



# Flowers of Stover Country Park

## Introduction

Stover Country Park was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1984 because of its wildlife interest including butterflies, dragonflies and overwintering wildfowl. It also became a Local Nature Reserve in 2001.

Plants are the key element of all ecosystems and habitats and provide the foundation for all the animals, birds and insects that live at Stover.

The diverse mosaic of habitats allows a huge variety of plants to thrive here. Active management helps to increase plant diversity further and new species are being recorded regularly.

Rarities found here include bog myrtle, greater spearwort, bladderwort, allseed, rigid hornwort, small pondweed, chaffweed, bird's nest orchid and broad-leaved helleborine.

**Knapweed and wild carrot attract butterflies, bees and other insects.**



## Flower Facts

Flowers are colourful, scented and contain nectar simply to attract their insect pollinators. Different types of insect are attracted to different flower attributes. Butterflies, for instance, prefer pink and purple flowers with heads that are easy to land on, such as thistles and knapweed. Using their long tongues they probe deep into the flowers searching for nectar. Their large wings make them unsuitable for crawling into flowers.

Bees, however, can crawl into flowers. Some flowers, like gorse, can only be pollinated by bees as they are the only ones strong enough to push into the flower. Bees are attracted to purple, pink, blue and yellow. 'Bee flowers' place their anthers and ovary tips precisely so that the visiting bee collects and deposits pollen without realising it. Many bee flowers have spots to guide the bee in to the nectar reward it is looking for (e.g. foxgloves).



Common  
Spotted Orchid

Other orchids also occur here such as heath and common spotted orchid, bee orchid and southern marsh orchid. These are always a good sign that the site has been un-disturbed for a few years as they take a long time to establish.

## Species List

reedmace	great willowherb
hemlock water dropwort	rosebay willowherb
yellow flag iris	ox-eye daisy
purple loosestrife *	common knapweed
bog myrtle	wild carrot
marsh marigold	wild daffodil
meadowsweet	bluebell
gypsywort	primrose
water mint	dog violet
marsh ragwort	wood anemone
valerian	wild garlic
cuckoo flower	agrimony
ragged robin	bird's foot trefoil
hemp agrimony	bell heather
common fleabane	cross-leaved heath
bugle	ling heather
common spotted orchid	tormentil
heath spotted orchid	western gorse
bee orchid	
bird's nest orchid	
broad-leaved helleborine	

*Full species list available at the Visitor Centre.*

\* cover photo by Sue Searle



Stover Country Park  
Stover  
Newton Abbot  
Devon  
TQ12 6QG

Tel: 01626 835236  
www.devon.gov.uk

Supported by



## Habitat Management for Flowers



Ox-eye daisy in the grassland.

At Stover there is a huge diversity of flowering plants due to the mosaic of different habitats. There are six main habitat types on site which are: fresh water, marsh, grassland, coniferous plantation, mixed broadleaved woodland and lowland heath.

Each habitat has its own community of plants and specific management to help enhance it for wildlife, including flowering plants.

Grassland and heathland plants are generally intolerant of shading. Encroaching scrub and young trees are cleared so that they do not become dominant. Some areas of conifers have been removed to allow heathland to regenerate. Bracken control in heathland areas is carried out where necessary.

Woodland plants are very tolerant of shade, but by keeping rides clear of trees more light can reach the woodland floor and a greater variety of plants will grow.

No fertilisers are added to the soil as this will favour grasses which soon become dominant. In addition, the vegetation is cut back every year to stop the long grasses dominating delicate plants such as orchids. Cuttings are removed to reduce nutrients.

## Records and Sightings

We hope you have enjoyed your visit. Please let us know if you see anything unusual by calling in at the Visitor Centre.

The Visitor Centre has more information about the wildlife on site.

# Where to look for Wild Flowers

Stover is full of wild flowers during the spring and summer. A mosaic of habitats means that there is a huge variety of colourful flowers to see around the site. Spring is the time to visit to see the woodland plants such as bluebells, primroses and wild daffodils. From May to mid-August the wild flower meadow, marsh and lakeside are full of an array of flowers; and from July to August the heath is colourful, with heathers and gorses in bloom.

## Lowland Heath

July and August are the best months to see the heathland flowers. Look for:  
Bell heather, ling, cross-leaved heath, tormentil, eyebright, heath bedstraw, heath spotted orchid.



Tormentil



Eyebright



Cross-leaved Heath, Ling, Bell Heather and Western Gorse



Heath Spotted Orchid



Heathland in summer



Yarrow



Common Fleabane



Common Knapweed

## Flower Meadow and Firebreak

Managed specifically for flowers this is a good place to visit in the summer. This area also attracts lots of insects including butterflies and bees. Look for:  
Knapweed, common spotted orchid, heath spotted orchid, common century, bugle, devil's bit scabious, dog violet, common fleabane, ragged robin, yarrow, hemp agrimony.



Ragged Robin

## Woodland & Woodland Rides

Spring is the best time to see the woodland flowers as they need to flower and set seed early before the tree leaves shade them out. Look for:  
Bluebell, primrose, dog violet, wild daffodil, broad-leaved helleborine



Wild Daffodil



Bluebell



Primrose

## Lake

Covered in water lilies during the summer, the lake is also surrounded by colourful flowers which thrive on the banks. Look for:  
White water lily (summer), bladderwort, purple loosestrife, marsh ragwort, yellow flag iris, hemlock water droplet.



Marsh Ragwort

## Marsh

One of the most colourful areas in the summer for wild flowers. Look for:  
Marsh marigold, yellow flag iris, purple loosestrife, meadowsweet, lady's smock, skullcap, reedmace, marsh ragwort, hemlock water droplet, gypsywort, water mint, bog myrtle, common valerian.



Meadowsweet



Yellow Flag Iris



White Water Lily



Purple Loosestrife



Lake in summer



Marsh in summer

