

Creating the Community Wildlife Garden

INCC





2018

The community wildlife garden is a narrow stretch of land adjacent to the Cwmaman Bowls Club in Garnant, Carmarthenshire. Before the land was managed by INCC as a wildlife garden, the grassland habitat was kept low by regular mowing. Large conifer trees dominated the habitat.



10/04/2019

Conifer trees were removed by Cwmaman Town Council for safety reasons in 2019, but still the grassland habitat was kept low by regular mowing. Only a handful of plant species, including Dandelions were able to flower.



10/04/2019

Looking the in the other direction before involvement from INCC.



10/04/2019

The barely noticeable land next to the bowls green.



08/04/2022

As part of a push to make land assets in the county better wildlife habitats, the town council asked the INCC to manage the land next to the bowls green in Garnant. Thanks to support from the local community and the Brecon Beacons Nature Partnership, the polytunnel and bat roost were the first installations and the start of the transformation.



08/04/2022

The polytunnel was installed in April 2022 to assist the growing of devils bit scabious as part of the Marsh Fritillary project and to grow native wild plants to be planted out in the developing garden.



08/04/2022

Inside the Polytunnel during the first few days - in need of proper flooring and some tables, but this was the start.



14/04/2022

A couple of tables, supporting some devils bit scabious



30/04/2022

Thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, work begins on transforming the land into a community wildlife garden. The first job was to improve the flooring in the polytunnel.



30/04/2022

Flooring underway



31/05/2022

Flooring finished and tables moving in.



31/05/2022

Ragged Robin in flower in the polytunnel



31/05/2022

No mow May at the garden. A major part of our plans for the garden was to allow the vegetation to grow to see what wildflowers were in the seedbank. Creeping Buttercup flourished. The longer grass started to support species such as Field Vole and Slow Worm, as well as a variety of invertebrates.



02/06/2022

Storing Barn Owl boxes and laying out new tables ready for construction. As well as growing wildflower plants for the habitat and species restoration project, the Polytunnel is the ideal base for storing important materials such as bird and bat boxes that are waiting to go out into the landscape.



02/06/2022

Key Volunteers, Carla Williams and Jan Slade helping to construct new tables for the polytunnel on a hot sunny day. Volunteers have played a major role in developing the garden over the 18 months and none have been more influential than Carla and Jan.



02/06/2022

New tables in the polytunnel.



15/06/2022

Shaping of the meadow. Changing cutting regimes helped create the basis of our wildflower meadow. Cutting and maintaining paths is a good way of enabling visitors to move around the garden whilst ensuring different plant and invertebrate species can flourish.



25/06/2022

In June 2022, INCC was visited by the local nature group - Llanelli Naturalists. It was to be the first of many groups and volunteering activities to be run from the polytunnel and the wildlife garden.



30/06/2022

Fence going up between garden and bowls club. Holes in fence were created every 2m so that Hedgehogs could safely pass back and forth the garden.



07/07/2022

Signage added to the garden



09/07/2022

Lots of grasses in the meadow, but with careful management and some planting of native wildflowers it won't take long to transform.



28/07/2022

The first open day at the garden



28/07/2022

Even the younger visitors enjoying the polytunnel



28/07/2022

Visitors enjoying the garden



08/08/2022

As well as groups and volunteers, the wildlife garden has become a great place for INCC to support students and the next generation of nature conservationists. Ellyn Baker, joined INCC from Exeter University and helped to undertake species surveys at the garden.



28/08/2022

Plants that will be added to the garden.



28/08/2022

Devils bit scabious in flower at the polytunnel.



01/09/2022

Ellyn, helping to plant out some Ragged Robin plants in the garden.



01/09/2022

Thanks to volunteers, Jan and Carla, the wildlife garden is open to visitors on a more regular basis.



25/10/2022

As the quantity of plants grown in the polytunnel increased, so did the need for storage and tables. Thanks to local volunteers and Cwmamam Town Council, several specially made tables were built and moved to the polytunnel.



