

## Observations of a Woolaston Garden – April – May

Our one-acre rural situation garden always has something of interest. This year, following the “monsoon” rain all Winter, Lock-Down brought near-continuous sun.

Our last Hawfinch sighting of the Winter was on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. A Hedgehog was seen on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. This was exciting as it was the first since 2015; perhaps the weekly sightings of Badgers on our Trail Camera may have assisted declines?

Spring flowers were excellent with over 1,000 primrose plants and nearly 2,000 cowslip flower spikes. Ladies Smock (Cuckoo Flower) was also good and was visited by many Bees-Flies ( *Bombylius major* ).

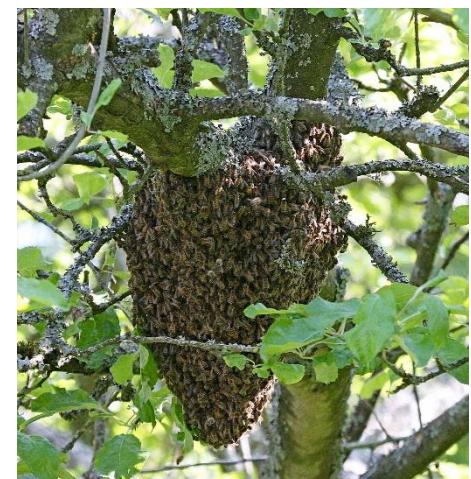


There were good numbers of Orange Tip, Holly Blue and Brimstone Yellow butterflies.



Our ponds probably helped to attract a large Red Damselfly ( *Pyrrhosoma nymphuta* )

Most of our 22 varied design bird boxes had many nests started with Great and Blue tits, Nuthatch, Jackdaw and Stock Dove all successfully fledging young. Woodmice use one. Red-tailed bumble bees occupied another box whilst the honey bees in a ‘Little Owl’ design box, which had successfully overwintered, outgrew space and on 7<sup>th</sup> May a large swarm emerged and settled in a nearby apple tree. These docile bees were collected and were destined for a new hive at a school in Chepstow. A further large ‘cast’ swarm, which would contain at least one unmated Queen, emerged on 20<sup>th</sup> May, again collected by a local beekeeper.



What a haven of sanity during COVID-19 isolation!

David Priddis