

## **Saith Ffynnon Farm - a guide to the garden and wildlife reserve, including the NCCPG Eupatorium National Collection. Jan Miller, [www.7wells.co.uk](http://www.7wells.co.uk)**

This one-acre garden and adjacent fields of 8 acres, have been planted and managed to enhance the wildlife visiting the area, especially butterflies and other insects which are the basis of the food chain for birds, bats, small mammals and then the larger birds and mammals that feed on them. Several different types of habitat are represented in a relatively small area. Beware! There are nettles, prickles, hidden ponds and uneven ground! Children are very welcome, but should be under adult supervision.

Next to the house; **Medieval Herb Garden** – planted in 2013. Ancient medicinal herbal plants are labelled, next to some better known culinary herbs. The Plan of St Gaul was the source book for the medicinal herbs;



First year



2014/2015 in the snow



2015 August

Some of the plants in the Mediaeval garden;



Costmary *Tanacetum balsamita*



*Thymes*



Ploughman's Spikenard *Inula conyza*



Mandrake *Mandragora autumnalis*



Lovage *Levisticum officinale*



Burrow of the Tawny Mining Bee *Andrena fulva* taking advantage of the limestone rubble substrate.

### **The Butterfly Garden**

Planted in a mound of builder's rubble and limestone rocks and chippings; *Buddleia davidii*; Royal Red, Beijing, White, Purple, *Buddleia x weyeriana* 'Golden Glow' and 'Sungold' Hebes; *Salicifolia*, Great orme, Etherington.

*Eupatorium* - good nectar for late season butterflies of all species.

*E.cannabinum* (native wild Hemp Agrimony), *E. cannabinum* Spray Paint,  
*E. Beggarten*,

*Erysimum* Bowles Mauve (perennial wallflower)

*Knautia arvensis* – Field Scabious

*Knautia montana*

*Scabiosa columbaria* (small Scabious)

*Succissa pratensis* (Devil's Bit Scabious – larval food of the Marsh Fritillary and also good nectar for late season butterflies of all species.

*Centaurea nigra* –Knapweed – great nectar attractant for Skippers and other butterflies that do not usually frequent gardens.

*Lycesteria formosiana*

Honesty, great early spring attractant for Orange Tip and green-veined white.

Lucerne – larval food of the Clouded Yellow, but also good nectar attractant for Common Blue, whites and Small Copper.

*Hesperis matronalis* -Dames violet/ Sweet Rocket – larval food of Orange Tip

*Centranthus ruber* - Red Valerian

*Lotus corniculatus* – wild Bird's Foot Trefoil- larval foodplant of Common Blue, Dingy Skipper and many species of moth.

*Anthyllis vulneraria* Kidney Vetch – larval food of the Small Blue butterfly and also great nectar for other blues.

*Sennecio jacobea* – wild Ragwort – larval food of the Cinnabar moth and also great nectar attractant for other species that do not usually enter gardens, including Small Copper and many moths,

*Nicotiana affinis* – great nectar attractant at night for many spectacular

Hawmoths. Achillea –wild yarrow, attracts Small Copper butterfly, *Primula denticulata* – pink – best early spring nectar. Chives. Marjoram

Herrenhausen, Aubretia. Lavender Munstead. Teasel – good nectar for butterflies and bees, then the Goldfinches come for the seed in winter.

*Carduus nutans* – musk thistle. Michaelmas Daisy *Frickartii* Munch . *Sedum spectabile* -Ice Plant

### **Raised bed of natural Dye plants**

**Woad**

**Gypsy-wort**

**Japanese Indigo**

**Madder**

**Alder Buckthorn**

**Willow coppice bed** of different basket-making coloured varieties; early nectar for butterflies and bees emerging from hibernation in March. Many moths also lay their eggs on goat willow, and these caterpillars in turn provide food for spring birds to feed their chicks. Moths are great food for Bats too.

Medlar tree, var Nottingham, Crab apple, Mountain Ash.