31/01/2023

Working party helping to take down the old fence to create a more natural edge to the garden and allow more access for wildlife.



31/01/2023

A great job by the working party removing the fence.



31/01/2023

Working party clearing some bramble and making way for the composting area.



12/02/2023

After a great job clearing the area, by February the two large compost areas were installed. As well as providing compost for the plants, the area is also home to Slow Worms and Wood Mice.



16/02/2023

Thanks to support from the Carmarthenshire Nature partnership, a new storage container was added to the wildlife garden.



16/02/2023

Storage container in its new home



03/03/2023

With further support from the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership, work begins on the path and the pond. The path is designed to encourage greater use of the wildlife garden by less abled members of the community.



03/03/2023

A little help from some heavy machinery necessary for this job.



06/03/2023

Compacted gravel path in the making.



06/03/2023

Large crater!



08/03/2023

Sand layer going in to protect pond liner. Due to the site's industrial past, much of the substrate under the topsoil consisted of rubble and other porous materials. Therefore a pond liner was needed.



08/03/2023

A layer of sand and protective material is hopefully enough to protect the liner against sharp stones left by the digging.



08/03/2023

Pond liner complete - now to hope for rain



10/03/2023

The rain came and the pond started to fill.



06/04/2023

Pond almost full.



06/04/2023

Now what to do with the visible pond liner?



25/04/2023

Pond liner trimmed and hessian laid around the pond, some peat-free compost added so the area can be seeded and in time blend naturally into the pond.



26/04/2023

Thanks to support from Local Giving, more native wild plants were purchased to create a bog garden and also to help the pond margins.



02/05/2023

Planting out around the pond and surrounding garden.



07/05/2023

Another working party this time to help with planting out.



02/05/2023

With the help of volunteers some old dead wood is added around the pond as excellent wildlife habitat.



07/05/2023

It was a busy day!



07/05/2023

Adding drilled blocks for solitary bees and other insects.



17/05/2023

Pond completed, now to let nature take over (with a little loving care).



17/05/2023

Beautiful, the garden really starting to take shape.



22/06/2023

More planting out, concentrating on the meadow areas.



22/06/2023

Many species have been making use of the pond. These Damselflies are using the pond for breeding.



28/06/2023

New student placement Caitlin Ngheim helping out at the polytunnel.



08/07/2023

The garden hosting a moth morning. The moth trap is left out overnight, the following morning supporters are invited to observe and assist species officer Vaughn Matthews retrieve and identify the moths. This particular moth morning attracted 227 moths of 71 species!



16/07/2023

Purple Loosestrife in full bloom inside the polytunnel. These plants are destined for planting around the damper areas of the wildlife garden.



16/07/2023

The garden welcomed its first Cinnabar moth caterpillar earlier in the year. Wildflowers such as Ragwort are given a home at the garden, so the insects that depend on them can also hopefully flourish.



16/07/2023

A Wood Mouse taking up residency under one of the reptile refugia. The refugia is often used by Slow Worms, as well as Toads and the occasional Palmate Newt.



04/08/2023

The garden in August after a hot spell in June, July had double the amount of average rainfall for the month - the garden didn't mind at all!



04/08/2023

Pond looking full and the yellow iris plants enjoying their new home.



04/08/2023

How beautiful are the reflections in the pond, with the purple loose strife looking particularly lovely in foreground.



04/08/2023

The polytunnel housing plenty of devils bit scabious to feed the hungry marsh fritillary caterpillars.



04/08/2023

Although grown primarily for the Marsh Fritillary caterpillars, Devil's-bit Scabious is also an excellent nectar source for lots of different insects that use the wildlife garden.



04/08/2023

Please see the staff and volunteers for hints about what you can see in the garden on your visit.

Look how far we've come in just 16 months!

April 2022



August 2023

