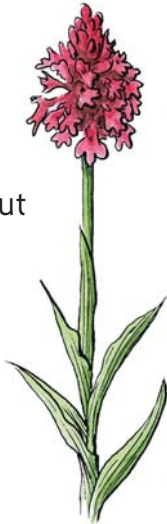


Wye Downs spotter guide

Pyramidal orchid

Look out for a flower spike, shaped rather like a pyramid, as you walk around Wye in the summer. This is the pyramidal orchid and is widespread on chalk grassland like here at Wye Downs. It grows to about 30 cm with pink to purple flowers. You can often see butterflies and moths feeding on the flowers. Twenty-one species of orchid have been recorded on the reserve.



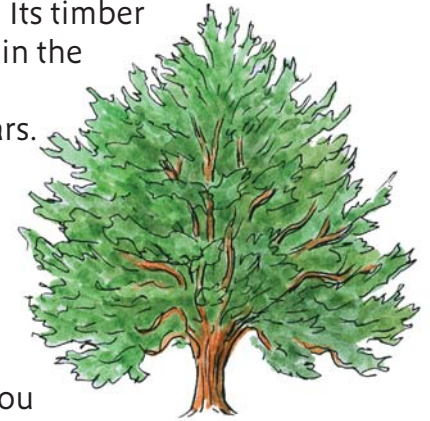
Sheep terracettes

Look at the ridges on the hillside of the Devil's Kneading Trough. These are known as terracettes, formed when the soil expands and then contracts causing the soil to creep slowly downhill. The ridges are made bigger by sheep trampling on them to form defined paths.



Yew

This is a very ancient tree. Some yews may be thousands of years old. Look for their gnarled and twisted shape. Its timber is very flexible and in the past was used for longbows and spears. There are lots of myths about yew trees and it is an interesting tree to read about. If you are visiting the reserve in winter, you will notice the tree maintains its green colour.



Wood anemone

The wood anemone is one of our first spring flowers. It flowers from March to May, taking advantage of the sun before the trees' leaves grow and block out the light. Wood Anemone has also another name, which is 'Windflower'. Anemos, the 'Wind' in Greek mythology, sends the Anemones to say he is on his way.



Skylark



Look high in the sky for this tuneful bird. It is bigger than a sparrow but you may notice it has a white tail. It loves the grassland here at Wye.

The skylark has been referred to in many poems and songs. Shakespeare wrote about this bird in 'Romeo and Juliet'.

Wye Downs spotter guide

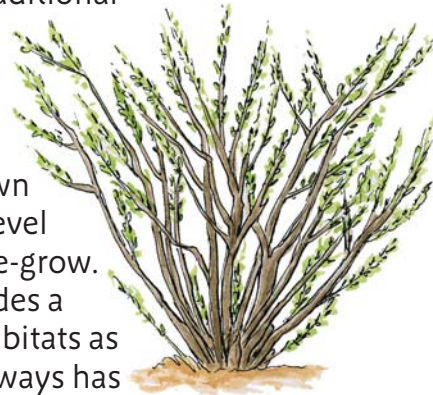
Wild marjoram

A relative of the cultivated variety, wild marjoram often grows in abundance on these chalky slopes at Wye. Its aromatic and sweet-scented flowers provide a nectar source for many of our butterflies. In former times the flowers were used to produce a dye and a herb tea infusion. If you purchase the cultivated variety and plant it at home, you will encourage bees and have a tasty herb for cooking.



Hazel (coppicing)

Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management. Tree stems are regularly cut down to near ground level and allowed to re-grow. Coppicing provides a rich variety of habitats as the woodland always has a varied age structure, which is beneficial for wildlife. The cut wood is used for firewood and to make charcoal which is sold locally.



Chalkhill blue butterfly

As its name suggests, the chalkhill blue is found on chalk downland like here at Wye. It is a warmth loving butterfly, found on south-facing slopes. As illustrated, the male is a lovely blue whilst the female is a chocolate brown.



Burnet moth

This vibrant coloured moth signals danger. It is poisonous and has bright red wing spots. Hungry birds would not attempt to eat this moth because of its bright colours. The moth is active during the day and may be mistaken for a butterfly.



Yellowhammer

Look closely in the bushes and hedgerows at Wye. These birds make their home here. Male yellowhammers have a bright yellow head. Listen carefully for the tuneful song 'a little bit of bread and no cheese'. It is easy to hear.

