



Lesser celandine

Ranunculus ficaria

The fleshy, luscious green, heart shaped leaves of this plant can often completely carpet a woodland floor, which in early spring becomes spattered with dense constellations of shiny yellow star-shaped flowers. These are often the first welcome colour of the year, D H Lawrence beautifully describes these flowers in his classic novel 'Sons and Lovers' "... He noticed the celandines, scalloped splashes of gold, on the side of the ditch. "I like them," he said, "when their petals go flat back with the sunshine. They seemed to be pressing themselves at the sun". Being in the buttercup family the lesser celandine is toxic and contact with crushed leaves can cause an irritable itchy rash or even blistering.

zone
2, 7

find me

From late February through to May covering damp woodland floors and verges.

zone
5, 6, 7



©Michael Walker

Blackthorn

Prunus spinosa

Appearing between March and April, before leaves start to develop, flowers give a distant blackthorn bush the appearance of having received a dusting of snow. These delicate porcelain white blossoms emerge from the dark brown branches and long spurs from which it gains its name. In autumn, spherical fruits called sloes develop, these are recognisable through their dusty purple blue coating to the skin. Blackthorn holds much value to wildlife, the spring flowers dispensing an important early source of pollen and nectar for emerging bees, the leaves forming the diet of many species of moth caterpillar which in turn provide food for nesting birds that find protection amongst the dense thorns and foliage.

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Blossoming before any leaves emerge between March and April, or with rotund dusty purple-blue marble sized fruit in autumn.



Garlic mustard

Alliaria petiolata

'Jack-by-the-hedge', 'sauce alone', 'penny hedge', 'poor man's mustard' are all alternative names for this prolific plant of hedgerow margins. The heart shaped, tooth edged leaves resemble those of a nettle. The 1m tall stems are topped with clusters of small white cross shaped flowers, once these are in bloom the seed pods extend upwards from beneath the blossoms and start to mature. A favoured plant of the orange-tip butterfly which lays single, ribbed, rusty orange eggs on the stem just below the flower.

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Flowering between April and June along the bottoms of hedgerows. Crushing a leaf in your hand produces a pungent garlic odour, these along with the flowers make a wonderful tasty addition to a salad.

zone
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plant life

hard to find
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zone
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Scarlet pimpernel

Anagallis arvensis

A member of the primrose family that grows very close to the ground in a creeping fashion, with tiny smooth oval leaves, darkly dotted on the underside, that sprout from a stem that is square in shape when cut. The miniature flame red flowers burn in star shaped contrast to the surrounding vegetation.

The scarlet pimpernel's old English name 'John-go-to-bed-at-noon', refers to the flowers habit of closing around midday, also rapidly folding shut with the approach of rain or cloud, giving it its other name 'poor man's barometer'.

find me
Flowering from May to September on disturbed, rocky and rabbit grazed ground, growing quite profusely, giving a distant patch of land a brick red hue.



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zone
4, 6

Unusually, growing upon scaly stems up to 10cm tall and resembling little lemon yellow chimney sweep brushes, this early spring flower blooms and dies before any of the leaves emerge, gaining it the earlier name of 'son before father'. The leaves are roughly hoof shaped, have a ragged edge and a downy underside, this fuzz when correctly prepared, is said to make fantastic kindling, and in folklore was removed to reveal the fresh mirror like leaf which would reveal to the observer the face of their future spouse.

Coltsfoot

Tussilago farfara

find me
In open, disturbed areas with poor drainage. In early spring clusters of the bright yellow flowers can be recognisable from quite a distance.

