

Five Flowers for Fownhope

September-October

The greatest variety and number of wild plants in Fownhope grow in the woodland and grassland on the Silurian limestone ridges. Many wild plants also grow along the river bank, roadside verges, hedgerows and in old orchards.



Ivy – woodland, hedgerows, walls and buildings. An evergreen woody climber that can both carpet the woodland floor yet also climb up the tallest trees. Nutrition is entirely from the ground. It climbs using small aerial ‘roots’. The abundant green flowers with yellow stamens provide the last nectar of the year and the buzz of insects on ivy is one of the last sounds of summer.



Perennial Sow-Thistle – roadside verges, field boundaries, hedgerows. In late summer and early autumn, these often quite large richly yellow dandelion-like flowers bloom on patches of stems that can be up to one metre in height. The spiny-edged leaves ‘clasp’ the stems. One of the last golden flowers of the year.



Dryad's Saddle – on trees in woodland, grassland, orchards and gardens. A large and striking bracket fungi. The fan-shaped cap can be up to fifty centimetres in width. The top is whitish yellow with distinctive darker concentric scales. The pores beneath are creamy white. It often develops at the base of trees, particularly maple and ash, in three or four layered fans.



Snowberry – woodland, hedgerows, streams and riverside. Introduced into Britain from North America in 1817 and is now naturalised. The strikingly white berries, often in clusters of up to twelve, are crowned with small black dots, which are what remains of the flower. Widely planted by gamekeepers for pheasants. The berries often persist throughout the winter.



Parasol Mushroom – woodland, orchards and grassland. Often grows in small groups. Individuals open up like parasols as they mature with grey-brown scales on the cap, topped with a small brownish dome, the shape of which is wonderfully described technically as umbonate. The stem has a ring that can often be moved up and down. A delight to suddenly find in the early autumn.