

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 16 March 2019.

CONIFER WORKSHOP

This will be on Sunday 31 March at the **PARKRIDGE CENTRE, BRUETON PARK, SOLIHULL at 10.30 a.m.** There are many botanists who are scared of conifers as they are usually just green and spikey and all look the same. If you would like to be able to tell a Spruce from a Fir, sort out the different Pines or even come to terms with those "nasty" Cypresses, this workshop is for you, especially as BSBI County recorders have recently been encouraged to collect records of planted trees.

The workshop will include a short powerpoint and some indoor ID. Then we will visit the small conifer collection in the Parkridge Nature Reserve. We will be mainly using Poland and Clement, The Vegetative Key to the British Flora (2009), so bring a copy and a lens if you have one and any other tree books you have. Park at the Brueton Park Lake Car Park, 1021 Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 3HG (SP16277900), which is free (but you need a ticket), and then walk the couple of hundred yards or so to the Parkridge Centre.

Please e mail us if you would like to book a place so that we can prepare material in advance.

If you would like to do some homework before the workshop, consult

<http://www.stevenfalk.co.uk/publications> and read the Warwickshire Tree Catalogue Part 2 on Conifers.

Although it is not keyed it is very thorough and has more information than most books. You can also find the list of conifers growing at Brueton in his Warwickshire Tree Catalogue Part 5 Sites. Another useful resource is Mark Parratt's FSC Conifer Identikit website that you can find on <https://conifers.fscbiodiversity.uk>.

It includes an on-line multi-access key and many photos. We would like to thank the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust who have kindly allowed us to use the classroom at Brueton.

NEW AND INTERESTING RECORDS

As usual few new or interesting records come to light during the dark days of winter, but here are three to whet your appetite for the Spring ahead.



We were very pleased to have been able to identify *Polypodium x mantoniae* correctly. It was found in a hedge in Rising Lane, near Packwood (SP19257223) on 5th November 2018. This is the first record of the hybrid between Common and Intermediate Polypody for 27 years, and was identified by the white, shrivelled spores. (Confirmed R. Cooke).

Jon Bowley and Camille Newton of the HBA have also managed to add a couple of alien species to the county list. *Phuopsis stylosa* (Caucasian Crosswort) a pretty, pink, rockery plant, was found as an escape in Bordon Hill Meadow on 17 July 2017 and the deciduous shrub with wholly pink fruits, *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (Coralberry) was seen at Purnell's Brook Wood on 14 September 2017.

BSBI NEW YEAR PLANT HUNT 2018

For the first time ever the Warwickshire Flora Group meeting for the BSBI New Year Plant Hunt this year actually took place on New Year's Day. A hardy group of a dozen or so botanists battled to find car parking spaces as Brueton Park, Solihull was full of self-satisfied, lycra-clad, runners fresh from their first Parkrun of the year. We spent time wandering around the park and then moved to some of the streets near the shopping centre. We only managed to see 24 species in flower overall, but the warm weather had brought both *Galanthus sp.* (Snowdrops) and *Eranthis hyemalis* (Winter Aconite) into flower in the churchyard. We were more pleased to add 108 new species to the two tetrads that we covered, the best plants being a large patch of *Allium vineale* (Crow Garlic) in the churchyard and an *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) rosette in a grassy verge nearby.

Many other records were sent to the BSBI Database from six other New Year Plant Hunts in Warwickshire. Anna Dudley, Di Napier and Debbie Giles sent in lists from Coventry, Kineton and Austrey whilst others visited Ilmington, Maxstoke and Brandon Marsh. Inputting data is very simple and there are opportunities to share (did I really write that!) photos of both plants and of real active botany. Try <https://bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt> for results and lots of other related links.

AN APOLOGY

My e mail provider has recently updated their layout on their main e mail webpage and in the process I have lost the contents of two of the five Flora Group contact lists. I have taken the liberty of reconstructing them from a mixture of memory and common sense. If you have found that you have suddenly started finding WFG e mails in your inbox and you do not wish to receive them, please contact us on johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk and we will remove you your name.



SPRING BULBS - What do I record?

Please record as "naturalised" bulbs that are in large swathes that have obviously spread over a long period of time. Also record escapes and throwouts that are found outside formal planting schemes in and outside gardens, churchyards and in hedgerows.

Do not record bulbs that have obviously been planted in formal planting schemes such as flower beds in gardens or those that have obviously been planted recently in neat groups or in rows in grass in churchyards, cemeteries and parks.

Record **Snowdrops** as *Galanthus sp.* unless you have *G. woronowii* which has wider green leaves and is now found more frequently. Daffodils have so many cultivars that they should be recorded as *Narcissus agg.* unless you have the more delicate, wild *N. pseudonarcissus*, which is often naturalized and planted.

Try <http://www.thedaffodilsite.co.uk> for more help.

The commonest purple Crocuses are *C. tommasinianus* (white perianth-tube) and *C. vernus* (wider leaves). Use Stace for ordflowers and check the leaves in Poland.

Yellow flowered Crocuses are under-recorded as corm details are important in the key and digging up a crocus in a churchyard to look at the corm is not possible or desirable!

Be careful with *Muscari*. Please look at the pictures in The Plant Crib which show clearly the corolla shape and the bracts. The commonest species is *M. armeniacum*.