

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre has a garden designed to encourage wildlife. In a dip, and between two bodies of water (Christchurch Harbour and the sea) we are lucky not to have salt damage. Chris Beardshaw suggests that it takes at least three years for an ecosystem to develop. As the garden reaches four years we are noticing the wildlife establishing. In the chamomile lawn we discovered solitary bees emerging earlier in the year. Many solitary bees lay their grubs in the bamboo which is packed into the brick wall. They can be seen laying and sealing at the moment.



Much of the initial planting in the woodland area was designed to encourage wildlife. Kate Bredbury in her new book *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* suggests that Honeysuckle, Apple and Guelder Rose are perfect habitats to nest and take shelter in. When lush and mature, more birds will come - it takes time. Around the feeding station just outside the garden we see Greenfinches, and Blue Tits nest in a box above the holly in the garden.

People do sometimes ask if the plants are all wild flowers. They are not. To encourage a variety of wildlife we have planted many surplus plants from our own gardens. We watch what pops up of its own accord. Some things are left to see what they are. So you may see a plant you recognise as a weed (a wild flower) as we find out what it is.

The moths are recorded regularly - the Elephant Hawkmoth is attracted to the Rosebay Willowherb. Some moths are displayed at reception and are truly beautiful, so we are getting there. Nature is slow and forgiving though the climate is currently less friendly. We look forward to chatting with you on Wednesday mornings when we come up to the garden, to watch, wonder and work.

p.s Don't forget to do the 'Big Butterfly Count' between the 20<sup>th</sup> of July and the 12<sup>th</sup> of August - [www.bigbutterflycount.org](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org)