

Environment Matters

The environment bulletin of District 105N



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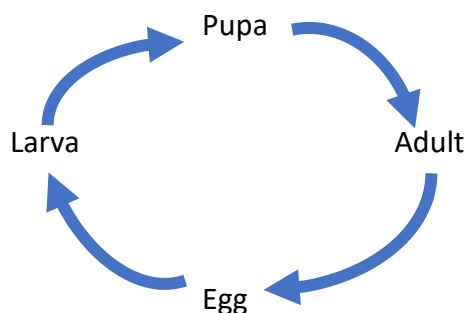


Fellow Lions,

With most parts of our District having taken a battering from a wild autumn, the prospect of undertaking environmental projects may not be terribly appealing! Nature too seems to have gone into shutdown. Herbaceous plants have died back; around them their leaves form a carpet on the ground and the sad stems of spring and summer point into the air. There is a lack of flying insects. No buzzing of busy bees or beautiful butterflies flitting around the borders. Have you ever wondered where they have gone or, indeed, where they come from when the weather warms up. This bulletin will focus on why the creepy crawlies in our parks and gardens matter so much and what we can do to ensure that they continue to fulfil their vital role in the great cycles of nature.

A quick bit of Zoology!

Insects can be split into two main groups. Some, such as grasshoppers produce eggs which hatch into young which are mini versions of the adults. The others, such as butterflies and bluebottles, produce a larva which is basically an eating machine and cannot breed as they have no sex organs. Once fully grown, these will form a pupa (a box in which to change). Inside this, the animal changes completely. It forms into an adult which is redesigned to live in a completely different way, feeding on different foods, flying rather than walking and with one thing as their major focus. Sex! This change is the metamorphosis.



Most insects will pass the winter months as eggs or pupae although the occasional one passes as an adult which may explain why some of you may have seen butterflies appearing in the un-seasonally high temperatures this November.

Where the insects undertake the metamorphosis depends on the species. Some, such as butterfly caterpillars usually look for a bit of height then attach themselves to rocks or plants to form their pupae (the chrysalis). This can happen in late spring through to autumn.

As these animals act as a food source for many other larger animals, their availability drastically affects their survival and breeding success. A couple of years ago, I had a discussion with a Yorkshire Lion about Swallows and Martins being close to Aberdeen but had not arrived in Yorkshire. The ones that had turned up in Aberdeen were far too early in the year and really struggled for food as there were too few flying insects to feed on.

The invertebrates in our gardens matter! Helping their survival assists the survival of our much-loved birds and mammals as well. Please do your bit to give them a hand.

Little Game Reserves and Bug hotels.

Since the last bulletin, I have had a number of chats with Lions about the value and design of hotels.

If it is a choice between your garden being a miniature nature reserve or a minibeast hostel then unquestionably, the better option is the reserve. Leaving the leaves and delaying cutting back dead flower stalks and the like until late spring will be a huge help to your local fauna, especially if you can persuade your neighbours to do the same. Your garden will be a mini nature reserve for the more unloved fauna of the country.

For those who cannot bear to do this the bug hotels provide an alternative, which will, at least, improve the chances of the survival of some of the invertebrates on which others depend. Why not enter the District Ugly Bug Hotel competition which will be judged at Convention?

Later in the bulletin, you will see the rules and some helpful hints for designing your own.

Around the Clubs

Tickhill and District Lions Club

We donated money to purchase wild flower bulbs (bluebells, snowdrops, aconites etc) to plant in Tickhill's only wood. We also spent a morning helping to plant the many bulbs too. Hopefully in a few years it will greatly enhance the wood.

2. We are planning another litter pick in November with the local community in one of our local areas. (Woodfield Plantation).

Come January we will be starting regular litter picks with a local environmental group which like last year was about 12 morning picking events finishing in April.

3. Also in January we are planting fourteen trees in memory of a 'friend of Lions' Melvin Wright in his home village of Rossington. This has taken over a year to come to fruition as we had to get permission from land owners and the council, but finally we now have the go ahead. Melvin's widow and disabled daughter will hopefully get many years enjoyment from the trees.



Stuart Allen
Tickhill and District Lions

Well done Tickhill Lions! Planting trees, underplanting woodland and cleaning up litter. You are covering all the bases and what a splendid way to recognise someone's service to their community. You have provided a living memorial which loved ones can see and know that a person's service to their community has been recognised and has been appreciated.

