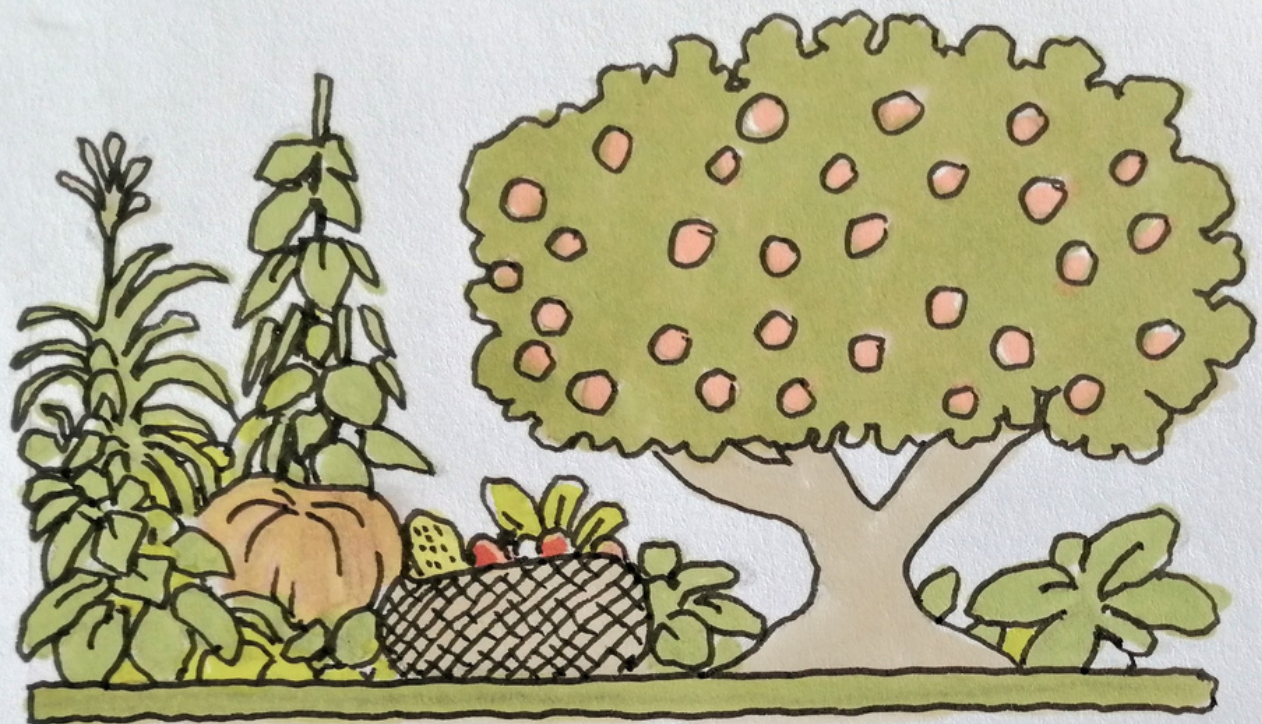


# The Longlander

JUNE 2022 ISSUE 07



LONG LANDS  
COMMUNITY  
FOOD FOREST

# Welcome

**Summer is here!**

**Hundreds of thousands of Meadow Buttercups are blooming on Long Lands Common, as wildlife roams below and birds swoop above; the Common is bursting with life, some of which can be seen in our readers' photos later in this issue of our Newsletter.**

**Speaking of news, well for this issue, we have rather a lot of it!**

**Firstly, it is my great pleasure to report that our provisional Woodland Creation Plan has now been finalised, compliant with the UK Forestry Standard, and in accordance with our plan this enables us to bid for a woodland creation grant from White Rose Forest.**

**This will be a great help to us as we plant thousands of trees on site later this year.**

**Secondly, it is with a great sense of excitement that we are now able to unveil a new project the Committee have been working on for the Long Lands Society, the Long Lands Community Food Forest.**



*Photo Credit: Ben Skinner*



*Drawing by: Long Lands Common*

**Our Food Forest project is an aspiration to use some of the unallocated money we are currently holding idle in the Long Lands Society's bank account to purchase an additional parcel of land within the Greenbelt, near to the main Long Lands Common site.**

