

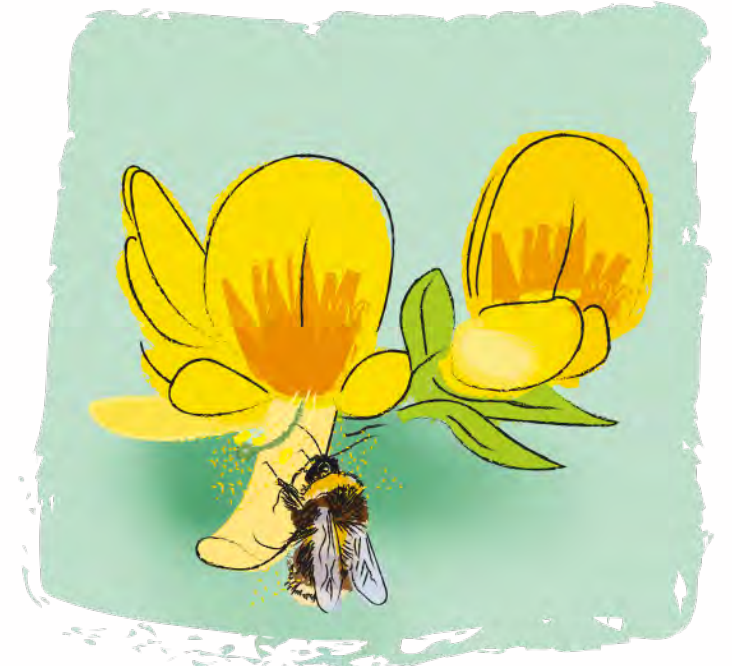
Native Planting





- Native flora has played a part in the story of humans.
- We want to reconnect you all with these plants
 - they are still of great importance to us all today!
- The beauty and wonder that they bring to our lives can sometimes be overlooked - we want to change that!

- 97% of wildflower meadows destroyed since the 1930s
- Road verges are a vital refuge for insects, birds, and mammals
- A good verge will supply a diverse source of nectar and pollen from February to September. Birds-foot trefoil alone is a food plant for over 130 species of invertebrate
- It is heartbreaking to lose the beauty and colour these native flowers give the UK landscape; the plight of pollinators has a very real impact on the food we eat



- Long grass improves conditions for invertebrates, which in turn provide food for birds and small mammals such as hedgehogs and mice
- Wild grasses provide nourishment for Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Skipper family caterpillars
- Long uncut grass provides great habitat for moth caterpillars which are blue tits' favourite food
- Spiders can spin webs from the tall grass to catch flies





Shall we bust a few
myths? Let's go!



You don't need wafting, high meadows to encourage wildflowers and all the beautiful life that goes with them. Shorter species work well.

Short grass is bad for wildlife...NO!



Certain bird species need short turf
in order to forage!

Starling and House Sparrow for
instance -
they are red listed and need help too!



- Surrey County Council looked at ways to adopt the Plantlife strategies to manage roadside verges
- Our project was born
- The reality did not match up

Another myth:
“Just leave it to grow”

Surrey County Council tried this approach
on urban and suburban verges;
it didn't work...





Try a clover patch first!

My grandchildren used this “maze” to “play trains”.