**Butterfly Lawn;** mown less frequently to allow wild butterfly and Bumblebee attracting plants like Red and White Clover, Knapweed, Yarrow (white), Ragwort, Bird's foot trefoil and Dove's foot Cranesbill to flower. Also Coltsfoot flourishes here in early spring near the wooden bridge.

**Wildlife pond constructed in 1993;** dries up in summer; native water



plants; marginals; Yellow Flag (*Iris Pseudacorus*), Burr reed, Giant water dock, Water plantain, Greater Spearwort, Bog Bean, *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp agrimony), Rush, flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), Brooklime (*Veronica Beccubunga*), Water mint (*Mentha aquatilis*), willows (*Salix spp.*).

In deeper water; oxygenators; *Runnunculus aquatilis* (water buttercup), water crowfoot, Hornwort, *Callatriche* -Starwort

All 3 species of British newts have been trapped here, and many frogs and toads. Southern Hawker dragonfly laid eggs in early years (dragonflies like new ponds)

Trees at pond side; Alder, Goat willow and willows spp, Aspen, *Rhamnus cathartica* -Purging Buckthorn and *Frangula alnus* - Alder Buckthorn (larval foodplants for Brimstone butterfly)

Silver birch, Hawthorn, Crab apple

**Oudolf Border;** originally planted 1998 to Piet Oudolf design, but now several original plants have been pushed out by; *Persicaria polymorpha* (large white flower at back), *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail' AGM, *Eupatorium* 'Purple Bush', *Eupatorium pupureum maculatum*

*Atropurpureum*, *Eupatorium dubium* 'Little Joe' and 'Baby Joe', *Tanacetum vulgare* Tansy, *Filipendula rubra*, *Ammi majus*, *Campanula lactiflora* 'Pritchard's variety', Bronze Fennel, *Monarda* ('Bee Balm') Scabious, Teasel, Hogweed, Ox-eye daisy. The purple shrub at right of centre is *PHYSOCARPUS opulifolius* 'Diabolo'



*The Oudolf border, summer 2016*



**Old Apple and plum trees in original farm orchard.**

Denbigh Plum

Mere de Menage (late 17<sup>th</sup> century, red baking apple)

Keswick Coddling (1790s) green apple

Grenadier (green cooker)

Bramley Seedling

Plus old pear





Possibly 'Keswick Coddling'

### **Bird Table and nest boxes;**

Different types of feeders and seed attract different species of birds; thistle seed especially for Goldfinches (you can also grow Teasels, thistles and sunflowers and let the seed-heads stay on), peanuts for Greater Spotted woodpecker, Nuthatch and Blue Tits, Long-tailed tits, Great Tits, coal tit; seeds for chaffinch, greenfinch, siskin, sparrows, all of which regularly feed at this bird table. Tree Creeper, Wrens, Bullfinch also seen on trees looking for insects. Other birds; Blackbird, Robin, Song Thrush, Swallows (nesting in stables – they love insect hunting over the pond and garden), Buzzard, Kestrel, Herring and Black-capped gulls, Magpies, Crows, Rooks, Heron cruise around the outskirts of the garden and sometimes swoop in for pond frogs. Woodpigeon, Collared dove, Flycatchers, Blackcap and Goldcrest.

Barn Owls and Tawny owls breed and hunt in the fields after dark. There is a new Barn Owl nest box with a camera showing inside the box in our kitchen.

**Through the arch; Eupatorium National Collection in prairie planting;** *Eupatorium fistulosum* 'Bergarten', & 'Bartered Bride (white), *Eupatorium cannabinum flore pleno*, *fortunei* 'Fine Line', *E. purpureum maculatum* 'Atropurpureum group' *E. purpureum* 'Gateway' & 'Carin' & *E. purpureum* 'Little Red' (all imported from USA), *E. purpureum* 'Purple Bush' *Eupatorium fortunei*, *E. perfoliatum* and *E. p.* 'Phantom' (from RHS trials), *Heucheras*, *Buddleja davidii* 'Black Knight' (very dark purple, strong perfume, next to arch) and 'Lochinch' (silvery, by gate into field) , *Persicaria* 'Red dragon' (*Persicaria microcephala*), *Impatiens noli-tangere* – 'Touch-me-not' Balsam, a rare wild flower – (the delicate fleshy stems with yellow balsam flowers) that grows locally. Larval foodplant of the rare Netted Carpet moth. *Verbena bonariensis* AGM, *Knipofias*, *Echinaceas*, *Rudbeckias*, *Achillea* 'Walter Funken' *Geranium pratense*, *Marjoram* 'Herrenhausen', purple *Plox paniculata*, White Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium alba*

