

## Pollinator Patch with Juliet from Hive Helpers

### In praise of tussocks

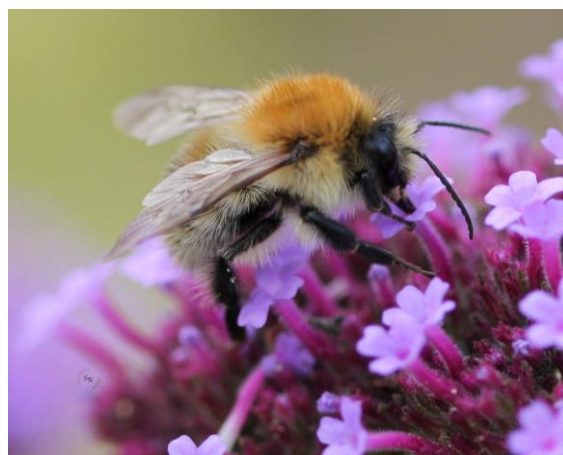
There is a small wood near where I live, familiar to residents as Ten Acre Wood. It is small but perfectly formed, with a valuable mix of habitats which has so far avoided development, although it has no specific protection that I know of. In autumn, it boasts a range of fungi including an impressive crop of winter chanterelles. And there is a small clearing in the middle which at this time of year is buzzing with bumblebees, reminiscent of Yeats' 'bee-loud glade' in his wonderful poem *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. There are large buff-tailed and common carder bumblebees scouting around in the long, tussocky grass, perfect for nesting bees. Grass which is long and uneven is so beneficial for biodiversity, which leads me nicely to...

### No Mow May

This is Plantlife's annual campaign which asks all gardeners, councils and landowners not to mow until the end of May, in order to boost the flowers and nectar available to pollinating insects. I have been pleased to see so many dandelions adorning our roadside verges, such a good source of early nectar, and I even spotted a blue heart in Rowledge to indicate that the area had been deliberately left wild and was not laziness on the part of the owners! Mossy and bare lawns are good too, although I haven't convinced my husband on that score!

### Bee of the month – Common carder bee

Chances are that if you see a gingery, fluffy bumblebee, it will be a common carder (*Bombus pascuorum*). They are often found in gardens and woods and like all bumblebees, it is a social insect making small nests in cavities, old bird's nests and mossy lawns. The name comes from the fact that they tease moss and dried grass with the bristles on their legs, brushing and shaping the material into a nest to keep the offspring warm and dry. They are long-tongued bees so like tubular flowers such as heather, clover, lavender.



Common carder bee by Sarah Womersley

### Pollinator plant of the month – white dead nettle

White dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), as its name implies, does not sting, and can be commonly found on disturbed ground such as roadside verges, waste ground or grassy banks. The white hooded flowers attract lots of species of long-tongued insects, including our friend the common carder. It is also the food plant of several moth caterpillars, including the unmistakable angle shades moth (*Phlogophora meticulosa*), which at rest looks like a withered autumn leaf. I always leave patches of nettles in the wild area at the bottom of my garden, but for some reason I don't have the white dead nettle, only the stinging variety (*Urtica dioica*) which is the food plant of several butterfly caterpillars, and a garden variety of yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) which I discovered has the nickname of 'aluminium archangel' because of the silver streaks in its leaves. It is very invasive and I keep it under tight control, tolerating it only for the pollinator-friendly flowers.

For a comprehensive list of plants for pollinators, visit <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators> and download the garden plants list.

For more information about Hive Helpers, please visit [www.hivehelpers.co.uk](http://www.hivehelpers.co.uk) , email us on [office@hivehelpers.co.uk](mailto:office@hivehelpers.co.uk) or phone us on 07895 547637