SPRING WALK

1 Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna)*
Yellow Flowers with 8 - 12 petals and heart-shaped leaves. One of the first flowers of the year. Wordsworth's favourite flower. Will grow in shade.

2 Cow Parsley *(Anthriscus sylvestris)*
White umbel with fern-like leaves already present in winter. Attractive to many insects including Orange-tip butterflies. Likes woodland edges.

3 Greater Stitchwort *(Rabelera holostea)*
White star-shaped flowers 2 cm across with five deeply notched petals and narrow leaves. Likes hedge banks and open woodland.

4 Cuckoo Flower *(Cardamine pratensis)*
White or lilac flowers with four petals. Food plant for Green-veined White butterflies. Also called **Lady's Smock**. Likes damp, grassy places.

5 Germander Speedwell *(Veronica chamaedrys)*
Tiny, bright blue flowers with a white eye and four joined petals. There are six species of speedwell in the park. Likes grassy woodland edges.

6 Primrose *(Primula vulgaris)*
Pale yellow flowers with five petals. They are slow to disperse, needing the help of ants and rodents. Likes scrub and woodland.

7 Wild Daffodil *(Narcissus pseudonarcissus)*
Yellow trumpets, smaller than most garden forms. Once common but now rarely found, Wild Daffodils have been planted in woodland areas in the park.

8 Pignut *(Conopodium majus)*
Small white umbels with thread-like leaf lobes. The tiny tubers were once eaten but best avoided in case of misidentification. Found in grassland.

9 Bulbous Buttercup *(Ranunculus bulbosus)*
Five yellow petals above with downturned sepals. The shiny petals attract pollinators. Likes grassland on drier soils.

10 Bluebell *(Hyacinthoides non-scripta)*
Deep-blue narrow tube-like flowers drooping on one side of the stalk. Slow growing with a seed taking five years to develop flowers. Likes woodland.

Discover Wildflowers and Grasses in Highbury Park

Hogweed Flower head

Portrait of a Summer Meadow

(From Left to Right; Fox and Cubs, Betony, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Yellow Rattle, Sweet Vernal Grass, Springy Turf-moss, Perennial Rye Grass and False Oat Grass)

SUMMER WALK

1 Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica)*
Dark purple flowers with heart-shaped leaves that smell pungent when rubbed. Was once used to heal wounds. Likes shady places.

2 Herb Robert *(Geranium robertianum)*
Pink flowers and fern-like smelly leaves that are often tinged reddish. Was once used as an antiseptic. Likes woodland edges.

3 Cocksfoot *(Dactylis glomerata)*
A tall grass with spikelets in clusters like a chicken's foot and bluish-green leaves. Likes fertile grassland.

4 Lesser Stitchwort *(Stellaria graminea)*
Small starry white flowers, 5-12 mm across. Likes damp, grassy places and is common in uncut grassland.

5 Yellow Rattle *(Rhinanthus minor)*
Yellow, two-lipped flowers with rattling seeds. It is partly parasitic on grasses. This reduces the vigour of grasses in meadows, allowing a greater diversity of plants.

6 Devil's-bit Scabious *(Succisa pratensis)*
Dark blue-purple flowers in rounded heads and long oval leaves. Important nectar source for bees and butterflies. Meadow flowers.

7 Ox-eye Daisy *(Leucanthemum vulgare)*
White flowers with a yellow centre 25 - 50 mm wide. Attractive to a wide range of insects. Likes grassland and disturbed ground.

8 Common Hogweed *(Heracleum sphondylium)*
White umbels up to 200 mm wide. Grows up to 2 m tall. A good flower to observe foraging hoverflies & beetles. Likes grassland and open woodland.

9 Yellow Flag *(Iris pseudacorus)*
Yellow fleur-de-lys flowers and long spear-like leaves. A marsh plant, it can be invasive in garden ponds. A yellow dye can be made from the flowers.

10 Himalayan Balsam *(Impatiens glandulifera)*
Large pink/purple helmet-shaped flowers intoduced as a garden ornamental but now an invasive annual. Exploding seed capsules! Likes damp areas.

Discover

Wildflowers and Grasses in Highbury Park

Highbury Park on the border of Kings Heath and Moseley is one of Birmingham's largest parks. The Park comprises ancient farmland and parts of three historic estates. It is listed as a Grade II Park and Garden by English Heritage.