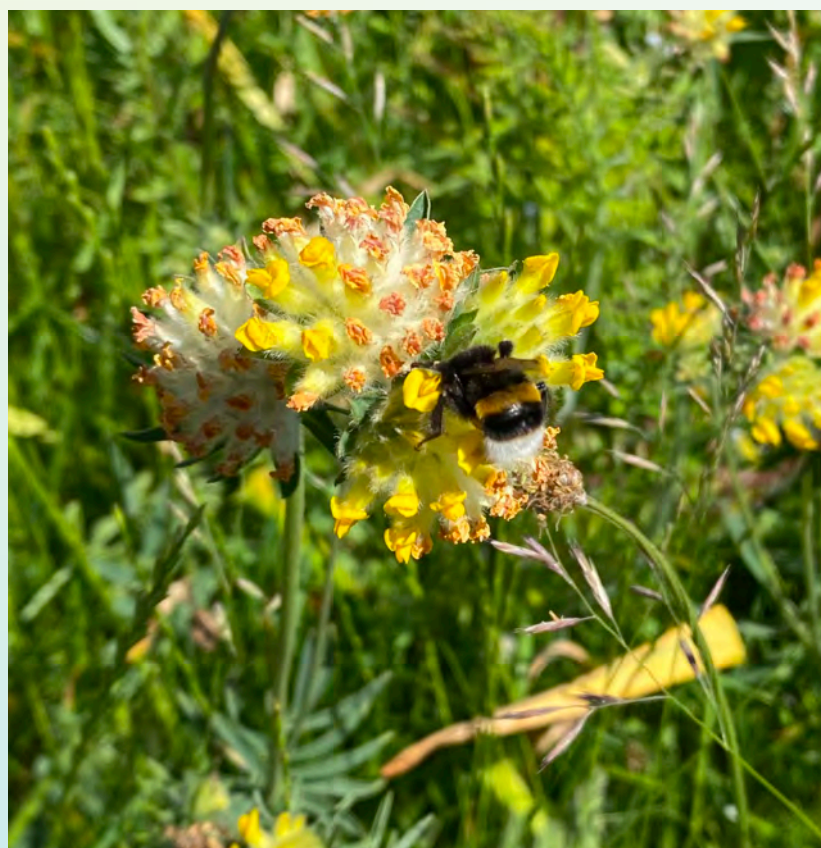
A more unusual way with mazes!





- If flowers in lawns are a step too far for you, it really isn't a problem
- What is really important is to find a home for them somewhere
- A small patch will go a long way
- If everybody creates just a small area for native plants a wide range of animals will benefit - us included!

Native plants will grow happily in a formal planting scheme with your favourites. Keep your lawn formal if you want to - you can still encourage pollinators.





Introducing Blue Hearts

If you plant an area of council owned land AND ASSUMING YOU ASK FIRST it is a good idea to let the poor contractors know - they don't deserve to be shouted at by angry residents! That is where the BLUE HEART VERGE MARKERS come in.

REMEMBER: not everybody wants to see a formal lawn turned into a flower garden so please be kind to neighbours. Pick an area where nature needs a helping hand and LOOK AFTER IT.



