

BATH CITY FARM

September Nature Trail

Wildlife observations & text by Mike Williams

Follow the nature trail from by the pig pens and into the wood to discover what minibeasts are living on the Farm in September. We've put out four signs for you to find – one by the pigs, two in the field beyond the pigs and one in the woods beyond that. See how many you can find, and learn more about them.

LOCATION 3 : SCRUB (including Hawthorn and brambles)



Speckled Wood (Pararge aegeria) – This butterfly is frequently seen throughout the year around the woodlands and scrub on the farm. The caterpillar feeds on various grasses. It mostly feeds on aphid honeydew, but may occasionally visit flowers and fruits such as blackberries for food. Sometimes you might see two butterflies circling quickly around each other – the males are very territorial and often fight other males that come near.



Seven Spot Ladybird (Coccinella septempunctata) – One of our most common native ladybirds, it is found into the autumn before it hibernates. They are important predators of aphids and other garden pests.



Harlequin Ladybird (Harmonia axyridis) – This is one of the most invasive insects in the world. It has only been in Bath since 2006 but is now one of the most common beetle species. There are 3 main colour forms – the most common is red with 19 spots, but black with 2 or 4 spots are also common. They eat a wide variety of insects.



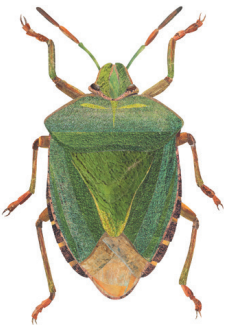
Harvestman (Phalangium opilio) – Harvestmen are close relatives of spiders, but they have no venom and do not make webs. Instead they are hunters, and are often seen crawling over vegetation in search of prey.



Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) – Many honeybees on the farm are from the hive, although there are sometimes wild honeybees as well. Unlike the Ivy Bees they live together in one big nest and have a worker caste that performs the task of collecting nectar and pollen, while the queen usually stays in the hive laying eggs.



Red-legged Shieldbug (*Pentatoma rufipes*) – This bug is commonly found in scrub, woodland, orchards and gardens. It feeds on the leaves of oak, alder, hazel and other woodland trees. It also eats caterpillars and fruit.



Green Shieldbug (*Palomena prasina*) – This bright green bug changes to a greeny brown colour in Autumn and is commonly found in gardens, hedgerows and scrubland. It is commonly known as the stink bug, because when disturbed or scared it lets off a really strong and stinky smell.



Dock Bug (*Coreus marginatus*) – There are numerous species of true bugs on the farm, but one of the most frequently encountered is the brown Dock Bug. The young insect feeds on broad-leaved dock, a common plant on the farm, but the adults are often found on brambles feeding on blackberries.



Common Drone-fly (*Eristalis tenax*) – This is a very variable species and can often be quite dark, with only the markings at the top of the abdomen present. If in doubt, it always has a thick black vertical stripe running down the face. This species is harmless, but mimics the honeybee so that potential predators don't eat them out of fear of getting stung. They breed in ponds and the larvae is the well-known rat-tailed maggot.