



AUGUST

In August the coastal saltmarsh is a shimmering delight! The sea purslane that snakes around the edges of creeks large or small has its golden knotted flowers offsetting its sun-reflective scaly-grey foliage. Its smaller relative, glasswort (or marsh samphire) is at the lowest point into the water's edge. It is this plant that initiates the formation of a saltmarsh as it causes mud to settle around it. It is, despite its location, a flowering plant, but its flowers are minute, only its small stamens may catch the careful eye.

Up on the saltmarsh in high Summer the sea aster is noticeably in flower, whilst that is less obvious with the sea wormwood, but the plant is easily recognised by the pleasant aroma from its grey leaves when rubbed.

In the rough grass above the seawall wild carrot's white umbelled flower has a single dark central flower that acts as a false reassurance that another small insect is there to an insect considering landing, in the same way that a bird is already on a bird table other birds feel safer about landing. Wild carrot has been flowering through the Summer, so now some are as well developed seed heads, where the umbel flower-head curls up into a bird's nest shape. On the SW coast, sea carrot is found with its stouter stems.

Larger insects can be found, (or heard if you are young), in the rough grass, such as the dramatically marked Roesel's Bush-cricket in the south and east (but spreading). It has an off-white curved brush-stroke line around the edge of its pronotum flaps behind the head. Other crickets (and family) are about in the countryside now, including the oak bush-cricket and the great green bush-cricket.

In areas of S & E England in brackish marsh among reed beds behind the sea walls, the tall, velvet-leaved pink-flowering Marsh Mallow may be found standing as high as the reeds.

On grasslands meadow brown butterflies abound in the summer, whilst around the brambles of path banks and hedgerows their relatives the gatekeepers feed on flowers.

Now is the peak breeding time for harvest mice, - and although as their name suggests their nests can be found woven amongst the stems and leaves of cereals, they are commonly found at field edges in clumps of long grass or brambles.

In field edges and on roadside verges mugwort & prickly lettuce are now in flower, with hops and hedge bindweed flowering scrabbling up through the hedge. At the field edge there is an occasional bright yellow contrast of the massed flower-heads of fleabane against the straw-coloured wheat.

On heathland Ling & the other heathers are in full flower.

In our rivers in August, white water-lily creamy flowers, interspersed with Arrowhead and occasional Flowering Rush. On the mud the purple-flowering water mint releases its attractive aroma when walked upon. On the banks the pinky-shaggy flowers of hemp agrimony and the bold flowers of yellow oostreife bring memorable colour to riverside high Summer walks.



Fleabane