

# Wildflowers for Everybody



24th March 2022

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER



# Learn by looking

For the best part of two years, being outdoors was the only pleasure most of us had.

The upside was, we were noticing the normally un-noticed. A neighbour commented to me that she was “quite sure that she had heard a woodpecker”.

Woodpeckers have been at large in our borough forever; the lack of traffic/aircraft noise and a longing for interaction during lockdown had sharpened our senses.





# Making a start

I saw a flower that I liked and had no idea what it was!

It seemed useful as it was happy in shade and poor soil, on a little country road in my neighbourhood.

On the next walk, I took the little book that my grandchildren liked to look at.





# Neat and tidy

Our street already has a bulb planting scheme.

Every autumn, a few of us spend the morning digging pockets in the street verges and throwing in the usual suspects.





# Take the plunge!

In a pocket of broken tar and concrete, where nothing could be planted, I threw in some wildflower seed.

We had a few unhappy faces.

Until it flowered!





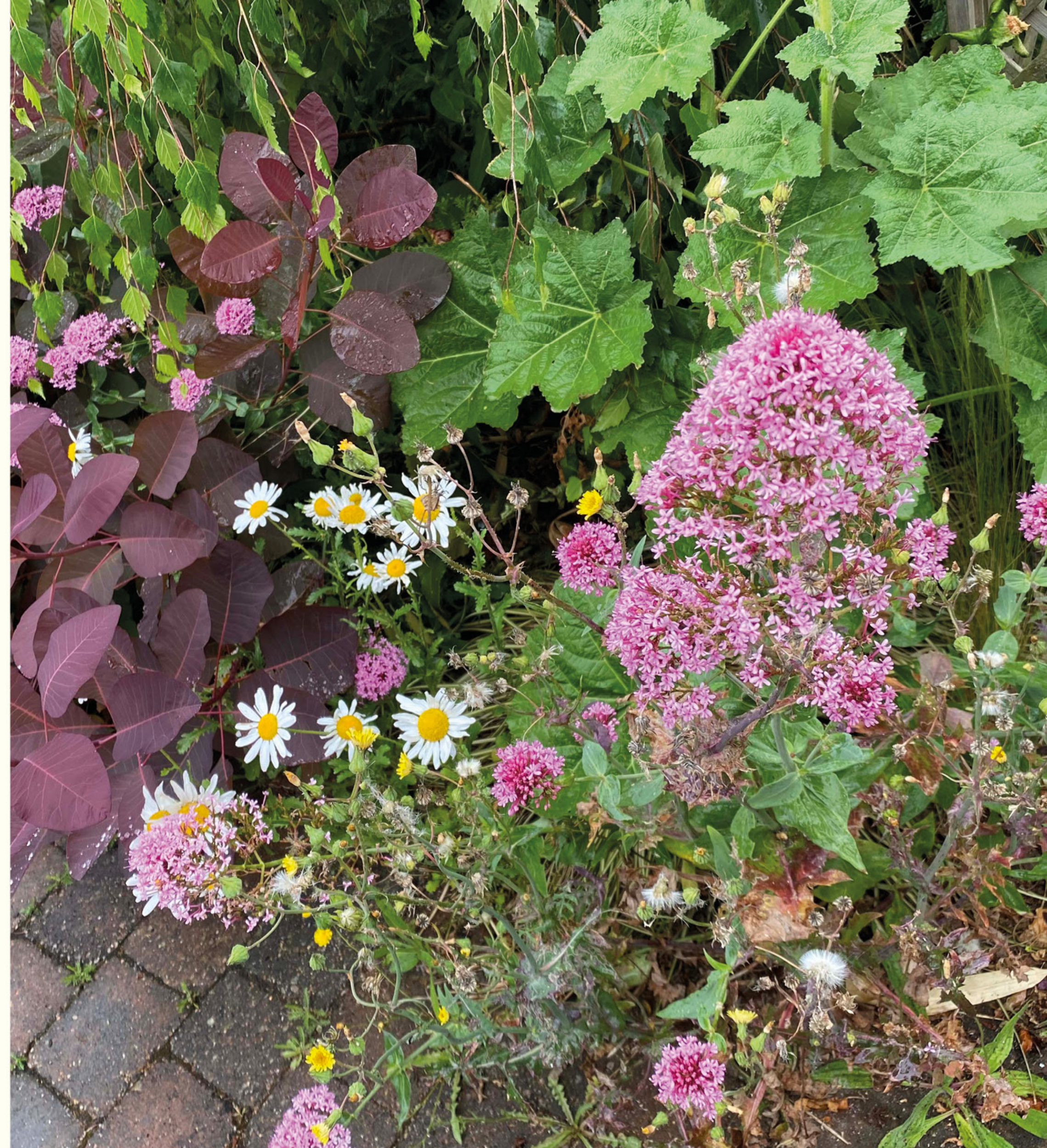
# What you preach

Wildlife gardens are only messy if you are a messy gardener.