Blue Hearts: making a start in Bookham

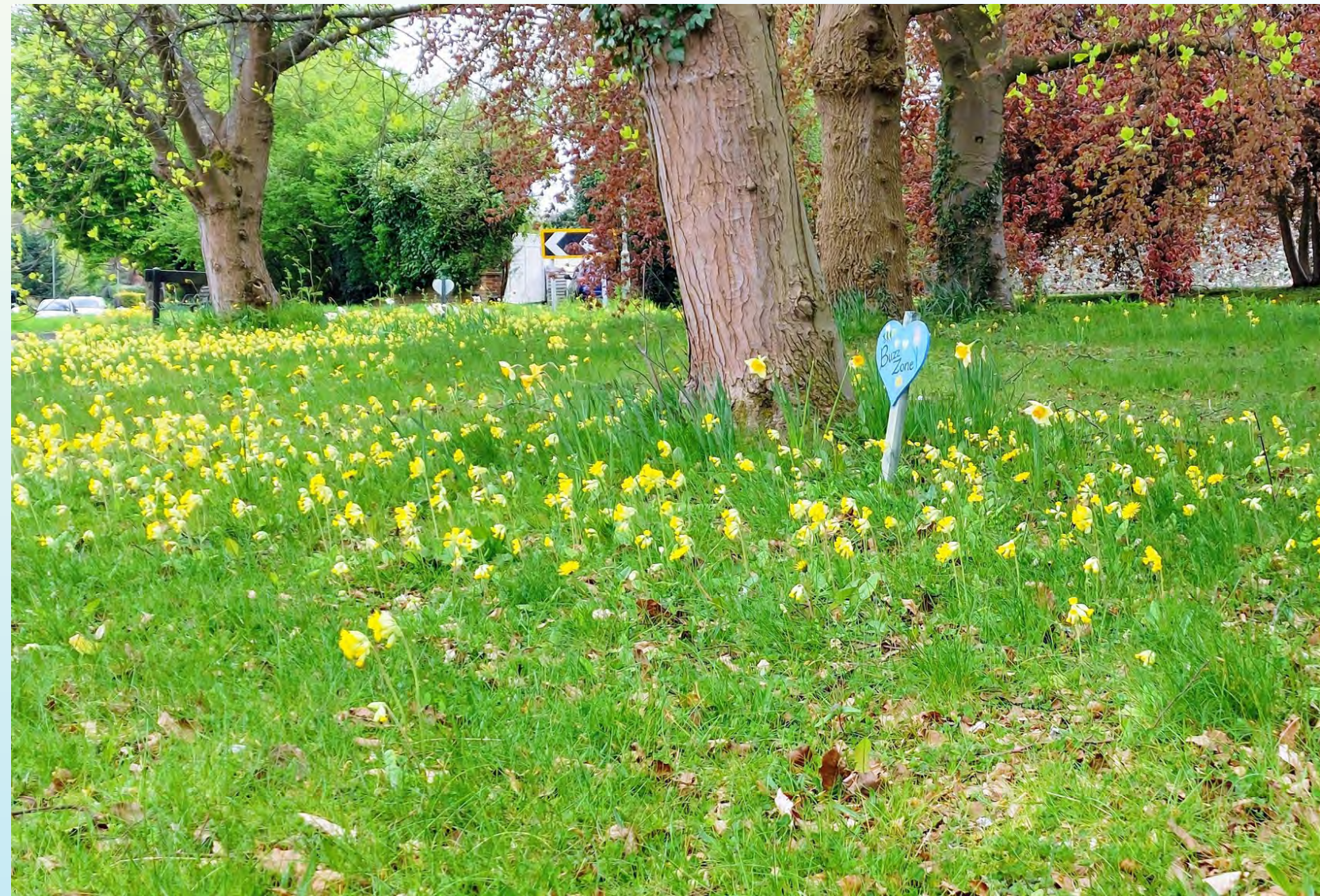
- Started by Steve and Diane Poole
- A private verge on the roadside at the Grange, Bookham was the first to be planted with native flora
- Further projects, aided by local volunteers, quickly followed
- Native orchids now bloom here

STEVE'S "COTTAGE INDUSTRY"





LEFT: TELEPHONE EXCHANGE
BOTTOM LEFT: THE GRANGE VERGE
BOTTOM RIGHT: COWSLIPS AT
THE LOWER SHOTT





In the Autumn, the areas are mown and the clippings raked away. Clippings boost soil fertility - this promotes grass and not flowers so clearing up is important.



Blue Hearts in Ashtead

Challenges in Ashtead: publicity and attitudes to native planting

We explained the need for better timed verge cutting in Surrey and the need for linear areas/corridors of wild species.

Kind local gentleman/handyman and Dorking Men in Sheds manufactured blue heart markers for the project.

Where would we be without our wonderful Residents' Associations!

Ashted Residents' Association offered us a page on their website and support to schools by offering them fruit trees and encouraging food growing and wildflowering.

We also have a list of about 15 or more street champions to promote the scheme.



One Ashtead resident rotavated a trench down the middle of her verge and sowed wildflower seeds. This one actually won an award locally!

Transition Ashtead

Promotes sustainability in different aspects of life. They hold free talks in Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall on topics such as Domestic Solar Generation, the Blue Heart scheme/wildflowering, sharing ideas and connecting people.



Spelthorne

Hazel, a local parent, asked for help with her local park.

We sent her some resources; here is the result!

Epsom and Ewell Borough

An online notebook is created at <https://epsom-ewell-flowerfinder.org>





Valerianaceae: the Valerian Family

Corn Salad, a tasty leaf that is a good replacement for Watercress (with a little black pepper) is another native Valerian with (if allowed to bloom) tiny, pale lilac flowers.

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER

Valerianaceae: the Valerian Family

A walk through a coastal village in Cornwall will give you a good view of one of this family. Growing on old walls, along with Fuchsia and Hydrangea, the pink (and sometimes white) Red Valerian is such a pretty sight - and it seems to have followed us home from our holidays and grows all over the borough - on roads, in gardens and parks. Much of London and the Home Counties has colonies of this butterfly favourite.

