



Small Tortoiseshell



Meadow Brown



Ringlet



Green Shield Bug

Help our local Wildlife – Allow some *Wildness*!!!

This may look like a bit of abandoned land that should be tidied up, but actually it is an incredibly important area for wildlife thanks to London Midland working in partnership with local volunteers from South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth.

Long grasses such as these provide a habitat for beetles, crickets, spiders, grasshoppers. They provide food to caterpillars of Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Ringlet Butterflies. The adult butterflies, Meadow Brown and Ringlet feed on these grasses.

Thrushes and Blackbirds depend on a wide range of insects that need these long grasses to breed and survive. Thrushes have declined by 50% since the 1970's. This grass is also mixed with nettles on which butterflies such as Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma lay their eggs.

TV Gardener Monty Don has sections of long grass in his own garden to promote wildlife. He says in an article in the Daily Mail 22 July 2011 "Grass, and the length of it, is the key to a healthy and varied insect population...Without a healthy insect population the whole food chain of birds, mammals and flowers starts to fall apart. Not only do we want more insects – we need them".

Also among the grasses there is an original range of wildflowers providing nectar including Common Vetch, Hairy Tare, Hop Trefoil, Birds Foot Trefoil, Cranesbill, Speedwell, Wood Avens, Goatsbeard, Tormentil and Toadflax.

South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth who have a minimal budget are using a simple management plan to support and increase the existing species through cutting the grass in some small areas in the late summer to stop the existing wildflowers being choked and have also planted native wildflowers including Wild Primroses, Wild Campion, Moon Daises, Stitchwort, Forget-me-nots, and also Honeysuckle, Buddleia and Buckthorn which is particularly important for the Brimstone Butterfly.

For more info go to www.southbedsfoe.co.uk



Cranesbill



Common Vetch



Toadflax



Primrose



Buddleia