

Biodiversity News from ChalCAN - July 2023

Our calendar of events has continued in June and July.

We held a **Regenerative Growing Workshop** on an innovative plot. Healthy and nurtured soil is at the heart of this organic, sustainable approach to growing. This is important because there are only so many harvests left in our depleted soils unless we continue to use ever increasing amounts of fertiliser and pesticides. Attendees and workshop leaders shared information and experience, successes, and failures.



The leading topic was No Dig. This approach is all about not breaking up the beneficial organisms and structure of the soil - so no digging. Deep layers of organic material, such as compost, are laid on top of the soil (mulching) and plants grow in the top layer. After harvesting more organic material is piled on and the cycle starts again. It also suppresses the weeds and it doesn't do your back in! We pulled a root of potatoes - grown this way you don't need to dig them up - and planted leeks in a deep layer of compost with cardboard underneath.



Thank you to Sam Usborne and Jim Bock for leading an enjoyable and hands on workshop. We agreed to meet up in the autumn for leek and potato soup!

Talking of compost, we also held a **Compost-Making for Beginners Workshop**. It reminded us how important organic material is for a biodiverse garden and healthy fruit and veg. Thank you to Neil Hall who proved that compost-making is both a science and an art.



Our third event was a **Moth Breakfast**. A what? Moths for breakfast? Well, yes, there were moths, and there was breakfast! We enjoyed a huge array of stunning moths trapped overnight by our moth expert, Bob Smith. He opened the trap, named and released each moth, (80 different species, 300 moths in total!) and told us all about the different species.



The children present loved to hold them on their finger and examine them up close.



Some of the moths are beautifully coloured and some are simply huge! And they're all there in our gardens whilst we sleep... Thank you to Bob and Sue Smith for the moths and to Hilary Burgess for the garden and the breakfast.



Good news about our **Swift Project** - these fascinating birds have already visited some of the nest boxes we've helped local residents to put up on their houses. Fingers crossed for next year! If you're interested in any of these topics and missed these events do contact us and we're sure we could run them again.

Projects for the end of summer/autumn are scything and raking some of our green spaces, sowing wildflowers and planting a hedge and some trees. Do get in touch (info@chalcen.org.uk) if you'd like to join us - it's good exercise, good company, and good fun!