HOME



Centranthus ruber

Red Valerian, Jupiter's Beard, Fox's Brush

Blue-green hairless leaves. Plant 0.8 metres high.



About

Highly attractive flowers, spreads easily thanks to "parachute" seeds. Red, pink and white examples have been found growing together. Popular with butterflies and moths.



As well as nectar hungry bees, you may spy a "hummingbird". Many have been fooled by this sight - it is a Hummingbird Hawk Moth. Like Red Valerian, it is a migrant from the Mediterranean region.

HOME

NOTES: THE POPPY FAMILY

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER

Papaveraceae: the Poppy Family

A relatively small family, the poppies are always a delight to see in the garden. These are some of the first seeds a child will grow - I remember giving California Poppy seed heads to my own children. Our wild poppies, although smaller, are quite a sight when they appear in road verges and fields.

HOME



Papaver Dubium

Long-Headed Poppy, blindeyes. Hairy stem, pale yellow milk when broken. Grows upright or sprawls on the ground up to 50cm high.



About

Wild poppy seed can live for many years deep in the soil and will germinate when the ground is disturbed (WWI battlefields are a well documented example).



Cuddington, Epsom and Ewell



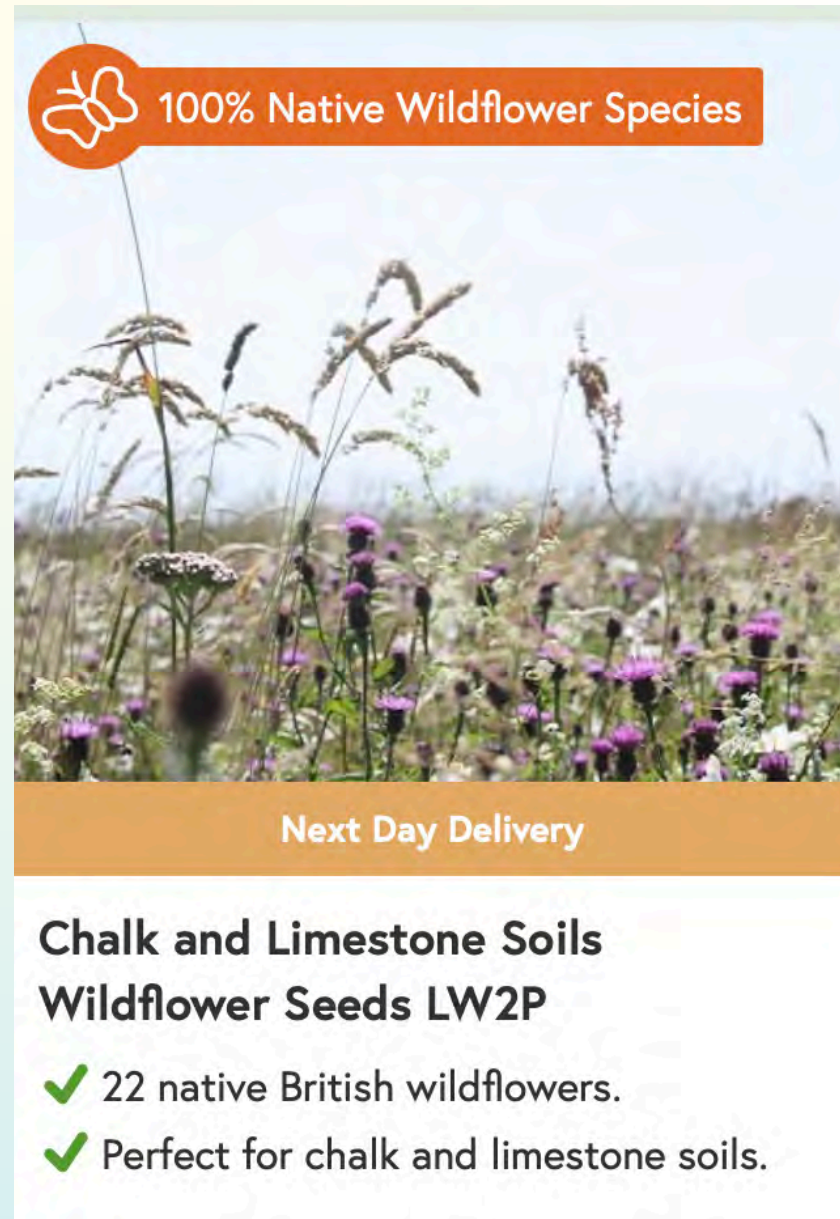
Verges, front gardens, parks, waste areas around lamp posts - anywhere we can squeeze them in!