Hart's tongue

Asplenium scolopendrium

Clumps of single fronds uncurl from moist shaded woodland floors like waxy, luscious, green party blowers. To say that they resemble the tongue of a hart, the old name for a male deer, is quite a challenge for the imagination. Another key to identification is the patterning of the spore structures on the underside of the frond, with the hart's tongue these appear as ribs or feather barbs in design, or even the legs of a centipede, the second part of the Latin name *scolopendrium* meaning centipede.

find me
Unfurling along damp banks, or shining with a vivid flesh green when illuminated by dappled sunlight on a woodland floor.



zone
7

plant life

a **real** find

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zone
1, 2, 3

Bee orchid

Ophrys apifera

This glamorous and flamboyant flower can take 5 to 8 years to emerge, constructing a spear up to 40cm tall which is capable of holding anything up to 12 flowers, each adorned with 3 large pointed pale mauve-pink sepals. The labellum, the central lip that attracts pollinators, is hairy and exotically patterned in chocolate brown and yellow, making it very similar in appearance to a bumble bee. In the UK the flowers are self-pollinating, however in the Mediterranean the

find me Flowering from mid-April to July in dry grassy areas, open woodland clearings and grassy verges. As with many of the orchids, once one is found you will start to discover many more.

bee orchid produces a scent which smells like a female bee, this along with the visual deception cons the male into mating with the flower and thus pollination is achieved.



zone
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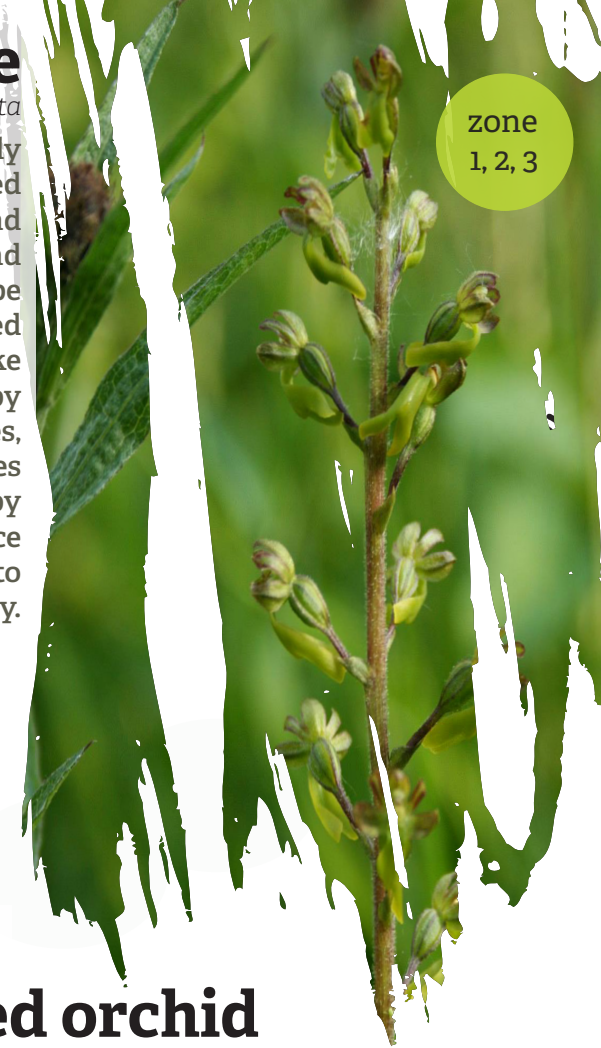
Common twayblade

Neottia ovata

A very easy orchid to pass by due to the completely green nature of the plant and its flowers. Cupped from between two large oval leaves which spread almost flush with the ground, the stem can ascend up to 60cm tall, which on some plants can be home to 100 separate flowers. On a more detailed inspection these small yellow green blooms take on a curious human form. These are pollinated by a range of beetles, wasps and sawflies which are drawn by its honeyed fragrance that is very similar to that of cow parsley.

find me

By scouring the edges of meadows and woodland verges between April and July. My gangly structure and all green guise help me to blend in against other vegetation.



zone
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Common spotted orchid

Dactylorhiza fuchsii

Unmistakably orchid in form, taking its name from the elongated dark plum-brown spots that cover 7 to 12 lance shaped leaves. Growing up to 60cm in height, the flowering spike is stacked thick with blooms that can vary in colour, from white to pale lavender, to a rich regal purple, the labellum patterned with deep violet loops, dots and dashes. Often found growing in great numbers, this meadow dandy wafts a sweet fragrance that invites many species of bees and day-flying moths to feed and aid in pollination.

find me

Standing with stacked spires of white, pink or purple flowers rising from grassy areas around beech woodland, wet meadows, ditches and stream edges from July.

Nottinghamshire

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