**BUMBLE BEES IN OUR GARDENS**

We are lucky to have 7 of the “Big 8” Bumble Bees resident and thriving in our gardens feeding on nectar and pollen from the flowering plants and at the same time pollinating the plants to ensure that they too thrive and propagate. If you look closely, you may also spot the all-black Cuckoo Bumble.

The numbers of bumbles appear to be growing, particularly in the Bank garden where ground cover woodland and bulb planting in recent years is becoming well established. The bees and other pollinators have been particularly enjoying the Primroses (Primula vulgaris) on the bank at the beginning of the Lime Walk which is at its best in April – the bank is now covered in hundreds of Primroses which have all self-propagated from just 5 plants placed there by John Hughes, our Head Gardener, almost 20 years ago – a nature and biodiversity success story.

Since early Spring we have had a succession of flowering plants, including Snowdrops, Daffodils, Scottish Bluebells, Helleborus, Lamium, Pulmonaria, Honesty and Berberis darwinii to name but a few with Alliums, Meconopsis, Nepeta and Ceanothus and others to follow shortly, and a good selection of new flowers throughout most of the season on which the pollinators thrive, although the pollinators have to negotiate the “June gap” where the spring flowering plants and trees shed their bloom and the main flow of Summer flowering blooms has yet to begin.