**Where Long Lands Common is in the process of becoming a publicly accessible woodland and nature reserve, Long Lands Community Food Forest would be intended as an accessible space for public horticulture. This new development would bring the art of cultivation from something that for most people is remote and semi-alien, into literal touching distance. Visitors to the Food Forest will be able not just to wander (and ponder) amongst**

**examples of how food can be grown in a sustainable manner, but also join in volunteering days as we sow and harvest produce together across the seasons. The Food Forest project would also be intended to dovetail with the core aims of the Long Lands Community Benefit Society, in protecting and enhancing the bio-diversity of the Greenbelt between Harrogate and Knaresborough.**

# Welcome

This also creates a new wildlife corridor between the main Long Lands Common site and the Nidd Gorge, and of course, takes further land that was previously under the threat of being turned into a major road between our towns into protective community ownership.

This makes the prospect of a renewed attempt to construct a road in the Nidd Gorge area ever more difficult for those who see more value in tarmac and traffic than tomatoes and trowels. Personally, I'm genuinely excited by the prospect of working with other fruit growers across the country to help rescue from the brink of extinction some of the heritage varieties of apple, which are no longer grown for the big supermarkets (As they focus on fruit varieties which preserve best for distribution and storage, which is rarely the same thing as focusing on taste!). At Long Lands Community Food Forest, such heritage fruit varieties could be nurtured, instead of disappearing into memory.

Our team leader in developing the Long Lands Community Food Forest idea, Kate Wilkinson, has written a feature article about the concept behind the project, and I ask that every member read and consider it carefully.

After reading, I would direct your attention to a new page on our website:  
[www.longlandscommon.org/longlandscommunityfoodforestvote](http://www.longlandscommon.org/longlandscommunityfoodforestvote)

Upon visiting this page, you will be asked to indicate your view as a member of Long Lands Common Community Benefit Society: "Should the Community Food Forest project proceed?".

Personally, I will be saying "Yes", and I would encourage others to do so too. I am confident from a review of the society's finances and other resources (which includes significant numbers of professional horticulture volunteers!) that this project can be undertaken successfully. If we receive at least 60% of submissions in favour of continuing the project, the Long Lands committee will proceed with the purchase of more land from within our existing funds, and the establishment of the Food Forest.



*Photo credit: Clark & Company, Getty Images*

# Welcome



*Photo credit: Clark & Company, Getty Images*

**This is YOUR decision Longlanders, for the society of which YOU are a co-owner, and the project will not continue without your assent. Please give it your most serious of consideration and then fill out the membership consultation form.**

**If you do not feel you can make a decision on the project at this time, we will be holding a Q&A session on the Food Forest project at our upcoming Annual General Meeting, on Saturday 25th of June, at the Long Lands Common site, from 11am until early afternoon. Please come along to ask any questions you may have of the team, and do bring a picnic too!**

**We'll see you soon, then?**

**If you would like to contribute to The Longlander by writing an article, or want to send us your letters and photographs, then get in touch at: [thelonglander@yahoo.com](mailto:thelonglander@yahoo.com).**

**Ben Skinner - Chair of Long Lands Common.**

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**Artemis Swann, Editor**



**Ian Murdie**



**Kate Wilkinson**



**Richard Lord**

# News From Long Lands Common

## Ponds

**We are so excited to share the news that all 3 ponds are now full.**

**Now we patiently wait for new life to arrive.**

**The ponds will be colonising naturally so, if you do visit, don't get too near, don't put anything in them, keep dogs out and please don't endanger yourself.**



*Photo Credit: Artemis Swann*

## Railway Sleepers



*Photo Credit: Ed Lee*

**On Saturday 19th March, volunteers from Long Lands Common gathered at Nidd Gorge to clear 6 railway sleepers from the river. Some were harder to remove than others, especially those with metalwork still attached. However, with some spirited teamwork and ingenuity we got them all out.**

**The sleepers were taken to Long Lands Common. They will be used as foundations for a container to store tools and give park rangers shelter. Thanks to everyone who came down and helped.**

# News From Long Lands Common

## May Working Days

Long Lands is sending a big thank you to our volunteers who spent two days working hard on site last week. An amazing show of community spirit.

