

Bumblebee Notes for November 2018

Despite the lowering of temperatures and the decreasing length of daylight, there are still some of this year's new queen bumblebees foraging for essential food in the gardens of Cookham. They can be seen regularly on shrubs such as Mahonia, *Abelia grandiflora*, Lavender and Winter heathers although Caryopteris has finished flowering. Wild flowers are still blooming in sheltered corners and these include Cornflower, White dead nettle, Vipers bugloss, Borage, Tree Mallow and Scabious. The frost has put paid to Nasturtium and Dahlia. The good news is that *Viburnum bodnantense*, *Daphne odora* and Helebores are starting to bloom. Many of these are evergreen shrubs that add interest and value to any garden, particularly those of serious wildlife supporters.

Next month there may well be bumblebees looking for food on sunny days and we will be looking forward to Crocus, Pussy willow and early daffodils but you might try bee-spotting at one of the local garden centres if you are wondering what to add to your garden or widow box.

Once you have accepted the role of a bumblebee supporter then you can justify giving Garden Centre vouchers to potential wildlife gardeners as Christmas presents. If you wish to give something that would be refreshingly different and worthwhile then it might be worth considering some of the excellent books that are available as part of the mission to save bumblebees. Membership of organisations such as Friends of the Earth, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, and the Royal Horticultural Society could begin a new hobby for someone who wishes to help endangered pollinators. There are usually membership packs suitable for individuals, for children, for families, and for schools. Arranging a present like this should leave you feeling mighty virtuous too!



If you have been caught by the bumblebee bug and would like to learn more then you will find these publications useful.

"A guide to bees of Britain" FSC Publications, Unit C1, Stafford Park, Telford, TF3 3BB.

"RSPB Spotlight on Bumblebees" by Richard Comont, from Bloomsbury Natural History, London.

"Bumblebees An introduction" by Nikki Gammans, from The Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

For a huge amount of well-illustrated and free information, and suggested ways of becoming more involved, visit The Bumblebee Conservation Trust at www.bumblebeeconservation.org.

Dr Bumbledore