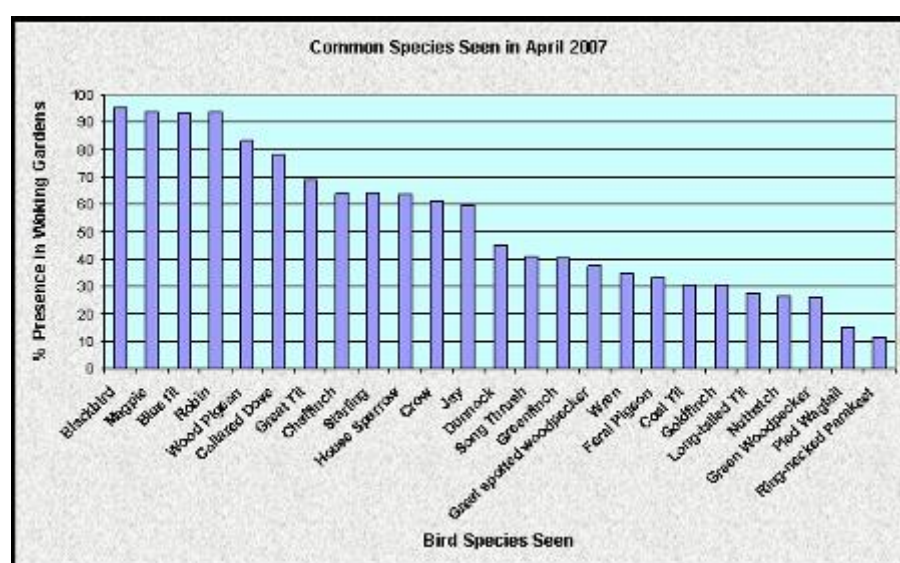


Woking Garden Wildlife Watch 2007 – Results

In March 2007 Woking Magazine published the first Gardening For Life (GFL) new style annual Woking Garden Wildlife Watch survey form. We were delighted that this created a great deal of interest and nearly 400 people returned the survey forms on line or by post. Thank you to everyone who spent the time watching the birds during April 2007, testing out their memories of recent visitors and filling in the surveys. Woking Local Agenda 21 have processed the data and present the main findings of the number of participants recording bird and animal species and also how attitudes to environmentally friendly gardening practices are changing.

Birds



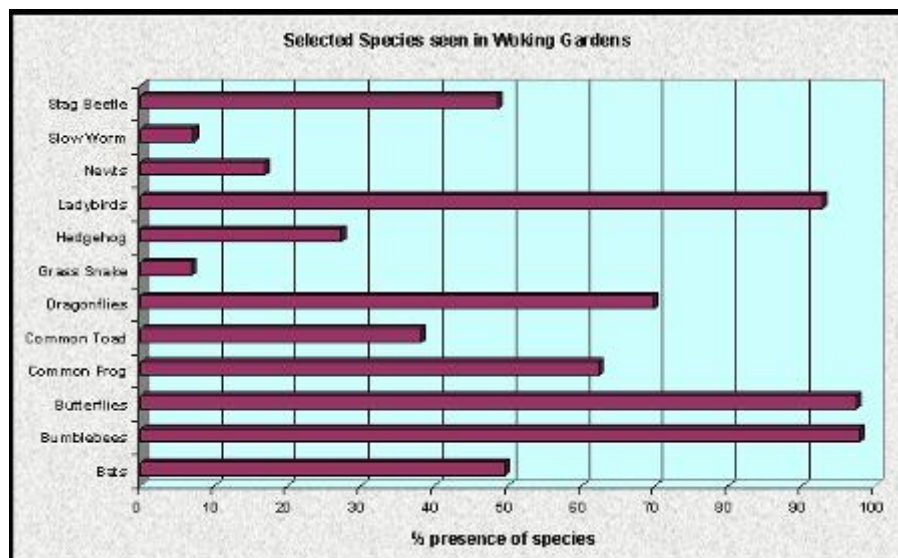
Common bird species seen in April 2007 were very similar to previous monthly surveys and will form a new baseline for monitoring the species in Woking. Direct comparisons with previous surveys cannot be made as there are many new respondents and a different survey layout. Also April 2007 was abnormally warm and dry, giving rise to different nesting patterns and to residents being out and about in their gardens in April, meaning that many fascinating observations are now in our data base. Thank you again!

Encouraging Birds

- Attract birds by choosing berry plants like holly or cotoneaster and seed plants like honesty and sunflowers.
- Clean out nest boxes and put up new ones in plenty of time before the nesting season.
- Provide water for drinking and bathing at all times.