So...how is it done?

GOLDEN RULES

1. Talk to each other
2. Ask the landowner
3. The right seed
4. Start small
5. Every native plant has a purpose





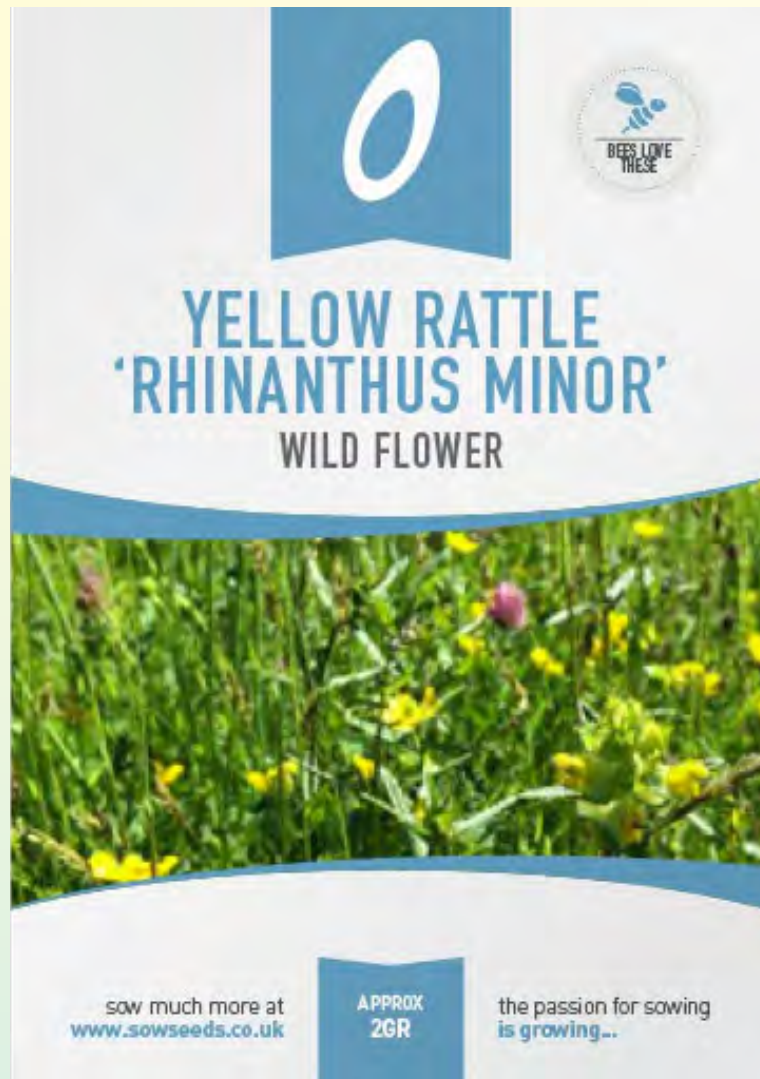
In early Spring or late Autumn give the verge a quick mow with a high setting. Any cuttings to be collected (or raked off) and any dead grass or 'thatch' should be raked off.

Put up your Blue Heart(s) to show what you're doing and to alert the contractors not to mow until the end of the season.



More plants will show up over time. They may have been waiting low to the ground for their chance to grow and flower!

Don't rush to supplement before you've seen what comes up naturally. If nothing much comes up in the first year you may wish to make the verge more interesting by sowing seed - but **GET THE RIGHT MIX FOR YOUR SOIL**



Grassy meadows need the right balance in order to flower. Yellow Rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*, is hemiparasitic, robbing nutrients from grass roots.

