

## Report of Plant Survey 2022

The weather this year has been even more weird than last year. It started with +16°C on New Year's Day but ended with -6°C in December and with snow. For most of the year temperatures have been above average – and in July, up to a record 40°C. It was correspondingly very dry. This resulted in completely browned off meadows in July and green dried up leaves falling off some trees (particularly beech and hornbeam) in July/August. Many herbaceous plants simply failed to show up/died off – or weren't seen by me because the weather was too hot/cold/frozen/wet/muddy/windy etc to go out in.

### Observations:

- All grasses were noticeably shorter this year – and sparser. Yellow rattle which is partly parasitic on grass was also less prolific/thinner. Sweet Vernal Grass emerged before Meadow Foxtail. The Foxtail is usually the first grass up in the Spring but this year was late and quite short and only seen in Newstead Meadow.
- Small plants like chickweed, blinks, mouse-ear, pimpernels, hairy tare were less obvious.
- All six species of the willowherbs, which normally flower late summer suffered in the July heat and were hardly to be seen.
- Only one specimen of hedge mustard was seen when usually there are a dozen or so. Only one bugle plant. No sanicle at all. No hairy tare.
- Although the very hot and dry weather in July resulted in reduced plant growth everywhere, the orchid bank at the lower end of Broadwater Meadow still managed an excellent display of mostly Common Spotted orchids this year. They were only half the usual height but there are now hundreds of them (up from perhaps a dozen or so, 10 -12 years ago). Last year about a quarter(?) of them were Southern Marsh orchids but this year, much less (5-10% ??) There were no Bee orchids at all this year, nor Fragrant-orchids and only a few scattered Pyramidal orchids, although a few more in Tubbenden Meadow.
- Early Purple Orchids were not affected by the hot dry weather – they flower April - May.
- Very little native Yellow Archangel was seen – but more of the Variegated (garden) kind.

Using the same Area plan as last year, there are 14 "Areas" in DNW, grouped broadly into Meadows (4), Wet Areas (3) and Woods (7). Please see attached map. Inevitably of course, the meadows have woods or shaws on the boundaries and the woods have wet areas or open glades/ woodland edges etc. but the Areas are fairly well defined geographically.

Just two new species were identified this year:

224 Rhododendron      R42 Black Sedge

Page references are to: The Wild Flower Key ----- by Francis Rose  
or: Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns ----- also by Francis Rose