In just two days we:

Created foundations for a new storage container using reclaimed sleepers from the Nidd Gorge, large stones were reallocated from the viewing mound to the container foundations, old and unnecessary barbed wire was removed from the boundaries, 3 large conifer branches on the floor near pond 3 were trimmed and put in a pile and finally the site was litter picked.



*Photo Credit: Angela Jex*



*Photo Credit: Linda Nelson & Sam*

## Container Update

The container is almost here! As reported in the March newsletter, after much deliberation and debate, the Long Lands board settled on a 30ft x 8ft container. A 40ft container was purchased and has been cut down to size by the very helpful Ace Containers of Leeds. And the 'off-cut' of the container isn't going to be wasted - it will be used to create an accessible green toilet.

The container itself is currently being painted and hopefully will be ready to be delivered to Long Lands Common within the next week or so. A big thank you to those volunteers who helped lay the foundations in readiness. The container will be multifunctional. As well as being a base for Site Rangers, it will be used for educational activities, meetings and storage. No doubt its use will grow and evolve over time as Long Lands itself grows and evolves.

The purchase of the container was funded by donations made in memory of Carl Nelson. Carl established and ran Veloheads Community Interest Company, which is an alternative educational provision for young people with additional needs. Carl was excited to be involved with Long Lands Common, but sadly he wasn't able to see it develop and flourish as it is doing. However, he would be pleased to know that the donations made in his memory have contributed to a project which represented his beliefs and values; a legacy for future generations, the preservation of the environment and opportunities for community involvement.

# News From Long Lands Common

## Guided Tours

April saw the start of guided yours around the Long Lands site. Thank you to every one who took part: we hope you had a great time!

Members got to:

- find out about what is currently being planned
- hear about the future development schedule
- meet other members
- ask any questions

When we have new dates you'll be able to sign up using the [link here](#)

Tours take approximately 1 hour, and involve off-path walking on potentially wet ground - please wear suitable walking boots. Tours for attendees with additional mobility considerations will be scheduled once the ground has dried out later in the year.



*Photo Credit: Ben Skinner*

# News From Long Lands Common

## Site Ranger Training



Photo Credit: Ed Lee

**Our Site Ranger Team, consisting of Long Lands Common Volunteer Coordinator Barry Slaymaker ably assisted by Angela Jex and Miranda Dunstan, has successfully completed two induction sessions for our growing team of Volunteer Site Rangers.**

**The morning sessions at Woodfield Dene Park Community Centre kicked off with us getting to know each other including our interests, skills and motivations, fuelled by ample tea, coffee and biscuits served up by our very own John Jackson. We then went on to learn about the history of Long Lands Common including the important work that went into stopping the proposed 'relief' road that would have run right through the site, covered the work completed on the site so far, our design plans and ideas, the role of the Site Ranger and key policies and procedures.**

**After munching on our packed lunches, we took a short stroll along the Nidderdale Greenway to the site itself where Barry guided us through an informative tour, highlighting all the key features and really bringing the design ideas to life. We took in the mound with stunning views past the Major Oak and out to Greenhow Hill, 'The Quiet Place' where the wind gives a voice to the poplars, the site of the 'Office' with its reclaimed sleeper foundations waiting patiently to receive their burden and of course the three ponds which have really started to come to life.**



Photo Credit: Ed Lee

The blackthorn blossom had been replaced with colourful blooms of buttercup, vetch, pignut, red clover and stitchwort to name a few. We were lucky enough to be serenaded by skylarks and a blackcap and watched house martins and swallows swoop low over the ponds taking advantage of the numerous flying insects. The clear waters of the bottom pond revealed a healthy population of plump tadpoles, a dragonfly nymph, water boatmen and a pair of common newts, plus a multitude of unidentified swimming specks – that pondlife identification course can't come soon enough!