The whole park is designated as important for nature conservation and supports a wide range of habitats including ancient hedgerow, woodland, orchard, pools and the *Shuttuck Stream*, a tributary of the *River Rea*.

Highbury Park is home to a variety of flowers and grasses. More than 100 species have been found, many of which are uncommon in the wider area.

Discover some of the Park's flowers in these Spring and Summer walks. The map overleaf gives helpful locations.

Highbury Park Friends and Birmingham City Council Ranger Service run regular nature walks in the park. More information about the plants in the park and events can be found on the Highbury Park Friends website.

To find out more about Highbury

Highbury Park Friends
www.highburyparkfriends.org.uk
Twitter: @HighburyPark Facebook: Highbury Park Friends
Instagram: @highburyparkfriendsbham

Chamberlain Highbury Trust
www.chamberlainhighburytrust.co.uk
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HIGHBURY PARK Friends

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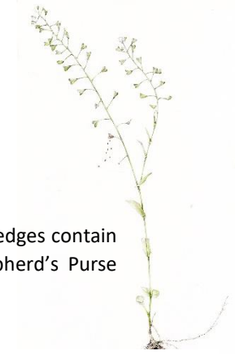
Where do Wildflowers Grow?

Highbury Park has many different habitats each with their own selection of plants.

In **Woodland** ground dwelling plants e.g Bluebell and Wood Anemone flower early in the year before the trees shade the ground. We also have the Spanish Bluebell with broader leaves and flowers all around the stem rather than on one side as in the Native Bluebell.



In **Mown Grass** flowers such as Daisy, White Clover and Selfheal can flower on short stalks. Plants like Yellow Flag, Greater Reedmace and Rushes prefer **Waterlogged Soil.**

Disturbed Ground such as path edges contain tough specialists including Shepherd's Purse and Pineapple Weed.

What is a Meadow?

Some of the most flower-rich grassland in Europe is managed for hay by cutting once or twice a year. In the last 10 years several meadows have been created in Highbury Park and each year different flowers appear. The flowers and grasses support many insects.

Shutlock Upper Meadow

In 2008 a once-a-year cutting regime was introduced and some wildflowers were spot planted. To further increase the diversity of the meadow, seeds from an ancient meadow (Illey Pastures SSSI) were introduced in 2019. The meadow now supports an attractive diversity of plants including Red Bartsia, Smooth Tare and Meadow Vetchling.

Hopyard Meadow

The grass in the playing field has been allowed to grow in recent years. In 2016 a band around the perimeter was strewn with wildflower seed introducing flowers such as Common Knapweed, Crested Dog's-tail and Yellow Rattle.

Shutlock Lower Meadow

After initially applying herbicide to the meadow in 2016, seeds from ancient meadows (*Eades Meadow SSSI* and *Illey Pastures SSSI*) were strewn. Buttercups and Common Spotted Orchid early in the year are replaced by a purple mist of Yorkshire Fog with Black Knapweed and Ox-eye Daisy in the summer.

Flowers are for insects. Although we delight in the beauty of flowers, they are designed purely to attract pollinators. The meadow on a sunny day is a good place to observe the hoverflies, bees, beetles and butterflies feeding on the nectar and pollinating the flowers. More than 180 insect species were spotted in Highbury Park in 2020, including those insects that prey on the pollinators. Examples include the Mother Shipton Moth (*Callistege mi),* one of the few day-flying moths and the Yellow legged Bee-grabber (*Conops flavipes),* a fly that mimics a wasp. The larvae feed on bumblebees.

Is a Grass a Flower?

Grasses also have male and female structures that are flowers and need to be pollinated, but they rely on the wind rather than insects. So they have no need of showy petals or nectar.

Do Trees have Flowers?

All trees have flowers – some are pollinated by insects for example Pussy Willow is one of the earliest trees to flower and a vital source of nectar for insects emerging from hibernation.

The abundance of Lime trees, Sycamores and Sweet Chestnuts sustain bees through the summer months. Ash and Hazel are examples of wind-pollinated trees and release large amounts of pollen into the wind.

Seeds

Look out for the many different shapes of seedheads. Some have burrs and are dispersed by passing furry animals, others are carried off by ants or eaten by birds. The round seedheads of Black Knapweed *(Centaurea nigra* rayed form*)* provide food for Goldfinches and also support caterpillars of the *Metzneria* moth. Hopyard Meadow is the best place to spot these seedheads in the winter months.

Discover

Wildflowers and Grasses in Highbury Park

Walking and exploring