Boroughbridge 98 Lions Club

Following a recent request from Great Ouseburn Primary School who wanted to enhance their curriculum by creating a Forest School Outdoor Environment, we were delighted to help by funding the project in conjunction with The Friends of Great Ouseburn School.

We visited the site recently to see this enhanced curriculum in action and what a treat we had! As you can see from the photos, the excitement from the Head Teacher Mr Oswald and the children as equipment is being installed and The Forest School is becoming a reality thanks (in part) to us was immeasurable!

This project is an excellent example of how the Lions are actively supporting the local area with projects that support education, physical and mental wellbeing, the environment and the community!



John Boulton
Lion President



Congratulations on an excellent project, Boroughbridge Lions and apologies for not showing all the photos you sent. For safety's sake, I will only use pictures of youngsters, if their faces are not showing, unless I have assurances that permission has been given by their parents. For the same reason, I was unable to use the accompanying photos for the next article.

Teesdale and District Lions Club.

The Environmental work we've done this summer is to give all 15 primary schools in Teesdale area and one in Swaledale, the full or completed sets of Wild Tribe Hero books.

My daughter who teaches 8 - 9 years olds says that they have attracted great interest at her school, with children choosing them during personal reading periods, and taking them home.

They reflect very well on Lions!

Bob Garton
Lion President

Excellent work Teesdale! You are spreading a vitally important message to youngsters.

Building on Wild tribe Heroes

Ellie Jackson's books continue to give inspiration and influence on the youngsters of our District and beyond. It is heartening to see the support our Clubs have given to her work and passion and I am pleased to say that she will have a table at the District Convention in February.

The presentation of books to our local schools has given Clubs an "in" on which we can build. Lions involvement will depend on the local situation but there is a possibility of tree planting, or biodiversity projects. This may allow Clubs to engage with teachers and parents which in turn may assist membership drives.

The spring bulletin will have possible projects suitable for early stages to supplement Ellie's school pack material.

Focus on - Winter Gnats

On warm days, over late autumn and winter many of you will have noticed small swarms of flies which look like either really big mosquitoes or small Daddy Longlegs. These are the Winter Gnats. Although related to both, they form a separate family and these brief warm spells trigger them to get together into dancing courtship swarms. The eggs are laid in decaying, moist leaves on which the larvae feed. They are totally harmless and do not cause any damage to plants.

Around the world

Some good news! Some forms of plastic may well be broken down by micro-organisms (bacteria and fungi). Natural evolution works on the basis of supply and demand. If a material can be used as a food source, something will evolve to utilise it. Some bacteria isolated from landfill sites appear to have done so. In future, we may see genetically modified forms of these being produced on an industrial scale to eliminate junked plastics.

Another development which may have consequences in the not so-distant future is a clay suspension which can be poured into dry soil into which trees can be planted and become established. This enables near desert soil to be planted, providing new habitats suitable for other vegetation to occupy.

A good deed?

It is the time of year that many people perform the most common act of kindness to animal life in this country. Our feathered friends are finding it tough going just now with many species very much in decline. We like to help birds by feeding them over winter. So much so, that many conservation charities are concerned about feeding too much fat to the birds.

Another concern which has been raised is the spreading of disease by the use of dirty feeding stations. This year, the added risk of spreading bird flu to other birds or indeed the risk of transmission to humans is a real concern. If you are going to use them, please be careful to sterilise them regularly and frequently, taking care to protect yourself and your feathered clients.

District Environment Challenge Competition

This year's "No Prize" Competition is to design and make a garden Bug Hotel.

Each layer should have at least 6 fillings which allows as great a variety of possible "rooms" for the clients.

The roof should be waterproof.

Possible fillings are	bark,	dead leaves and twigs	slates
	large gravel	hollow bamboo canes	old pine cones
	straw	dead hollow stems	cut branches

Judging will take place at lunchtime on the 4th February during the District Convention.

Rules

1. The hotel should be a maximum size of 60cm length x 30cm width x 60cm height with at least two layers.
2. The layers must be observable in the completed hotel.
3. The hotel must sit on a base which keeps in leaves (to minimise mess in the hotel)
4. All bug hotels should arrive at the Expanse Hotel, Bridlington Environment Table, Between 9.00 and 10.00am and be removed by 4.00pm sharp.
5. Judging will take place at lunchtime on the 4th February.
6. Any accusation of corruption on the part of the judges should be placed in a plain brown envelope stuffed with used £10 notes.

If you are going to Convention why not give it a go?
Good luck to all!