

Summer 2021

The creation of flower-rich habitats is an important action to help promote biodiversity, capture carbon and connect people to nature. Many landowners, farmers and landowning businesses in the South West have been creating these new habitats for these reasons. This is our first newsletter for our wildflower collective project funded by the Halpin Trust, exploring the benefits of wildflowers to the environment, people and economy with a range of landowning businesses.

Wildflowers for the environment

Wildflower 'Meadow Matches' 2021

This summer, we have successfully match-made three species-rich wildflower meadow 'donor' sites with nine 'receptor' sites. Here we have been able to start restoring **25 ha (25 rugby pitches) of species-rich grassland** by transferring green hay from the 'donor' sites to the 'receptor' sites.



Photo: Hand collected Yellow rattle seed from Bodmin Airfield, Cornwall and Yellow rattle in flower.

We have discovered an exciting brand new 'donor' site at Bodmin Airfield in Cornwall, which has provided valuable green hay and some Yellow rattle seed that we hand-collected this summer. Yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) is a 'meadow maker' because it is semi-parasitic to grasses, controlling their vigorous growth and allowing wildflowers to establish through the sward. This is an annual species, so it needs to seed every year to persist in the grassland. If this is established, it is the first sign of success and a vital indicator of a good 'donor' meadow. Bodmin Airfield was delighted to be looking after such a valuable resource and are currently encouraging other Airfields across the UK to see if they may also have valuable species-rich grasslands. You can read their article [here](#).

We have also collected soil samples from our 'Meadow Match' sites to help with match-making and have started pollinator surveys with Lucy Mooney, a student at the University of Exeter.

Habitat creation

This spring, we were busy delivering wildflower seeds bags to Cornwall businesses to help support bees and business hand in hand.

We have created a beautiful **display of Red campion** (*Silene dioica*) at [Trebah garden](#) by sowing 500g of seed across shaded slopes at the botanical gardens.

We have teamed up with dairy farm champions at Tregleath farm, who supply Trewithen dairy. Tregleath farms are keen to support biodiversity and do their bit to mitigate climate change. We have provided them with **12kg of wildflower mix** containing eight perennial wildflower species and four grass species to cover a 0.3ha margin as well as **1.5 kilograms of cornfield annuals** to cover an additional 750m². Tregleath will host a farm walk and tour with other Trewithen dairy suppliers to share their work and insights later this year.

We have also teamed up with Tregullas farm, farm shop and cafe based on the Lizard peninsula, Cornwall, by providing **4kg of cornfield annual wildflower** seed consisting of Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), Corn marigold (*Glebionis segetum*), Corn chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*) and Corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*). Over the autumn, we plan to work with these businesses to see a business case in growing and harvesting these wildflowers for future projects.



Photo: Hand sowing 500g of Wild campion at Trebah garden

Wildflowers for people

As part of the project, we want to understand the social value of wildflower displays at visitor facing attractions. We have been surveying the types of activities visitors undertake in these wildflower displays and capturing feedback from visitors on their experience.

The Lost Gardens of Heligan wildflower meadow and survey

The Heligan Wildflower project is now in its third year. Since 2019, 4.65ha of annual wildflowers have been sown and harvested to provide a stunning visitor attraction, provide forage for pollinators and provide a new business opportunity. We are studying the types of activities and their duration and location using the 'System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities' (SOPARC) method at this wildflower display. This is an observational method designed to collect data on the usage of greenspaces by the public, and we will use the results to determine the benefits of this display to visitors. This study will be running until early September.

Visitor engagement surveys

We have teamed up with five botanical gardens and garden centres - [Trebah garden](#), the [Eden Project](#), the [Lost Gardens of Heligan](#), [Enys gardens](#) and [Trevisker community meadow](#) to engage and gather feedback from visitors on their wildflower meadow displays.

We have put up attractive engagement boards created from reclaimed pallets and made locally, with QR codes linking to an online survey. We will gather feedback on the perceived benefits of these displays to the visitors and provide recommendations to those businesses with wildflower displays on how they could create wildflower displays to engage visitors in the future best.



Photos: Engagement survey boards at the Lost Gardens of Heligan and Enys Gardens, Cornwall.

Wildflowers for business

At the Lost Gardens of Heligan, we have installed sensors that record the number of people entering and exiting the wildflower meadow in partnership with the [Tevi project](#). We will then use this information to determine the value of the wildflower meadow to the Lost Gardens of Heligan by combining this with the online engagement survey results.

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