Nature's Calendar
SUMMER 2025

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the summer edition of the Nature's Calendar newsletter!


Photo credit: Ben Lee WTML

Have you spotted a ripe blackberry yet? It's time to start looking.
Whether you eat it, bake it in a crumble or leave it for wildlife, don't forget to record the date that you first see a ripe blackberry this summer on the Nature's Calendar website.
Ripe blackberries have already been spotted by a volunteer in Bristol on 23rd June (see map).

Looking back at spring, it has been a record-breaking year for sunshine levels across the UK! With plenty of warm and dry weather we hope you enjoyed getting outside and recording the first signs of spring where you live.

Will this fine weather during spring have resulted in good fruit crops over the coming months? Recording fruit scores on your local trees will help us find out.

A warm welcome to new volunteers.
Within these newsletters we share project updates or news, insights into your records, reminders of what to look out for and highlights from our blog.
We are here to support you in your role, if you have any questions at any point, you can ask us via our project inbox: naturescalendar@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Best wishes,
The Nature's Calendar team.

What to look out for in the coming months

It's bramble season! Let us know when you spot your first ripe blackberry.

On a bramble shrub that you can visit regularly (ideally once a week), record the date of first ripe fruit when the first blackberries are soft to touch. Expected Date Range**:** July until early September.

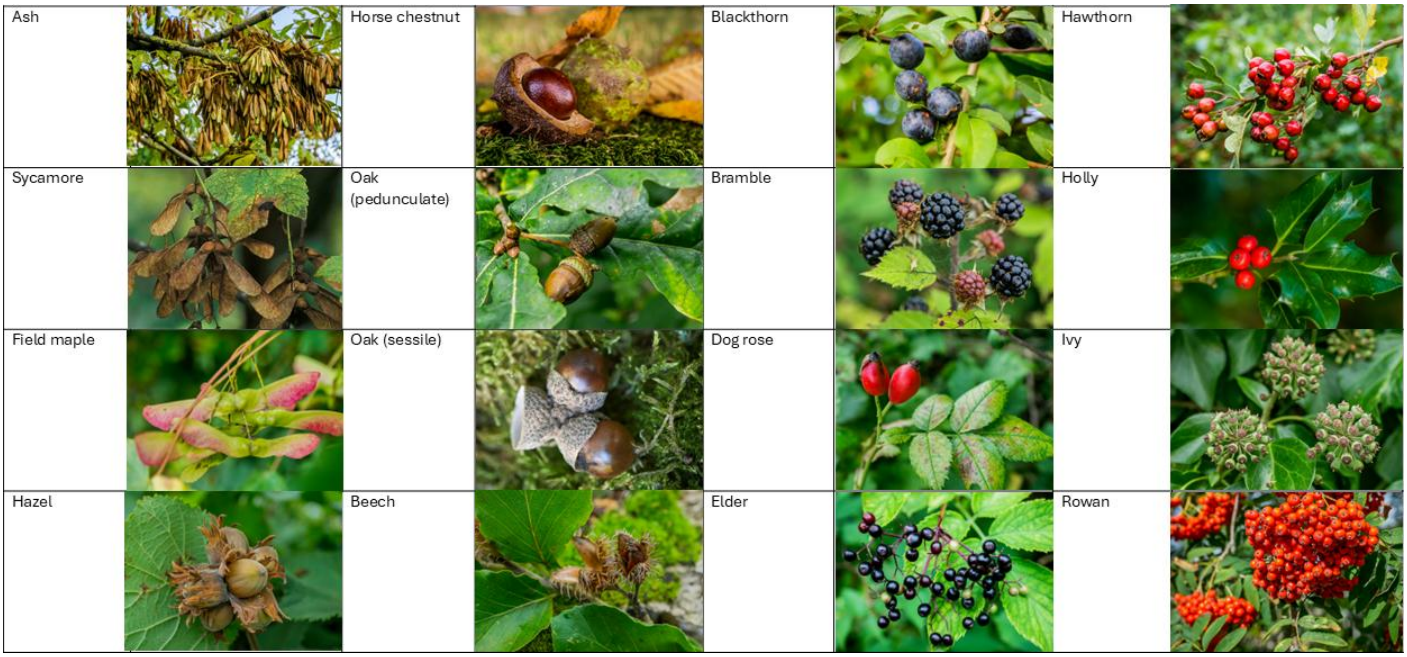
Tip: You can do the 'squish test' to work out whether the blackberries are ripe enough to record. If they are, they'll be easily 'squishable', if they still feel hard, that means they're not yet ripe. You don't need to wait for all berries on the same stem to ripen as this would be considered too late, just one single ripe berry on the shrub is enough to record as the date of the first ripe fruit.