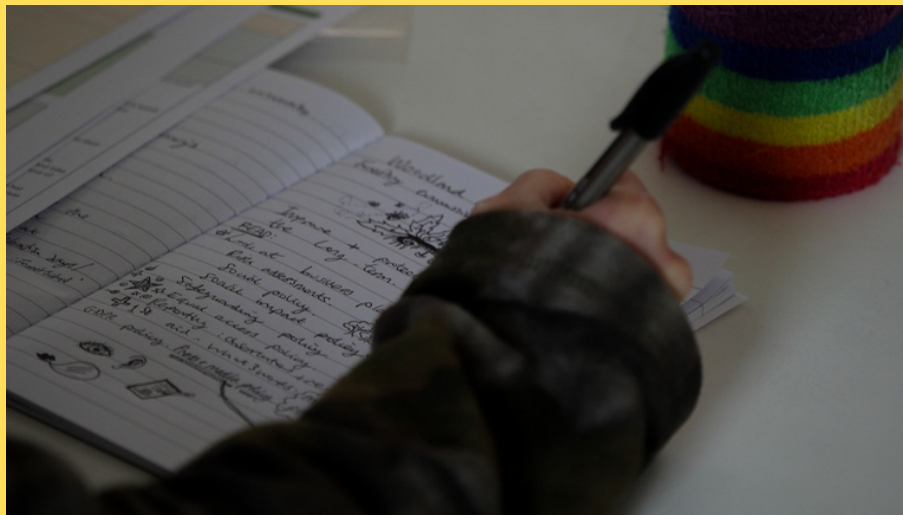


*Photo Credit: Ed Lee*

We are keen to have our Volunteer Rangers on-site as soon as possible to help identify any maintenance needs, make wildlife observations and recordings and engage with site visitors so please bear with us while we put together a rota.

We are aware that not everyone was able to attend the sessions so we will look to run a further session later in the summer depending on demand.

As we hope to have our recycled shipping container which will act as our site office delivered very soon, please do let us know if you have any unused binoculars or field guides (for example covering birds, trees, wildflowers, pondlife etc.) which you are willing to donate as these will no doubt prove invaluable to our Site Ranger team.



*Photo Credit: Ed Lee*

There is a huge breadth of knowledge and talent within the Site Ranger group which we feel incredibly privileged to be able to tap into. Thanks to everyone who participated for giving up their time and energy and do check out our social media channels to see photos and a short video of the event, filmed and edited by Edward Lee.

If you are interested in becoming a Site Ranger but have not yet expressed an interest, please get in touch with the team via our dedicated email address: [rangers@longlandscommon.org](mailto:rangers@longlandscommon.org).

# Community Food Forest



*Photo Credit: Adrian Reeve of the Food Forest group*

## Long Lands Common Community Food Forest

**By Kate Wilkinson**

### **Who are we?**

Longlands Common Community Food Forest is a small group of horticulturalists, orchard keepers, diggers, eaters and dreamers who have been meeting to work towards a Food Forest for Longlands. Our vision is a place where everyone is welcome and where connections are made. Longlands Common is already creating culture-shift - around access and land ownership. A movement towards the treasuring of everything wild. The Community Food Forest is part of this movement - connecting people through working together, creating memories through sensory contact with plants and showcasing a different approach to food growing. The culture it generates is about abundance, about sharing and the re-discovery of traditions and ancient ways of being on our land.

In the UK, small-scale food growing has been an exclusive club, open only to those with a garden, with time to tend it, with confidence. Access to land is a gigantic barrier to new growers. The Community Food Forest can help overcome these barriers. It can be a place to escape to and a place to come home to. To rest, to forage, to learn and to play in. We believe in the power of eating together!

# Community Food Forest

**My name is Kate and I'm a Permaculture designer. I look for ways to meet human needs and encourage human thriving in ways that respect the needs of all the other organisms around us. Longlands Common is itself a "Permaculture project". That's where its roots lie. Permaculture has a big role to play in the next chapters of its story and Longlands has a role to play in our response to all these problems around land use, climate and our relationship with food.**



*Photo Credit: Adrian Reeve of the Food Forest group*

**Yesterday I read an article about the "new food strategy" for England. It said that the document "contains virtually no new measures to tackle the soaring cost of food, childhood hunger, obesity or the climate emergency". And I felt a strange combination of panic and an expectation fulfilled. War in Ukraine, the repeated warnings on climate change and our experiences during the pandemic have made clearer than ever the interconnections between food, fossil fuels, power, inequality and human suffering.**

