

Whitchurch Nature Notes (2)

Tess & Scarlet's Garden Watch

Tess and Scarlet Higley have been busy looking out for insects in their garden. They found these three interesting specimens and have taken excellent photographs of them. The pictures then made it possible to make accurate identifications. Here are their conclusions which they wanted to share with other keen fans of our local fauna in Whitchurch.



Dark-edged bee-fly *Bombylius major*

We found this lovely bee-fly hiding in some stones; it is the most common bee-fly in the country. We liked his yellow-brown furry body. He looks like a bee with long, thin legs and a long proboscis but is actually a fly. The fly-bee uses the proboscis to drink nectar with. The wings have dark markings which give the bee-fly its name. The dark-edged bee-fly likes the sunshine and will often do some sunbathing on dead leaves. The adult male bee-fly is a bit of a Don Juan who performs courtship dances to attract a female. He will swoop at other males whilst spinning at females to show off.

Common Green Shield Bug *Palomena prasina*

This is a Common Green Shield bug but he is still wearing his brown winter coat. Shield bugs were once restricted to southern England however the changing climate means that they are now widespread across England and Wales. The common green shield bug feeds on a wide variety of plants by sucking the sap although they seldom damage the plants. The adults hibernate and emerge in the spring. The females lay their eggs on the undersides of leaves. Shield bugs are also called 'stink bugs' because they emit an unpleasant smell when threatened.





Seven-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*

This ladybird is very common in this country and it is one of our favourite beetles. There are over 5,000 species of ladybirds in the world. Our grandad likes to see ladybirds in his garden because they eat lots of aphids. Seven-spot ladybirds are red with three spots on each side and another one in the middle. These ladybirds have a black head with tiny white patches on each side. Their colour warns their predators not to eat them because when they are threatened, they secrete a nasty yellow fluid from their legs which tastes horrid. When we were tiny, we used to like singing the song 'The Ladybird has six shoes.'

If you are inspired by Tess and Scarlet's successful Nature Watch, why not spend some time in your garden or on your walk, taking a close look at the natural world. In their April 2020 Newsletter, TVERC are encouraging us all to send in our sightings of any flora & fauna that we see.



Please submit your records to TVERC

Your wildlife sightings will help protect and enhance our environment by increasing the quality and quantity of data we hold. In these hard times many people are finding solace in nature, whether within your garden or on your daily walk/run/bike ride, we'd love to know what you've seen! We've set up an [iRecord](#) activity for anyone who wants to join and have some fun!

If you click on the iRecord link in the box above, it will take you to the User Login page for the TVERC Lockdown Challenge group on the iRecord national data recording system. Set yourself up as a user by clicking on 'Create new account' and then you are all ready to enter the information about what you have seen.

Alternatively, you can use the easy to use iRecord phone App and these records will also get passed through to the TVERC database. And if all this sounds too techy, email me the details of your sightings (date & time, species, location and a photo) and I will submit them for you.

Happy nature watching!