Grasses; Elephant grass, Karl Forester, *Miscanthus* 'Flamingo' and others.  
Orange daylilies and Dahlias





Eupatorium National Collection September 2015

**Bug Tower-** lots of different dry holes and crevices for many different invertebrates to breed or hibernate. Rose and Lambs' ears (*Stachys lanata*) planted at base of tower for leaf-cutter bees and carder bees respectively to



use for their nest material.

**Through the gate into the wildflower meadow;**

**New Rubble Mound (2011)**

This is a new experiment with wild flowers and habitats from my studies of brownfield sites;

**From seed ( & some plants):** Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Knapweed, Queen Anne's Lace *Daucus carotta*, Ox-eye daisies, Wild poppies, cornflower, mignonette, candytuft, thymes, Bird's foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* (larval food for Common Blue and Dingy Skipper and important for Bumblebees), Sheeps sorrel *Rumex acetosella* (larval food for Small Copper butterfly) Kidney vetch (larval food Small Blue), Rock rose (larval food Brown Argus), Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Devil's bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* –larval food of Marsh Fritillary, Barren strawberry *Potentilla sterilis*- larval food Grizzled Skipper, Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca*,

**Came in by themselves;** Fat Hen (seed important for Sky Lark in winter), Good King Henry, Burnet, Ramping Fumitory, Bindweeds, Dock, Nettles (larval food Small Tortoiseshell & Peacock butterflies) Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* (larval food Painted Lady)



*White Letter Hairstreak butterfly on Creeping thistle (Cirsium arvense)*

### **The wildflower meadow.**

This one-acre field has been left to grow until late August or September for over 28 years, with no fertiliser added. Luckily it has not been part of a working farm since before the second world War, so has not been ploughed and re-seeded with modern grasses like Italian Rye Grass, which most farms have used since the war. However, it has taken until now to revert to the old fashioned, multi-species wildflower meadow. The meadow was made up of mainly old-fashioned native grasses like Cock's foot, Timothy, Sweet Vernal grass and Yorkshire Fog. These are all used by many species of our native butterflies, moths and other insects as larval foodplants, whereas Italian Rye grass is not. Also, modern management practices, including an early and later cut for silage, does not allow time for the lifecycle of the butterfly to complete.

Plants planted in that have taken well= Greater Birds foot Trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus* syn *uliginosus*, wild blue geranium *Geranium pratense*, Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Common Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza majalis*, *salix* spp.



*Greater Bird's Foot Trefoil (Lotus pedunculatus)*



*Spotted Marsh Orchid, (Dactylorhiza spp.) in June-July*

Came in by themselves, or may have seeded from one bought-in plant; Lady's Smock *Cardamine pratensis* (larval foodplant Green-veined white and Orange Tip) Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) Yellow Rattle, Nipplewort, Black Meddick, Meadow Vetchling, Great Willowherb, Meadowsweet, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*- larval food Small Copper, Horsetail *Equisetum*, Greater stitchwort.

A recent problem has been the invasion of Horsetail, starting as a few spears on the far end on the field and within 3 years shading out most of the damp patch. Weedkillers had no effect at all, so we have experimented with strimming in July (after the orchids had flowered and set seed), and this seems to have allowed the grass and wildflowers to fight back.