Fruit Scores
As well as first ripe fruit, please also let us know the fruit score:
1 = no fruit
2 = meagre
3 = moderate
4 = good crop
5 = exceptional


Photo credit: Ben Lee WTML

Lots of sunshine in spring followed by rain in summer can lead to higher yields of fruits. In spring 2025 the UK experienced record-breaking sunshine levels and consistently warmer and drier than average temperatures, and as a result pollination rates may have increased, too, possibly leading to greater crop yields. Help us understand if this is the case by recording fruit scores this summer!

You can record fruit score on:



Download our phenology calendar here to see the full list of species to look out for based on the season.

Your records

Your records contribute to research carried out by environmental scientists and students from across the world.

A recent BSc study by Hazel Shipsey from the University of Liverpool asked, 'can four migratory bird species keep track of the UK's early springs?'

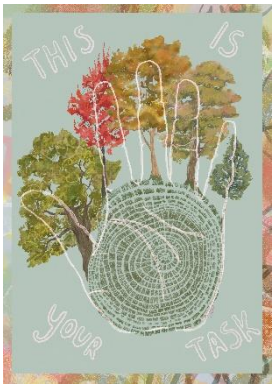
For her final-year Environmental Science research project, Hazel explored whether four long-distance migratory birds, which visit the UK to breed, are keeping track with changes in spring phenology.

Photo credit: Paul Smith WTML

To track the timing of spring phenological events in the UK, a total of 356 900 observations from the Nature's Calendar database were analysed over a 21-year study period.

The results showed clear differences in how these birds are tracking changes in the timing of spring. Swallows are arriving more than 2 days earlier per decade, showing the species is responding to environmental change. However, the shift is happening twice as fast as many spring events, meaning they may risk arriving before optimal conditions. In contrast, swifts are arriving almost two days later per decade – the opposite trend to changes in the timing of our spring – creating a long-term delay that puts the species at risk of increased mismatch with key spring events. Both house martins and willow warblers appear to be better at adapting migration timing, showing well matched arrival timing with the onset of spring events.

Blog highlights



'This is your task' artwork
by Claire McGuigan

Wellbeing, art and wildlife recording with Nature Over Natter

Hear from 3 young UK-based artists as they share their experiences of spending time in nature observing the changing seasons, and how this has impacted on their wellbeing. They will also be sharing their artworks with us, art which has been informed and inspired by these experiences in nature.

Photo credit: Anita Nicholson WTML

Volunteer spotlight: Janet

Nature's Calendar is a citizen science project. Anyone can volunteer to become a citizen scientist, and every single Nature's Calendar volunteer adds vital information to the database. Here we shine a spotlight on some of our most dedicated volunteers.

Tech update

The map function on the Nature's Calendar website has recently been updated. To ensure the best experience, we recommend clearing your browser cache (by pressing CTRL + F5) the first time you visit the site after this update. This helps load the most up-to-date content, as browsers often cache website data to improve performance.

Your new volunteer platform, Assemble

Assemble is the Woodland Trust's volunteer website, you will have received an email inviting you to log into the platform. Assemble is a secure location where all volunteering information is now kept- including for our Citizen Science volunteers who record for Nature's Calendar. All communication about your volunteering role with Nature's Calendar will now come from the Woodland Trust through Assemble.

ASSEMBLE

Please note that recording of seasonal signs will still take place on the Nature's Calendar website as before.

Since you are a citizen science volunteer you have the freedom to volunteer as much or as little as you want. We don't pay expenses for this type of volunteering since it should be something you can do easily as part of your everyday life.

Why not visit our new Nature's Calendar forum on Assemble where you can chat with the team and other volunteers on topics of interest. Log in and follow the link on the left-hand navigation where it says "forum".

WOODLAND TRUST
UK CEH
PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY
POSTCODE GREEN TRUST