's mattresses, as this plant smells sweet when dried. Flowers—July/August



Cowslip

This early flowering plant was once a common sight in meadows and hedgebanks. So common that the flowers were used to make cowslip wine. The flower heads are smaller and deeper yellow than it's relative, the primrose.

Flowers—April/May



Bird's-foot Trefoil

Also known as "eggs and bacon" due to the colour variation as the individual flowers change from orange to yellow. Food plant of many caterpillars. Also a good nectar source.

Flowers—June/September



Meadow Vetchling

A member of the pea family with seeds in "pea-pods". Favoured by bumblebees for nectar. The stem is square in section.

Flowers—May/August



Ragwort

Food plant of caterpillars including the Cinnabar Moth. The flowers are a magnet for insects such as hoverflies. This plant is poisonous to horses.

Flowers—May/October



Magnificent Meadows

Below are a few parks where meadow flowers can be found.

Elmdon Park Small pockets of flower rich grassland and areas being managed as hay meadow.

Elmdon Nature Park Large area of hay meadow created in 1999.

Colebank Park Areas of scrub and grassland support many interesting plants.

Brueton Park Conservation Area Marshland and hay meadow.

Jobs Close Area of long grass. Management being reviewed to increase floristic diversity.

Hillfields Park Areas of long grass on bund with interesting flora.

Green Lane Rec. Riverside meadow with some interesting plants, but dominated by coarse grasses.

Marston Green Park Areas of long grass and scrub with various plants.

It's not just about flowers

Many species of insects are dependant on flower-rich grasslands. The most obvious of these are butterflies, bumblebees and hoverflies. Dragonflies can be seen hawking over meadows catching smaller flying insects. Grasshoppers can be abundant and their songs are a familiar sound in some of our parks. Many bird species feed on the abundant insects. Frogs and toads find food in damp grasslands, and grass snakes feed on them.



Bumblebee on Meadow Vetchling

GAF/2005

Solihull Park Rangers Guide To

Meadow flowers Of The Borough



WILDFLOWER MEADOWS ARE THE RESULT OF DECADES OF CONSISTENT MANAGEMENT. IN THE PAST HAY WAS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO FARMERS AS A SOURCE OF WINTER FOOD FOR LIVESTOCK. MEADOWS WERE MANAGED FOR A CROP OF HAY AT THE END OF THE SUMMER. MANY SPECIES OF WILDFLOWERS THRIVE IN HAY MEADOWS, BUT IT IS A HABITAT UNDER THREAT. THIS LEAFLET GIVES DETAILS OF SOME OF THE MEADOW FLOWERS FOUND IN OUR PARKS.

For more information contact
Solihull Park Rangers 0121 704 8472

Wild flowers of our Meadows

There are many species of wildflowers that depend on our meadows, from common Knapweeds to uncommon Orchids. The change from hay to silage, increased use of herbicides and fertilisers and over-grazing have all led to the decline of flower-rich meadows. This leaflet gives examples of just a few of the flowers which may be found in our parks and open spaces.

Orchids

Spotted Orchid

As the name suggests, this species has dark spots on their leaves. The flowers are usually a delicate pink in colour but can be white. Flowers—June/July



Southern Marsh Orchid

Only known from one or two parks in its “pure” state. This species has no spots on the leaves. But does hybridise with spotted orchids and hybrids are found at other sites. Flowers— June/July

Pink/Purple



Betony

An unusual plant locally. The flowers look plantain-like before they are properly open. Favoured by many butterflies. Flowers—June/September

Centaurry

A delicate little plant, preferring drier soils. Was once used to treat digestive disorders. Flowers—June/October



Knapweed

A common grassland plant. Found in many areas of the Borough. The thistle-like flowers are an excellent source of nectar for insects. The alternative name of hardheads refers to the hard flower-buds. Flowers—June/September

Greater Burnet

Can be abundant in wet grassland. The oblong flower heads have no obvious petals. Uncommon locally. Flowers—July/September



Snake’s-head Fritillary

This unusual lily has been planted in a few wet meadows locally. The flowers are purple with a faint checked pattern. Can also be white. Flowers—April/May



Blue/Purple



Devil’s-bit Scabious

The blue pom-poms are made up of many small flowers. The name is derived from the legend that the Devil bit off the roots to stop it growing as it was used as a cure-all. Flowers—June/October

Meadow Crane’s-bill

The long flowering season and large flowers make this a most attractive plant. The darker veins on the petals guide bees to the pollen. Flowers—June/September



White



Ox-eye Daisy

The little Common Daisy thrives in short turf, but the larger Ox-eye Daisy grows in longer grass. The latter species has an unpleasant smell. Flowers—June/August

Lesser Stitchwort

A common little, creeping plant of grasslands. It’s white petals are deeply divided and it’s leaves are glossy green. Flowers—May/July



White Clover

These pom-pom flowers are an important nectar source for Bumblebees. Very common. Flowers-June/Sept



Mouse-ear

Similar to Stitchwort but this has hairy leaves and stems. Very common. Flowers-Apr/Aug