



Sutton Poyntz
Biodiversity News
July 2024

This month Garden Bird Watch 21st – 27th July 2024

As I get older, I walk slower and look more carefully at things. Recently, it also was time once again to clear the patio of weeds, which included two small buddleia bushes. I then started to look around, and I perceived that adjacent gardens had a lot more, but bigger buddleia. I started looking for the butterflies as an alternate name is the butterfly bush. There are actually quite a lot of buddleia in Sutton Poyntz and Preston but in 2024, but no butterflies. Walk from Sutton Road to Seven Acres on Preston Road to see the invasion. My best observation over the years was 12 species of butterfly in 15 minutes at my son's house in Rotherham in 2012. Here five or six species why?



So, in a morning, as I walked around Sutton Poyntz and Preston, I looked carefully. There were a small number of bees including this grey tailed bumble-bee but little else.

A few bushes are infected with black-fly aphids distorting the leaves but as far as I can see not forming a plant gall. It is a large deciduous or semi-evergreen shrub, now very commonly encountered on waste ground, by railways and canals, in abandoned quarries, on roadsides and

in a wide variety of micro-habitats in urban areas including pavements, walls and derelict buildings. It prefers dry, disturbed ground where large populations can develop from its wind-dispersed seed. It can form dense thickets reducing ground flora and invertebrate diversity locally, especially in chalk grassland

B. davidii was introduced into cultivation in 1896, and quickly became very popular in gardens. It was known to be naturalized in the wild by 1922 (Harlech, Merionethshire). Its range increased greatly on bomb-damaged sites in urban areas after 1945 and it was well-established in southern England by the 1960s. Its distribution continues to increase, with many more records in the 21st century from northern Britain and Ireland. (BSBI Atlas 2020 on line)

A useful project is about to start Nationally – **the Big Butterfly Count**. So, look carefully for 15 minutes or so and count the number of butterflies at your local buddleia.

- **“The Big Butterfly Count” from 12th July to 4th August 2024.** To do this, one picks a likely spot say a buddleia bush and count the number of butterflies visiting the bush for 15

minutes. One can write the answers on paper and then submit the totals using your home computer or alternately there is an app available for both Android and iOS phones. This way is quite useful as the app geo-locates your position, whereas doing it on your home computer requires the observer to take a grid reference. The second way is again to use the app on your mobile phone or iPad. Download from your app store free.

- The National Charity Butterfly Conservation principally co-ordinates monitoring of butterflies. They are good reliable indicators of response to climate change and provide a sensitive response to changes of habitat and are one of the National Quality of Life Indicators used by the Office of National Statistics.



Comma butterfly



Small copper butterfly

Walking round I have found some interesting species. Roses are quite difficult but this is an example of *Rosa stylosa* or short-styled field rose – easily booked as a common field rose.



Key features include reflexed sepals



and importantly glandular hairs on the pedicel (small globules)

I was asked to visit a garden on Puddledock Lane as the hedgerows have a number of dead trees. Tall but only around 20 years old. They have succumbed to Dutch elm disease. This is a complex disease with interactions with a beetle *Ophiostoma ulmi* and a fungus. It has killed off thousands of venerable trees across England since the late 1970s especially on the Magnesian limestone in Yorkshire. There was at least one good sized tree here originally and regrowth produced two trunks both dead with bark falling off and many beetle holes. I am afraid a job for tree surgeons.





Whilst in this garden I noticed an alder, which are only found along the River Jordan south of Puddledock Lane in the village. Here with a plant gall *Eriophyes laevis* ssp. *inangulis*



Also, on a leaf a very small parent shield bug *Elasmucha grisea* which lays its eggs only on alder and birch. Note the bug covering the eggs. Record accepted on iRecord.

Finally, two very different things:



This is a rare plant gall where in this instance an aphid has had a relationship with an English elm causing the elm to produce this unusual growth. It was easily identified using the Aidgap *British plant galls* (2023) Redfern and Shirley. ***Colopha compressa***. I had never seen it before so straight to the online NBN Atlas. There are just 23 records of which 21 had been extracted from Museum collections and just two field records where it had been seen in the field. This one was near the pond.

The second unusual species is this sawfly larva, which have appeared annually on dog rose in my garden for the past few years. Initially, these larvae eat their way down the stem munching leaves. Interesting insects, in Rotherham one species ate all my Solomon's Seal. The plant flowered happily the following year as does the rose here. There are 223 verified records on the NBN Atlas of rose sawfly ***Arge ochrupus***. The large rose sawfly larva ***Arge paganais*** has a more yellow colour with both the adults illustrated on page 467 of Wild Guides *Britain's Insects*.

