

I-Spy on Hocombe Mead in September 2017



Common Earthball

Scleroderma citrinum

This is a fungus that likes oak, beech and birch woods. Are there oak, beech and birch trees in Hocombe Mead?



Betony

Stachys officinalis

Betony is a member of the deadnettle family and likes to grow on fairly dry sunny banks and on the edges of fields and woods. Although it is not rare there is less of it now than when woods were coppiced and the edges of fields were left unploughed.

Where would you expect to find this plant in HM; in the boggy bits or sloping meadow?



Rowan berries

Sorbus aucuparia

The flowers of the rowan provide food for many insects in spring and in winter the berries provide food for many birds. The tree is good for lichen to grow on.

Is there any lichen on the tree you have found?



Devil's-bit Scabious

Succisa pratensis

Devil's-bit Scabious likes living in damp meadows and marshes, open parts of woodland and riverbanks. A wide variety of butterflies and bees are attracted to its flowers.

Why do you think butterflies and bees are attracted to the flowers?



Teasel

Dipsacus fullonum

Teasels are found in damp grassland and field edges, or on disturbed ground, such as roadside verges and waste grounds. In late summer when teasels are in flower, they produce spikey flower heads which are mostly green with rings of mauve. In the summer teasels are visited by bees and in the autumn by birds.

Why do you think birds visit the teasels in winter?



Great Willowherb seed pods

Epilobium hirsutum

The Willowherb flowers from June until September. The flowers are pollinated by bees and hoverflies. The seeds develop in long pods which split to free them.

What do you think happens to the seeds when the pods split?



Marmalade hoverfly

Epsirphus balteatus

Hoverflies copy the colouring and markings of wasps but are harmless. Look on the water mint – you might find one there.

Why do you think that this is called a Marmalade hoverfly?



Orb spider web

Family: *Araneidae*

Orb-weaver spiders are named after the spiral wheel-shaped web they weave. They often make their web close to rivers and streams.

Why do you think they do this?