



# BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION

## The National Body for Naturalists

### Beth Chatto Gardens Weekend 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2025

A weekend of activities and talks held at the world-renowned gardens and extensive plant nursery created by Beth Chatto OBE in 1960s.

Beth was an award-winning British plantswoman, author and lecturer whose garden in Essex demonstrates her ecological approach to planting; '*right plant, right place*'. She used plants expected to thrive in the different conditions. The gardens are an early example of environmentally sustainable design, using plants adapted to, and in harmony with, their local, often hot and dry conditions. The idea of grouping plants according to their natural habitats was pioneering for garden designers everywhere.



Beth Chatto 1923 - 2018



Willow Room, our base for the weekend Photo: D. Farrar



Bioblitz Photo: J. Young

The weekend began mid-afternoon with a bioblitz to get everyone attending the event looking for invertebrates to add to the species list Dr. Chris Gibson began a few years ago.



Volucella Zonaria and Small Heath.  
Photos: J. Young



Scorpion Fly and Hawthorn Shieldbug  
Photos: S. Rutherford



Tachina Fera



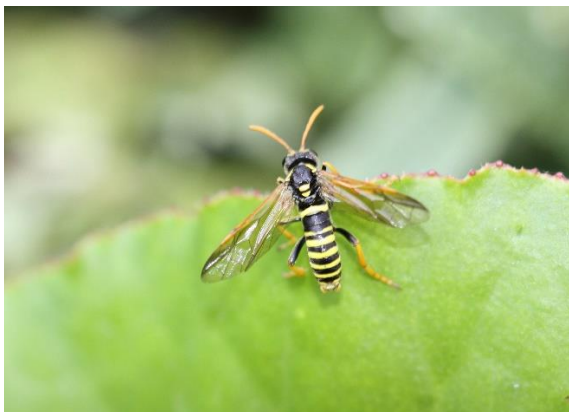
Southern Oak Bush Cricket Nymph  
Photos: J. Young



Weevil  
Photo: S. Rutherford



Sphaerophoria rueppellii hoverfly  
Photo: M. Dudley



*Cionus tuberculosus* - Figwort Sawfly



*Musumena vatia* – Flower Crab Spider

Photos: D. Farrar



*Ptychoptera contaminata* – Orange Marked Cranefly  
Photo: D. Farrar



*Issus coleoptratus* – Plant Hopper  
Photo: S. Rutherford



Jonathon Sullivan one of the BNA's Young naturalists spoke to people about galls on Oak trees, including this one *Andricus Grossulariae*.  
Photo: J. Sullivan



The species that got everyone excited was a Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi*!

Photo: Rob Byford (Beth Chatto gardening assistant)

After the bioblitz we regrouped in the Willow Room with a short introduction about the gardens and how they began, from Scott a gardener at BC.



Scott's introduction. Photo: P. Rutherford



Ted Benton. Photo: P. Rutherford

Then it was over to Professor Ted Benton who spoke about Grasshopper species in Essex; the subject of a new book co-written by Ted and Dr. Tim Gardiner.

After a lovely buffet supplied by local caterers, it was out to listen for bats. Steve talked about the bats, the habitats, echolocation and food. Four species were heard on the bat detectors – Soprano pipistrelle, Noctule, Leisler's, and Brown long-eared bats.



Bat Walk. Photo: J. Young



Rob Byford's Garden Walk. Photo: J. Young

Sunday arrived hot and sunny, perfect for invertebrates. Rob Byford from Beth Chatto gardens, began the day with an introductory walk around the gardens. He explained about the ethos of Beth Chatto and guided everyone through the different gardens.

The next two activities were moth trapping with Pauline and pond dipping with Steve.



Photos: D. Farrar

Unfortunately, it was a poor haul of moths with only a handful of species which included White Ermine, Common Wainscot, Turnip, and Nutmeg macro moths; and a micro - *Celypha lacunana*.



White Ermine



Dark Sword Grass



Nutmeg



Micro moth – *Celypha lacunana*



Common Wainscot and others on egg boxes



In the ponds were Rudd and Carp species, Pea Mussel (*Sphaerium corneum*), Dwarf pond Snail (*Galba truncatula*), Diving Beetles, Water Boatman, Hog Louse and Darter nymphs, and several other species.



2-spotted water louse, fish louse, fish leech. Photos: A. Young

Two illustrated talks were either side of another excellent buffet. Roger Tabor, Hon. President – “The excellent Mr. Ray” 1627 – 1705, with Dr. Tim Gardiner and his talk – “Grasshoppers of Essex”.



Roger Tabor and Tim Gardiner, with Steve Rutherford giving a vote of thanks.

The final activity of the weekend was a walk led by Tim Gardiner and Ted Benton looking for invertebrates including grasshoppers, bees, butterflies and other species.

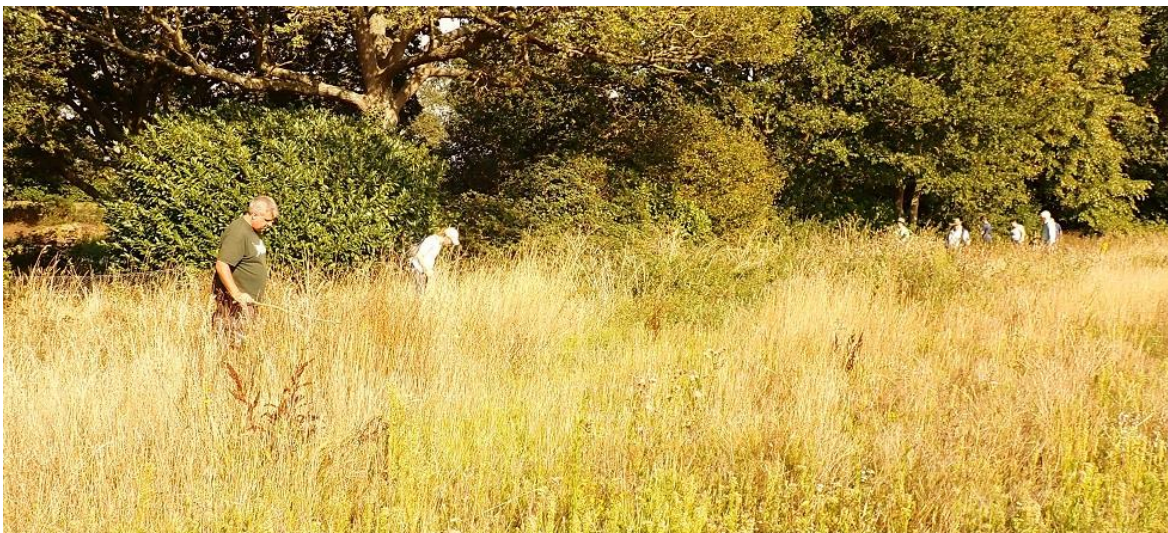


Photo: J. Young