Could I create a front garden that incorporated native plants and make it “acceptable” to everybody?

I decided to try!

Since then, I have been documenting my efforts and learning as I go.





# Mix them up

My flower beds are mixtures of “wild” and fancy. If I get too much of anything, I pull it up and give it away - the same goes for native plants.

People stop to talk to me about my garden and they all tell me how much they enjoy it.

None of them have asked me why I am allowing weeds to grow.





# For beginners

“Bee islands” on lawn are easy to create.

White Clover is good for the health of your lawn. When the time comes to mow it in, it feeds the turf over winter.

Just a patch will do!





# For productivity

I grow a variety of edibles and thanks to an increase in pollinators, higher yields!



24th March 2022

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER



# For interest

New visitors to the street!



24th March 2022

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER



# Sparking an interest

My online notebook, rather than an identification guide, shares information about wild plants, their unusual relatives, their origins, the animals that rely on them and how they have been utilised by mankind.



Valerianaceae: the Valerian Family

Corn Salad, a tasty leaf that is a good replacement for Watercress (with a little black pepper) is another native Valerian with (if allowed to bloom) tiny, pale lilac flowers.

## EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER

### Valerianaceae: the Valerian Family

A walk through a coastal village in Cornwall will give you a good view of one of this family. Growing on old walls, along with Fuchsia and Hydrangea, the pink (and sometimes white) Red Valerian is such a pretty sight - and it seems to have followed us home from our holidays and grows all over the borough - on roads, in gardens and parks. Much of London and the Home Counties has colonies of this butterfly favourite.

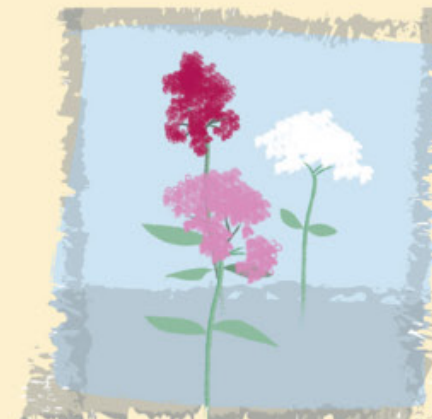
HOME



Centranthus ruber

Red Valerian, Jupiter's Beard, Fox's Brush

Blue-green hairless leaves. Plant 0.8 metres high.



About

Highly attractive flowers, spreads easily thanks to "parachute" seeds. Red, pink and white examples have been found growing together. Popular with butterflies and moths.



As well as nectar hungry bees, you may spy a "hummingbird". Many have been fooled by this sight - it is a Hummingbird Hawk Moth. Like Red Valerian, it is a migrant from the Mediterranean region.

HOME

NOTES: THE POPPY FAMILY

## EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER

### Papaveraceae: the Poppy Family

A relatively small family, the poppies are always a delight to see in the garden. These are some of the first seeds a child will grow - I remember giving California Poppy seed heads to my own children. Our wild poppies, although smaller, are quite a sight when they appear in road verges and fields.

HOME



Papaver Dubium

Long-headed Poppy, blindeyes. Hairy stem, pale yellow milk when broken. Grows upright or sprawls on the ground. up to 80cm high.



About

Wild poppy seed can live for many years deep in the soil and will germinate when the ground is disturbed (WWI battlefields are a well documented example).



# EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER

24th March 2022



# The future

Could an opportunity arise to grow wildflower “plugs” for interested parties, in a similar way to the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board sapling nursery?

I think the uptake for such a scheme would be good: professional landscapers and local gardeners, the residents’ associations/friends’ groups, conservators, schools, our hospital trust, developers, local railway stations.





*Thank you!*



24th March 2022

EPSOM & EWELL FLOWER FINDER