Animal and Insect Species

The selected species and insects section of the survey showed a healthy biodiversity in our area, with nearly 50% recording the presence of stag beetles and an amazing 7% recording slowworms as present. Many residents were keen to list the different butterflies seen. Comments included seeing fewer frogs and toads, but more new "invaders" like harlequin ladybirds.



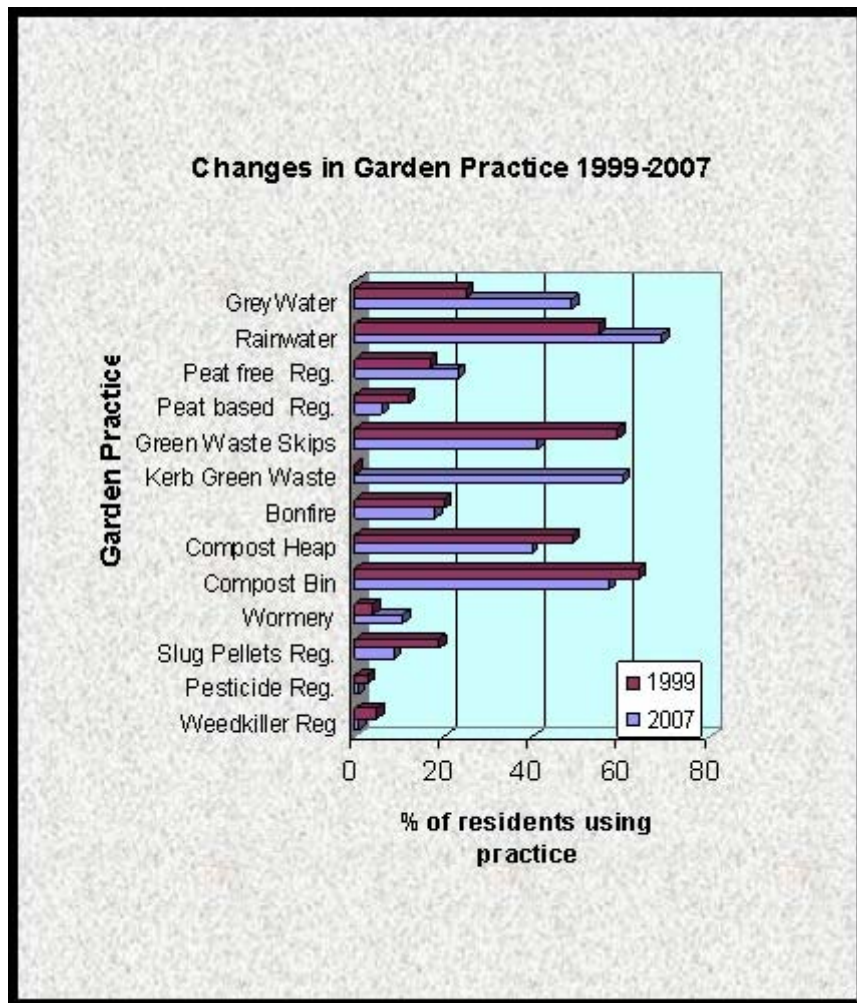
Attracting Animal and Insect Species

- Select plants like buddleia, lavender, hebe and sedums to provide nectar and pollen for butterflies, hover flies and bees.
- The best time to build a pond and to do pond maintenance is the autumn before frogs, toads and newts are ready to breed.
- Leave some old stems to provide shelter for over-wintering insects.

Gardening Practices

The third section of the survey is very interesting to compare with the first GFL survey which was published in the Woking Magazine in 1999. See chart on next page.

It is pleasing to note that there are significant positive changes in an environmentally friendly direction in many practices. Knowledge of climate change has led to rain- and grey-water being collected much more. There is a greater use of wormeries and although the graph shows that composting has declined slightly, 60% are now using the kerbside green waste service, with only 2% not using any method of green waste disposal. Concern about the environment has also led to a reduction in the use of peat based composts and similarly, regular weed killer and pesticide use has been reduced greatly due to growing awareness of the effect they have on biodiversity and health.



Good Gardening Practices

- Apply compost to improve nutrition and retention of water in dry conditions.
- Use peat-free composts, which are better soil improvers than peat. Peat extraction destroys special habitats and releases greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.
- Avoid slug pellets, which can be poisonous to helpful predators like hedgehogs and thrushes. Try surrounding plants with prickly holly leaves or irritants like sand.

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