## **What is Permaculture?**

**There are a lot of possible answers to this question! The name recognises that modern, Western ways of living can never be "permanent". If we live in extractive ways, using up resources and exhausting our land and ourselves then we know, inevitably, it will all come to an end. You can see Permaculture as a response to this reality - a shift in culture towards self-renewing cycles, like those found in the natural world. It learns from the cultures of indigenous peoples and from close observation of natural systems. Permaculture is a design methodology, based on ethical principles. It recognises that everything on our planet exists in a complex web of relationships and interactions with the things around it.**

# Community Food Forest

It is open, inclusive, and driven by love. The three foundational principles are earth care, people care and fair shares. If it doesn't care for people and for the earth, if it doesn't strive towards parity and the elimination of inequality.. Then it's not Permaculture.



*Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson*

A food forest is a “garden” in the sense that it is planted and cared for by people. It is designed to meet some of their needs - for food, for beauty, for connection. In wild woodlands, plants, fungi and invertebrates mingle in great diversity. There are layers of plants, from the canopy trees and climbers, epiphytes, down to shrubs, herbaceous ground cover, roots and bulbs and the hyphae of mushrooms under the ground. A “forest garden” or “food forest” does the same. Plum trees arch over blackcurrant shrubs underplanted with rhubarb, alpine strawberries and wild garlic and yes, dandelions! The systems are perennial, designed to maximise diversity, forming robust, zero-waste ecosystems supporting wider biodiversity. There are examples all over the world, with Robert Hart's pioneering garden in Shropshire being one of the earliest examples in our climate.

## What is a Food Forest?

A while back, I was sitting on a bench in Prospect Park in Starbeck - a scrap of land next to the busy high street. A family on their way home from school came into the park. Mum with kids in tow, encumbered by brightly coloured school backpacks. They started searching amongst the shrubs.. And picking leaves. They were gathering dandelions. For a salad? More likely, these were the preferred snack of a much loved rabbit or guinea pig. And I thought THIS! This is a right-relationship with the land. They were taking something they needed, without destroying anything. They were connecting with the living things around them. They seemed at home and happy in a space they had a right to be in. I have no doubt that, when our ancestors walked through the forest of Knaresborough, they took a basket. There will always have been something to gather or forage.

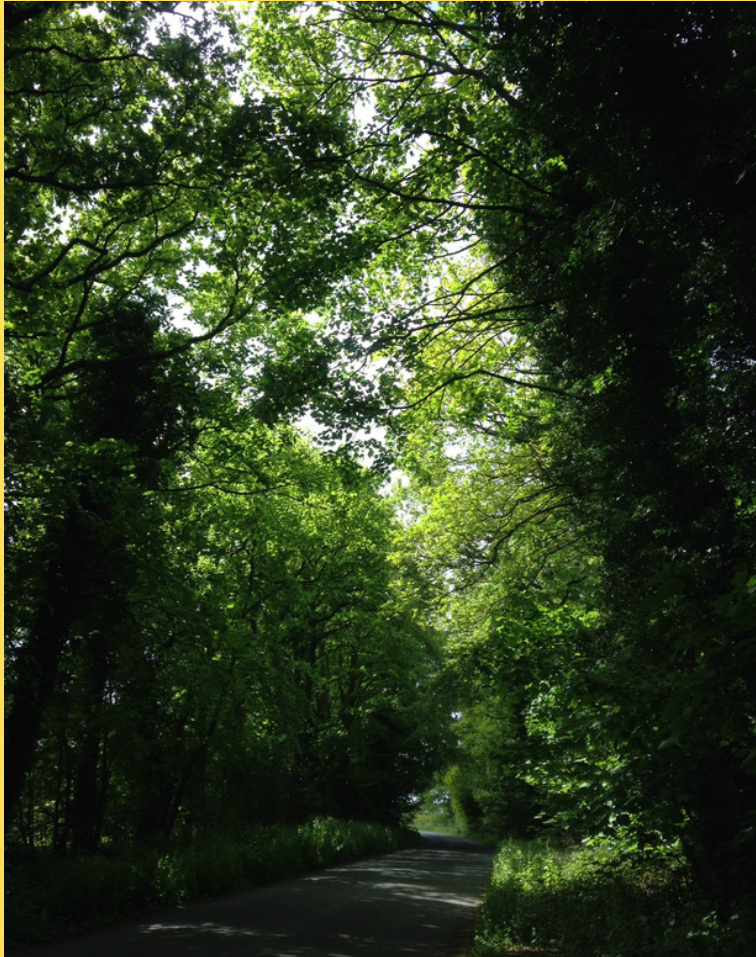


*Photo Credit: [knowledgebase.permaculture.org.uk](http://knowledgebase.permaculture.org.uk)*

