



# Wild About Barrow

March 2021

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Spring has sprung! What a wonderful time of year. Birds are singing, plants are growing, roots stretching into the warming soil and some are already flowering.

Here are some flowers seen around the village, providing a welcome source of nectar for a few insects that have already made an appearance.



Red dead nettle  
(*Lamium purpurea*)



New Zealand bitter cress  
(*Cardamine corymbosa*)



Daisy  
(*Bellis perennis*)



Primrose  
(*Primula vulgaris*)



Dandelion  
(*Taraxacum officinale*)



Common field-speedwell  
(*Veronica persica*)

## Have your say

It's been great to see quite a number of bird feeders on trees around the village. The most I've seen on one tree is on Damson Drive with a whopping 9... unless you know better? A mention must go to a hedge of three trees on Branston Avenue with 13 feeders. I suspect a

lot more feeding is going on in back gardens which is heartening as there will soon be a lot of little hungry chicks for busy parents to feed.

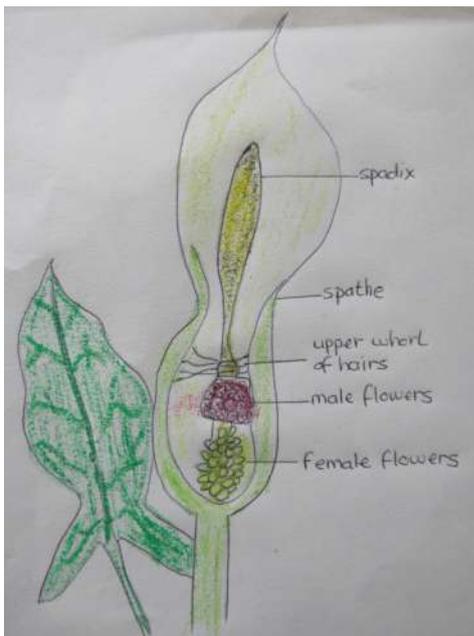
What have you done to help nature? What have you spotted in your garden or around Barrow?

We'd love to hear what you have seen and/or been doing to help wild plants and animals. Send your stories and photos to [wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com](mailto:wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com) and we'll share them on this site. It doesn't have to be much. Just a line or two is enough but more is welcome too!

## Nature Notes in March

### What to see

1. At this time of year the leaves of the nobly named **Lords and Ladies** plant begin to shoot up. You may have noticed the spear-shaped leaves of Lords and Ladies growing up in the bottom of hedges. There is quite a lot in the Strancliffe hedge towards Nottingham Road. This plant is sometimes called Cuckoo Pint or Parson in the Pulpit and its latin name is *Arum maculatum*. In fact, it has over 20 common name names! *Warning: all parts are poisonous.*



Later in spring the lily-like flower appears but the large greenish 'petal' with a shiny white interior is in fact a sheath. It protects a poker-shaped spadix which can be brown, purple or sometimes yellow. This heats to a surprising 10 to 15 degrees higher than the surrounding air and produces an odour which attracts small flies.

The midges crawl down the spadix, past a ring of stiff bristles to the flowers. Here they pollinate the tiny female flowers but are trapped by the bristles until the male flowers, the stamens, ripen and produce pollen. The bristles then wilt and allow the insects, now coated in pollen, to escape and visit another flower.

2. **Active insects.** Some remain active through the winter such as the winter moth. Look out also for the March moth, both of these are common throughout England. Some insects overwinter under bark or rest in holes and crevasses. The only brightly coloured butterfly in the UK, the brimstone butterfly (yellow), is in flight from March to October and is fairly common in central England. They like to feed on purple flowers.



March moth



Winter moth

Photographs: Graham Calow, [www.naturespot.org.uk](http://www.naturespot.org.uk)

## What to do

1. **Make a hole in a fence to allow hedgehogs to pass through.** Hedgehogs travel around one mile in a single night in search of food and a mate. One of the main reasons for their decline in the UK is due to them being easily trapped in modern gardens with fences.



We can make life a lot easier for this endangered species by making a hole in or under our walls and fences. A 13 x 13cm hole is sufficient. First check with your neighbour and that pets cannot escape. Also make sure that the hole does not lead onto a busy road.

Hole put in my new fence earlier this year to help hedgehogs that live under my holly tree.

2. **Sow seeds of bee friendly annuals.** This will be great for insects and give a colourful display too. Try cornflower, borage, Echium 'Blue Bedder' and scorpionweed.
3. **Let some of your lawn grown longer.** Shrews, voles, beetles, toads, frogs and hedgehogs much prefer to move through longer grasses than out in the open.
4. **Volunteer to help sow wildflower seed in our Millennium Park.**  
See notices in the village library and here at ~~Wild About Barrow~~ or email [wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com](mailto:wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com) to register your interest. We'd love to see you there!