



BRIDE Project
Farming with Nature

BRIDE Project

Newsletter June 2019

PROJECT UPDATE

Hard to believe that the spring has come and gone and summer is upon us. Children are getting school holidays this week and teenagers will be doing summer jobs or working at home, helping on the farm. This week also sees the first of our farmers deciding on the biodiversity improvement options for their farms. Several have been into our office to discuss these and they will now have to decide on what measures to implement and what funding to obtain from the BRIDE Project. Successful applicants will then be notified and works can be carried out over the next 6 months

MONTHLY REMINDER

June and July will see vegetation at its most dense. It's the time of year when electric fence wires come into contact with high vegetation. The temptation might be to go out with a knapsack sprayer, front-loader mounted sprayer or boom sprayer – try to change to mechanical control of vegetation and reduce chemical inputs on the farm. Having cut-out switches strategically placed around the farm will ensure that all the electric fence power is channelled towards the field where the stock are at that moment.



Cut-out Switch

The BRIDE Project recommends a 2m field margin so that flailing this vegetation during the winter months will help to alleviate this problem and will also allow the use of a mower to top under the electric fence and so reduce the need for sprays.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Nettle Patch

Good to hear the nettle patch is working on some farms. **Topping** these now (once caterpillars have moved) will allow for a second hatch of some butterfly species on the new regrowth in August.



Topping your Nettle Patch

SUSTAINABLE FARMING TIP

Feed ingredients

When sourcing animal feed try to insist on there being Irish cereals in the mix from your feed merchant. As farmers strive to farm more sustainably there is a need to look at where and how some ingredients are sourced. Palm oil, soya beans and other ingredients may be causing habitat destruction in other countries leading to further biodiversity loss. Both tillage and grassland farmers are dependent on one another and supporting the tillage sector will reap mutual benefits.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR...

Elder is the dominant hedgerow plant species this month. At this stage you might have noticed the

Willow were in bloom to provide early food sources for our pollinators and other insects. This was followed by the Whitethorn in April/May, Elder in June and from now until July the Blackberry will be our most important hedgerow species. This diversity of shrub species that might also include Dog Rose, Furze, Wild Cherry and the tree species provide food and shelter for our wildlife throughout the growing season.



Elder in a Hedgerow



Painted Lady



No, this is not something you'd see on a Saturday night in Fermoy but a migratory butterfly which can be seen at the moment. It arrives in Ireland from North Africa in May and June and can be seen in large numbers some years. The food plants for the caterpillar (pictured) is the nettle and thistle – sorry!

WHATS IN BLOOM. . .



Foxglove



Dog Rose



Honeysuckle
(Woodbine)

importance of the different shrub species in farm hedgerows. In Feb/March the Blackthorn and

Foxglove - this beautiful flower is out at the moment and is very beneficial to bumblebees as a food source. It is a poisonous plant but nevertheless a very important one as it is the source of a drug that is used to treat heart conditions.

Honeysuckle - this can be seen in hedgerows now. Take time to smell the blossom – especially in the evening when the scent is stronger to attract moths.

WATERGRASSHILL SCHOOL VISIT

Last week one of our Project farmers, John Murphy, hosted Watergrasshill National School (second class) on his farm. The children took part in a very enjoyable and educational nature walk on the farm, learning all about the trees, wildflowers and birds on the farm.

The highlight was getting up close to a Greater White-toothed Shrew.

Thanks to John and the Murphy family for hosting the walk and to the teachers and pupils from Watergrasshill N.S.



MOOREPARK OPEN DAY 2019

For those of you interested in all things dairying, The BRIDE Project will be represented at the Sustainable Milk Production Village at the Moorepark '19 Open Day, Irish Dairying – Growing Sustainably, next Wednesday at Moorepark in Fermoy. Entry is free and car parking is available on site. The day runs from 8.30-5.00pm. Call in and say hello!

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