# Community Food Forest

## What do we need?

Well, we need the support of the Longlanders. Long Lands Common is a place for wildness and will remain so - we have no intention to turn it into a garden! We would like to purchase some more land for food growing, extending the common. The purchase would improve access to the common, boost its impact as a wildlife corridor and strengthen its effectiveness as an obstacle to future development or road building on the greenbelt. The land would be managed according to the Long Lands values, with a greater emphasis on access and on meeting human needs.



*Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson*

It could ultimately be home to a Community Supported Agriculture project alongside the Food Forest, depending on the support and the enthusiasm of the wider community. We will be making a proposal at the AGM for you to consider.

We're also keen to involve more people. We value diversity and believe that every individual with their unique character, skills, story and connections has something to offer the group - so if the vision gets a toe-hold in your heart.. We'd love to hear from you, whoever you are and whatever you have to offer.

# Ecology at Long Lands Common



*Photo Credit: Henshaws College*

**By Richard Lord**

Shareholder and tutor at Henshaws College, Anna Bryer, had written asking if we would help her students complete their studies by participating in a nature project within the community. As our last newsletter contained an article about building a reptile hibernation chamber, a hibernaculum, we thought it'd be an ideal job for them.

So on May 3rd a procession of wheelbarrows, spades, wood saws and loppers were pushed from Henshaws to Long Lands by Anna, her students, support staff and a couple of board members. We chose a site near the pond in our west field, at the base of the excavation soil mound and the digging commenced. The ground was just soft enough to make it possible as the rain stopped only 15 minutes earlier. An hour later we had a drinks and snack break and sat around looking into our hole like all good workmen do.

The next task was to scour the area and collect as many rocks and logs as possible. These were carefully dumped into our hole. Three clay drain pipes, access tunnels, were laid into the pile before it was all covered with the removed soil and turf sods. Everyone stood back to admire the Henshaws Hibernaculum, even if it did look like a hastily dug shallow grave!



*Photo Credit: Henshaws College*

# Ponderings About Ponds



*Photo Credit: Artemis Swann*

**By Ian Murdie**

**The ponds are in situ and full so how useful will they be and how do pond plants work? Well, believe it or not, these small ponds will probably contribute more to biodiversity than anything else we do here. Ponds don't just bring fish to Long Lands. After all, all life depends on water. Mammals will come to drink, and so will birds – tweeting is thirsty work!**

**So, what can we expect from these ponds? Let's look at a couple of local examples.**

**My first example – let's call it pond A. The water is like green milk, the colour of a rotten avocado. There's a nasty slime that collects around the edges; shredded pieces of Mother's Pride lie soaking in the shallows; the only sign of life in the water are some forlorn ducks perched on a fallen tree, looking like they really don't fancy swimming in that! This is not a good example.**

**My second – pond B. When I look down on it, I can see the bottom. Although the pond is small, there's a heron lurking in the corner playing musical statues between meals. This is a better example.**

**A healthy pond has crystal clear waters; it's a blaze of colour in the spring and summer, it's a seething orgy of frogs during spawning season; it will attract coots, moorhens and kingfishers and it is surrounded near and far by a mist of neon damsel flies. An unhealthy pond is dominated by algal blooms that deprive the water of oxygen. This is what turns the water into the opaque poisonous sludge that looks like it belongs in Gotham City.**

**So how do we avoid our small areas of stationary water becoming the stagnant toxic algal soup that is pond A?**

# Ponderings About Ponds

Well, a pond's ecosystem depends on having the right plants that create an environment where the algae cannot thrive. The problem with pond A is there are no pond plants to compete with the algae, so the algae run riot in the nutrient rich waters.

