



## JUNE

June is a glorious month, when leaf growth is lush and flowers are all around, birdsong is still vibrant and swifts scream past just above our heads then fly high, trawling the sky for insects.

It is the month of roses, - our two commonest hedgerow wild ones are the pinky-white dogrose and the pure white field rose.

Pond edges find a blaze of yellow as clumped flag iris open in their stately manner. Stream edges are dotted with small blue flowers of water forget-me-not and brooklime. More small water courses and ditches are home to flowering fools' water-cress than the more beloved water cress. Suddenly encountered proud clumps on the riverbank of purple loostrike with numerous full flower spikes catch the eye. In the water, floating on the surface the small yellow flowers of brandy bottle water-lily nestle among their surrounding dark green pads.

In drier chalky places plants like weld bring stature.



Weld



Dog rose

As much as June is the month for roses, it is also the season for the large wild umbellifers. Whilst May was dominated by cow parsley, that has now been followed by the more robust hogweed whose flower heads really do smell of pigs! Weedy corners of gardens have that invasive umbellifer ground elder now attractively in flower, gardeners blame the Romans for this introduction. Yet it is the very poisonous umbellifer hemlock that visually dominates the month of June due to its abundance, coupled with its great height (around 2 m), and attractive ferny leaves and white umbels. A clue to its toxic identity can be seen in the warning blood red-purple blotches on its stems.

June is also the month when a number of stately orchids flower – the convincingly shaped bee-orchid, the common spotted orchid, the distinctive shaped pyramidal orchid and others.

The migratory butterflies of the red admiral and the painted lady are crossing the Channel in good numbers by June, in some years much more so than in others. Less attractive to gardeners are the appearance of "blackfly", in reality the black bean aphid, that is suddenly found in dense clusters up the upper neck stems of broad beans, but also on certain wild plants like thistles.

Britain's largest beetle, the male stag beetle takes to the wing, as does the female, on warm June evenings.