## Native Woodland planted 1988



*Photo taken Autumn 1993.*

One hundred trees planted 3m apart in a quarter of an acre; mainly oak and ash as they are locally native dominant, with cherry, holly, small-leaved lime, hazel, mountain ash. This density was recommended because a large proportion are expected to die in the early years, but the quality of the site with underground spring water and sheltered by high hedges meant we lost only 7 trees in the first few years! This means the wood is too dark and needs coppicing to allow ground flora and young tree seedlings to grow; which we have done 3 times, leaving piles of the cut dead wood for beetles and fungi. I planted in some bluebells, but otherwise everything has been left to its own development; Moschatel or 'Town Hall Clock' has appeared in big mats under the trees. There is a huge recently extended badger sett in the corner next to the field hedge, and badger trails and latrines are frequently found across the field and garden. Next to the sett is a rabbit warren. Foxes and their cubs have been seen playing in the field.



The rare and extraordinary wildflower 'Town Hall Clock'; the flower being a cube with a flower on each of 5 sides. *Adoxa moschatelina*





*Our Wildlife WATCH group cooking over a campfire and making dens in our woodland*



**Through Field gate into adjoining meadow;**

Barn Owl nestbox erected in Sycamore near gate June 2011.

This kind of meadow is exactly where they like to hunt for small mammals like voles, so is not grazed until September. We have seen a Kestrel hunting here, and Tawny owls can be heard at night, Barn Owls have nested and reared young successfully for several years, and when the nestbox fell down one year, they nested in a hollow ash tree



*Ian Spence, the local BTO licenced Barn Owl ringer, holds the mother*



*Barn Owl chicks, 2016( taken out of the nestbox by licenced staff only very briefly to check their health and to ring and record them)*

This field was not at all damp 20 years ago. Now has a large spreading wet patch supporting Ragged Robin, Marsh thistle and Marsh orchids and the rare Grass Vetchling that all came in by themselves.



*Ragged  
Robin*



*Exuviae of Hawker Dragonflies found at base of reed stems*



Leafhoppers ( *Cicadella viridis*) doing mating dance next to dried up pond August 2015

**around new pond (dug 2004?)** planted in; bog myrtle (larval food Argent&Sable moth), Hemp Agrimony (keeps dying out!), Purple Loosestrife, Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Marsh cinquefoil, Bulrush *Typha latifolia* (needed for Hawker Dragonflies to lay their eggs inside the base of the stems), Bog Bean, ox-eye daisy, Knapweed, **in water**; native oxygenators ;Crosswort, Hornwort, *Ranunculus aquatilis*, *Potamogeton*, and foreign oxygenator; *Elodea Canadensis* (to boost oxygen content in early stages) The Spearwort and *Crassula helmsii* came in by themselves! Black plastic membrane trying to control the latter.



Bog Bean (*Menyanthes*= Moon Flower *trifoliata*= with three leaves )flowers in June-July



the rare wildflower, Grass Vetchling (*lathyrus nissolia*)flowers in late summer on the

**Back into the garden via the steps at far end of Eupatorium border and living willow seat; Top orchard (with swing seat);**

old farm orchard apple varieties and pears.



variegated Tulip tree, Rose ‘Albertine’ climbing through apple tree, Azalea bed, with , *Rosa gallica*, *Paeonia molekowitzschii*, *Garrya elliptica*, *Buddleja* ‘Sungold’, wild elder, ivy, Damson plum trees, *Viburnum* , Gladdon *Iris foetidissima* , shuttlecock fern *Matteuccia struthiopteris*

**Stream;** *Hosta alba marginata*, *Astilbe*, *Crocsmia*, *Acer puppureum dissectum*, *Cercidophyllum japonicum* (‘the toffee tree’ – because of it’s smell in autumn) Honesty, Red campion, ferns, *Crocsmia* and *Iris pseudacorus*.

**Moss Lawn and woodland garden;** *Magnolia*, *Viburnum tinus*, *Viburnum rhydotaphyllum*, *Viburnum bodnantense* Dawn, *Buddleia davidii*, *Heleborus* (*ashwoodii*), Snowdrops, Trilliums, celandine, bluebells, *Acer japonica*, *Clematis montanii*, *Eucalyptus* *Epimedium* *Arum italicum picta*, *Fuschia megallanica*, *Spirea* ‘Goldflame’ *Camellia*, Old English Elm *Ulmus procera*, the tree that was devastated in the 1970s by Dutch Elm Disease and larval food for the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, now scarce too.