Pond plants fall into three categories. You need a good combination of all three for the perfect pond. The first are the bog plants - plants that grow in the shallow areas and waterlogged ground surrounding the pond. These are like a nutrient sponge, absorbing minerals from the water and effectively removing the stuff that stimulates the algal growth. Plants like bulrushes give cover for waterbirds to nest while yellow iris, purple loosestrife, king cups and ragged robin provide the eye candy and bee food.



*Photo Credit: Brian Global, Getty Images*



*Photo Credit: Mantonature, Getty Images*

Next are the floaters. They may have roots in the pond bed or just trailing in the water, but their leaves lie flat on the surface. These plants absorb nutrients further out in deeper water, and also give shade, blocking the sunlight the algae need to photosynthesise and grow. Native examples include water crowfoot, frogbit and the plant that in my opinion has the most beautiful flower nature has ever produced – the water lily *Nymphaea alba*.

Last are the submerged plants. These remove the CO<sub>2</sub> from the water that the algae depend on. In doing so they generate oxygen, thereby creating an environment where water breathing animals can survive – fish, tadpoles, insect larvae and other bugs. They also create thickets where these animals can hide – a heron will quite happily empty a pond of all fish if they have no hidey holes to escape to.



*Photo Credit: PhotosbyYuva, Getty Images*

So that's the theory – let's see how it works in practice. It'll be interesting to watch the plants establish and see how they help the ponds and wildlife thrive!

# Tree Protection

By Richard Lord



*Photo Credit: George Clerk, Getty Images*

We've all seen fields of newly planted trees stuffed inside ugly plastic protection tubes, but how many of us have ever bought several thousand of them. When you look into it, there are dozens of different types, sizes, materials, and huge price differences. When it comes to tree planting in the Autumn we're going to need around 7-8,000 tree guards, but which will be the best to choose? Does it matter? The clear answer here is yes as we are using the ethos of permaculture in our designs and works. A tenant of which is produce no waste.

Are there plastic alternatives? Yes, but their ability to protect from predation, their longevity and environmental impact are questionable. There are many companies striving to make ones that work and many trials are ongoing. We are keeping a watch on the trial outcomes. We may approach manufacturers and woodland organisations such as the Woodland Trust, White Rose Forest, National Trust & others to ask to be involved in these trials.

Size, ventilation and securing in place matter too. Hedging guards tend to be 60cm high, great for some of our smaller saplings, but once they exceed that height deer can eat them. Tree guards are twice the height, 1.2m, and need ventilation holes so saplings don't get mould and diseased. Spiral type guards may not need staking, but tube and taller tree guards definitely do. Then there's securing the guards and stakes: it's usually done with cable ties which aren't recyclable, but an alternative of thin wire ties have a much greater manufacturing carbon footprint.

Choosing what to use isn't straightforward either! Here's a list of some of alternatives on trial and initial findings:

- A) Egg box cardboard style tubes or spirals - don't last long enough
- B) Cardboard tubes - better than A, but some need assembling as come flat packed, still not long lasting & can get eaten
- C) Wool & Nut resin - a promising plastic free alternative, compact to transport as they will stack, plus made to zip apart as the tree grows
- D) Biodegradable Plastic Spirals - light, cheap, don't need stakes, lifetime still unproven. Need to fracture & break apart onto the ground before they will compost unsightly and will blow around.
- E) Recyclable plastic tubes - protect trees very well, but in short supply and labour intensive as need to be collected & cleaned before recycling.

# Your Nature Finds

The summer months are finally here again and with it some nice warmth! Everything is blooming and the trees are green again. The longer days make it an excellent time to get out with your camera! It's always exciting to see what you can discover and there is so much to see no matter what you're into.

In this issue, we feature some colourful flowers (Artemis Swann & Richard Lord), a tadpole (Ed Lee) and some very special night time visitors caught on camera by Chairman Ben Skinner!!.



We would love it if you sent us your captures of what you've found and we'll do our best to feature them!

Email your photographs to: [thelonglander@yahoo.com](mailto:thelonglander@yahoo.com)

or

Tag us in your pictures on Twitter [@LongLandsCommon](https://twitter.com/LongLandsCommon), on our Instagram [@longlandscommon](https://www.instagram.com/longlandscommon) or over on our [Facebook page](#)