



Late Summer
What's new in the garden this month?

Succisa pratensis - Devilsbit scabious



Devilsbit scabious is easily recognized by its distinctive, round flower heads composed of numerous tubular florets. These purplish-pink blossoms are adorned with long stamens that gracefully extend from each floret. This striking wildflower thrives in green spaces with low soil fertility, such as grasslands, heathlands, and meadows. At Whatley, devilsbit scabious naturally flourishes along the upper banks of our meadow and is also celebrated through an artistic depiction in our car park.

Artist and activist, Matt Willey has brought his global mission, "The Good of the Hive," to Whatley Manor. Through this initiative, Matt is dedicated to hand-painting 50,000 honeybees as part of his effort to raise awareness about global environmental challenges. Devilsbit scabious is featured alongside the bees on our car park wall, not only showcasing its beauty but also emphasizing its crucial ecological role. Find out more about ["The Good of the Hive"](#)

Blooming from July to October, devilsbit scabious is a valuable food source for our butterflies and bees, and most importantly, it serves as the larval food plant for the marsh fritillary butterfly. Due to the declining numbers of this species across the UK and Europe, it is listed as Vulnerable and is fully protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. In response, our garden team at Whatley has sown hundreds of additional devilsbit scabious seeds, which will be planted out in the meadow later this year. This enhancement, combined with our existing population of plants in our meadow, will ensure a plentiful food source for the larvae of the marsh fritillary butterfly, helping our ecosystem thrive.

Marbled White Butterfly



The marbled white butterfly is unmistakable, with its distinctive black and white markings that differentiate it from all other species in the British Isles. Male and female butterflies are alike in appearance, though females are slightly larger and have a subtle yellowish tint on the underside of their wings. This striking butterfly is typically found in the countryside and is rarely spotted in domestic gardens. It is considered one of the UK's most beautiful butterflies and has become increasingly abundant and widespread across Britain, largely due to a warming climate. The species has successfully adapted to these changing conditions, expanding its range northward into areas it previously would not have inhabited.

With a slow and relaxed flight pattern, the marbled white is easy to observe as it glides gracefully through grasslands. Early morning is an ideal time to spot these butterflies as they bask with their wings open, absorbing the sun's warmth. Their striking black-and-white wings stand out even from a distance, often appearing as the only white object among the greenery. During wet periods or at night, they rest with folded wings on grass stems or flower heads, making them easy to find. Marbled whites often feed communally and show a preference for purple nectar plants like knapweeds, thistles, scabious, and marjoram, where their contrasting markings make them more visible.

In the mornings, they can be seen in our meadow and along the grand lawn borders. However, as temperatures rise in the middle of the day, they become more active, flying along our back track and grass borders.