Herbaceous border; *Fuschia megallanica alba*, Smoke bush, iris, geranium Anna Folkard, *Chamerion angustifolia* (Rosebay Willowherb – larval food of the Small Elephant Hawkmoth and favourite nectar plant of many other moths), wild honeysuckle, *Eupatorium cannabinum flore pleno* (double), Acanthus, Aruncus Michaelmas daisy (*novae anglia*) ‘Barr’s Pink’ and Barr’s Blue’, *Echium plantagineum* (Viper’s Bugloss – loved by bees), Geranium ‘Wargave Pink’, Golden juniper, rosa, *Silene dioica*, *Aquilegia*, Hebe ‘Midsummer beauty’

Golden Privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium aureum* - nectar from scented flowers very attractive to butterflies and moths, so avoid cutting before flowering.

Golden rod, Helebores, *Kerria japonica*, *Rosa glauca*,

### **The Secret Garden**

First you have to find it! The theme is blue and silver; collecting blue flowers and silver foliage plants plus the odd splash of white has been quite a challenge – true blue flowers are quite scarce. Many that are described in catalogues as blue are in fact pale mauve.

In the spring here there are Bluebells and *Pulmonaria*, *Ceanothus*, *Omphaloides* and *Brunnera* ‘Jack Frost’, which combines the silver mottled leaf with blue forget-me-not like flowers. Many of the silver-leaved plants, like curry plant, however, have yellow flowers, so I cut the flowers off to concentrate the foliage.

A real silver-plated leaf is provided by *Convulvulus cneorum* in a pot which I bring under cover in winter. The huge seed pod If you are lucky in May you may see and smell enormous *Lilium cardocrinums*, and later in the

year their huge seed pods. There are also blue *Salvias*, *Plumbago*, *Gentians*, *Artemisia* ‘Powys Castle’, *Ceratostigma*, *Mecanopsis*, *Viola riviniana*, and variegated white Honesty or their silver seedpods, in different seasons.



*the Secret Garden in June*

There is an octagonal herb wheel made of old bricks that is home to blue flowered or silver-leaved herbs like Rosemary, Chicory, Artemisia and curry plant at different times of year.

The fernery was built up on rotting logs and leaf mould some years ago – the wild ‘Hart’s tongue’ fern is now taking over the other fern species!

A large Kiftsgate rambling rose, brought from Kiftsgate Garden itself, in about 2008, creates a waterfall of flower and scent over the secret garden wall from the veg. garden in June.



*Kiftsgate Rose, with bee, June-July*

## The Conservatory;

*Clerodendrum thompsonii* , *Clerodendrum ugandense*(blue)(climbing on back wall), Plumbago, Frangipani, Banana, Stephanotis, orchids, loquat, lemon, *Bouganvillia*, *Agave*, *Puya alpestris*, Abutilon, Hibiscus, Begonia rex varieties (for foliage), Tree Fern (*Dicksonia*), *Hoya* & *Stephanotis* (in hanging baskets), *Tibouchina* (large purple flowered shrub), Australian chocolate lily, *Aechmea fasciata* (large pink-flowered bromeliad) *Dracaena* (tall leggy tree), *Guzmania*, Scarborough Lily, *Beaucarnea*(the broad-base trunk and floppy head of long leaves) is a genus of four species of flowering plant native to Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala. *Thunbergia grandiflora* (purple flowered climber on trellis) If you *are very lucky* you may see the fabulous South American *Puya alpestris* in



flower – but they only flower every 20 years!  
native Peru it is pollinated by Humming Birds!

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**Some Moths that can be seen in the light trap at different times of year;**

**Lime Hawkmoth**



**The Spectacled moth**

**Peppered Moth (2 forms shown)**



**White Ermine, Brimstone moth, Elephant Hawkmoth**

**Poplar Hawkmoth, Swallow Tail, Swallow Prominent**



**Buff Tip**

