

Woodland flowers

To see flowers in the woods you need to visit in the spring, before the leaves are fully out on the trees and there is enough light getting to the woodland floor for ground-level plants to thrive. All of the reserve's woods are cut back or coppiced on a rotational basis, allowing more light to reach the ground, and this is resulting in an increase in our woodland flowers.

In all of our woods you can see wonderful displays of bluebells in early spring. These contrast with white wood anemones - an indicator of an old woodland - and bright yellow celandines. A little later in the year come the delicate pink flowers of wild geraniums or cranesbills, such as herb Robert, red campion with its deeply lobed petals and purple dog violets. In the damper areas near the brooks you will see the white flower clusters and wide leaves of ramsons, or wild garlic - often you smell it before you see it!

In Webb's Wood and Sherbourne's Brake in early summer you may also find yellow archangel which has nettle-like leaves, and the waving, clustered flower heads of wood spurge. At the woodland edges and in the hedgerows are low clumps of pale yellow primroses.

Throughout the year you will also see ivy, various ferns and clumps of dog's mercury, which has tassels of small green flowers in spring.

Grassland flowers

The grasslands host a huge variety of wildflowers. Our most diverse area is beside Webb's Wood next to the school fence, but you can find plenty of flowers elsewhere, north of Savage's Wood and on the Tump. Late spring to early summer is the best time to look for them.

Familiar species include oxeye daisy, various types of buttercup, and the dandelion-like ragwort - an important food plant for cinnabar moth caterpillars.

Reflecting the area's farming past, many of our wildflowers are typically found on arable land, such as the broad-leaved spurge - a nationally scarce species. An easy flower to identify is the scarlet pimpernel; look out for bright crimson spots close to the ground.

The grasslands host several flowers from the pea family. Look for the pretty yellow bird's-foot trefoil, purple common vetch with its slender leaflets, and pink sainfoin. Sainfoin literally means "wholesome hay" in French, reflecting its use as a fodder plant.

Wetland flowers

The lake and brooks contain several native water-plants such as reeds, bulrush and yellow flag.

Clouds of purple loosestrife grow along the brooks. There are several umbellifers - plants with umbrella-like clusters of white flowers and frond like leaves. The one with purple spotted stems is hemlock - be careful, it's very poisonous! Closer to the ground is bright blue ivy-leaved speedwell.

In summer you are most likely to notice the abundant pink and white flowers of Himalayan balsam along the banks. This was introduced to the UK as a garden plant by the Victorians, and while very pretty it is also unfortunately very invasive; uprooting these is part of the management plan for the reserve.

The Marsh

Between Stoke Brook and Brook Way is a marshy area where greater reedmace and pink hairy willowherb grow, with other wetland species including yellow flag irises. In order to preserve this habitat, the conservation group has dug irrigation channels into the marsh to prevent it from drying out.

Some of our wildflower species are quite rare. Please don't pick them but leave them for other people - and wildlife - to enjoy.

How many flower species can you find?

	Bird's-foot Trefoil <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bluebell	
	Celandine <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog Violet	
	Herb Robert <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ivy-leaved Speedwell	
	Loosestrife <input type="checkbox"/>

	Ox-eye Daisy <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Primrose	
	Ragwort <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ramsons (Wild Garlic)	
	Red Campion <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Pimpernel	
	Wood Anemone <input type="checkbox"/>



THREE BROOKS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

FLOWERS



Bee Orchid

The different habitats of the reserve - woodland, grassland and wetland - support a variety of wildflowers. See how many you can find on a walk through the reserve.



Group website: www.three-brooks.info



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