SUSTAINABLE WHADDON

Opportunities to enhance ecology and biodiversity

Opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint

South Cambs Swift Corridor

In June Paul Evans and Dave Handscombe attended a meeting hosted by Peter Tiffin from Bassingbourn Zero Carbon Collective (ZCC). Those present included representatives from the eco/net zero groups in Shepreth, The Mordens, Sawston, Gamlingay and Litlington, as well as representatives from both the County and District Councils, and Cllr Natalie Warren Green, SCDC lead for the Environment. The emphasis was on Parish bio diversity plans that also embrace the requirements for a Local Nature Recovery plan.

One of the topics covered was the concerns regarding a 60% decrease in swift sightings over the last 10 years. This decline is due to several factors including climate change, farming practices, decreasing insect numbers and a lack of nesting areas.
Many of the groups had started tackling the problem, mainly through the provision of swift nesting boxes. The hope is that there will be a “swift corridor” running from Gamlingay to Sawston and the Shelfords. Much of the funding has been via the local Parish Councils.

Bassingbourn now has 78 swift nesting boxes of which a third are currently occupied, and since the meeting Sustainable Whaddon has applied for and received a grant of £300 from the PCC to purchase Whaddon's first nesting boxes. Dave has offered to undertake the installation. Initially bespoke swift and bat boxes will be installed on the tower in the church, and it is hoped that this would encourage villagers to continue the initiative by installing boxes on their houses.

The next meeting of Sustainable Whaddon will be on Weds 10th September at the house of Jan Gibson - 122 Bridge Street.

Sustainable Whaddon Seed Exchange

First Year Review

The seed exchange in the Meldreth Road telephone box has now been up and running for a full gardening year. Seeds of approximately 60 different species and varieties of flowers and vegetables have been kindly donated during the year, in more than 150 packets, including both commercial seeds and those collected from gardens. The flower seeds range from common English garden annuals and perennials to more exotic Australian and New Zealand species, alongside a wide range of vegetable seeds such as broad beans, courgettes and peas. It's good to see that the majority of these have been taken away and hopefully successfully sown and grown in Whaddon gardens. Many thanks to everyone who donated seeds and to those who took them away to grow on, you've made it a very successful first year. We'd love to hear your gardening stories; be it successes or failures, and any general comments on the seed exchange.

The autumn equinox is just around the corner and plants are setting seed once again, so now is an ideal opportunity to start collecting for the second year of the seed exchange. To continue to be successful, the exchange needs regular seed donations so please harvest your garden seeds and dig-out unwanted commercial seed packets and add them to the collection. Further information is available in the phone box and on the Whaddon web site at https://www.whaddon.org/sustainable-whaddon or email specific questions or comments to sustainablewhaddon@whaddon.org.



House Plant Glasshouse Open Weekend

Saturday 6th September 10am-4pm
Sunday 7th September 11am-4pm

Tour the glasshouses and buy peat-free plants direct from growers

Cut Your Own Dahlias
7 Days a Week

PYO Pumpkins
Coming Soon

Bury Lane, A10 Bypass, Melbourn, Royston, SG8 6GT
What3Words: months.wells.tanks
Tel: 01763 260418 www.burylane.co.uk

FOOD HALL • DELICATESSEN • BUTCHERS • FISHMONGERS • CAFÉ • GIFT HALL • GARDEN SHOP • FUN BARN

FORAGING- The act of searching , finding and collecting natural resources from the wild. As well as enjoying nutritious food it can increase our sense of wellbeing and our appreciation of nature.

GUIDELINES

Wild plants and the law All wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is illegal to dig up or remove a plant (including algae, lichens and fungi) from the land on which it is growing without permission from the landowner or occupier. Some species are specially protected against picking, uprooting, damage and sale. A list of these can be found on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Minimise impact -Only take what you plan to consume. Avoid trampling areas you are collecting from. Pick leaves or berries with care to avoid damaging plant roots.

Ask permission - Many places only allow foraging for personal use. Important conservation sites are habitats for rare or vulnerable species and need to be carefully accessed.

Identify what you are foraging - Never consume a wild plant or fungus unless you are certain of its identification.Leave it alone if unsure.

Only collect from plentiful populations -Only collect flowers, leaves, fruits and seeds where they are in abundance. For fungi, only take mushrooms that have opened their caps (so are likely to have dropped their spores). Do not collect small 'button' mushrooms.

Leave plenty behind -Wild food is vital for the survival of the UK's wildlife, and species need to regenerate.

Never collect rare species- Take a good field guide to confirm species in the field and avoid confusion. Some species are protected by law, so know what not to collect.

FORAGING IDEAS FOR AUTUMN

Beech nuts. You can nibble the nuts as you pick them after removing the outer brown skin. They can be used as an alternative to pine nuts in risottos or pasta dishes, but can be a little toxic if eaten in large quantities

Hazelnuts. Hazel nuts or cobnuts are common hedgerow finds. They have a lovely nutty taste and can be eaten raw or can be roasted for an even better flavour. Pick when green and ripen in a dark place.They are safe to eat once their papery covering begin to peel back. Delicious in cakes and nut butters.

Hawthorn berry. A common hedgerow find. Haws are picked when bright red or orange and are much better after cooking as this brings out a sweet, mildly spicy flavour. Great in jams and jellies due to their high pectin content. The round fruits are about 1cm long and resemble small apples with a single seed.

Rosehip. Rosehips are the ripe red and orange seed pods of the wild rose plants commonly found in hedgerows.The irritant hairs from these seeds were traditionally used to make itching powder. The outer layer of a rosehip is packed with vitamin C and traditionally made into a syrup to reduce winter colds, but rosehips are also good in wines, jellies or jams. Pick carefully to avoid the prickly thorns, and sieve well once cooked to remove seeds and hairs.

Sloe . The blackthorn is best known for its crop of acidic fruits known as sloes. These edible berries are too bitter to eat raw but are used to make sloe gin. Pick after the first frost as it softens the skins and helps to release the juices, or pick earlier and freeze at home before using.

Elderberries. September is a great time to collect the berries as most elders fruit between July and October. They must be cooked to be edible as they are mildly poisonous if eaten raw and can cause stomach upsets. They make an excellent wine.

Blackberries Always a favourite.Great for puddings, jams and jellies and sauces.

CAMBRIDGE ECO HOMES

With all the potential grants available at the moment, those of you who are considering a change over to a heat pump might be interested in this event.

Highlighting heat pumps in Cambridgeshire

Heat pumps will take centre stage this year for Cambridge Carbon Footprint's Open Eco Homes: Winter Special.

From 26 Oct – 23 Nov, people from across the region are invited to discover for themselves what it's like to get off gas and retrofit their homes to increase comfort, reduce carbon emissions and enjoy cost savings.

A fantastic opportunity to experience what it feels like to be in a Cambridgeshire eco home in winter: visit homes in Cambridge City and South Cambs equipped with heat pumps and other low carbon technologies and hear directly from homeowners about their journey towards increased comfort, savings and sustainability.

Gain practical advice from experts on working with professionals, cutting energy use, saving water, installing solar PV, and making affordable DIY improvements.

Whether you're planning your next retrofit or just curious, these events will help you to take the next step towards a greener, more efficient home.

Tours and talks are available in person and online.
All are FREE; advance booking required.
For full event details and booking go to https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/what-we-do/open-eco-homes/

"Really useful real world experience" OEH tour attendee
"Went well beyond other information I've found on the internet" talk attendee.