Grasses are a VERY important part of a healthy meadow. This is a natural way to stop them overwhelming the flowers that insects need in order to thrive.



Choose native plants and seeds suitable for your soil type (e.g. there are chalk-specific mixes and plants), whether the grass is particularly dry or wet, and whether the area tends to shade. Most wild flowers like sunshine but there are options for shady areas.

Annuals will come up the first year if you sow early enough in spring. They are not likely to seed on grass so won't come again.

Perennials will flower year after year – once they get going they'll keep coming back and should multiply.

Watering - remember to keep them watered in dry weather till established.



Mowing - leave a 30 cm wide unplanted border around your verge, especially alongside the road, and maybe mow it to show you're caring for the verge, not leaving it to grow totally wild – this is called 'framing'.



Finally...

Young people will get so much out of this!
Do include them! Why?

- They have younger knees
- They love decorating Blue Hearts
- They love to inform elderlies like me

Fantastic Flowers



The Royal College of Physicians' garden contains over 1,100 plants, all with links to medicine. The myriad stories they tell come from diverse cultures, different countries and from every age in recorded history.

Fantastic Flowers



Starch from the native bluebell was used as collar starch by Elizabethan laundries.



Fantastic Flowers

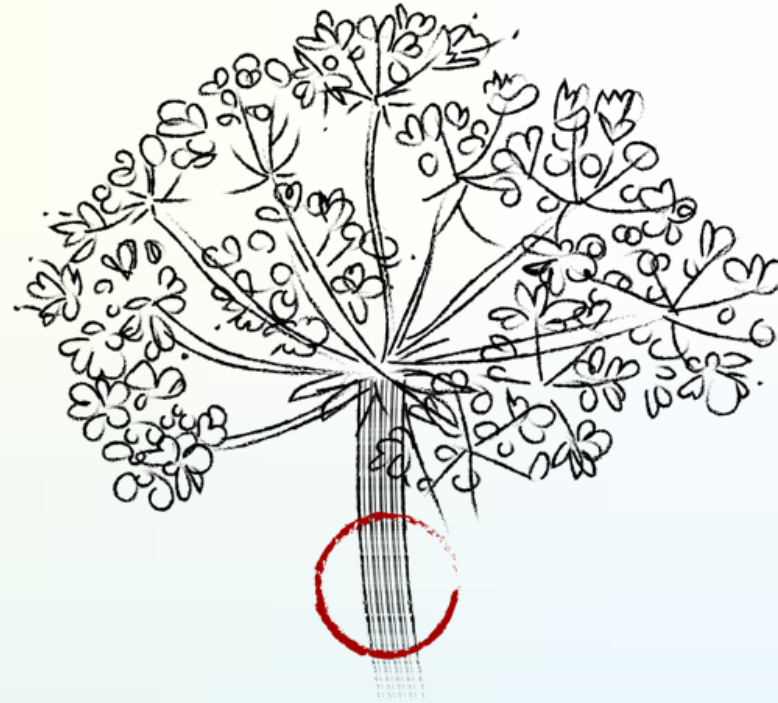


During the seige of Jerusalem in 1948, Common Mallow helped to prevent malnutrition. On Independence day every year, the Jewish people celebrate the plant by preparing special dishes of mallow leaves.

Fantastic Flowers



Shepherd's Purse is a "protocarnivorous" plant. The seed exudes a substance that traps and digests small insects and microorganisms. As the seed germinates, the nutrients from the insects feed the seedling. This plant feeds us! Naengi is a Korean dish parboiled and mixed with a seasoned soy sauce.



A warning about Apiaceae - the Carrot Family

Poor old Socrates...the pretty swathe of white in fields, or along riverbanks... you will recognise this family of plants.

UNLIKE YOUR VEGETABLES, SOME OF THESE ARE POISONOUS, SO PLEASE LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH.

A last word... on foraging

- People can be poisoned - even the experts
- The plants belong to the animals that rely on them

I absolutely LOVE wild garlic;
I grow my own!
The bees rely on it for early
spring nectar.



thank you!

