

Troopers Hill is purple

Troopers Hill Local Nature Reserve slopes have now turned purple as wide areas of bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) come into flower. Those who look carefully will notice that another kind of heather, ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), with paler more violet flowers, is adding to the range of colour. Both types of heather are much loved by bees.

In 1830, best-selling local author Elizabeth Emra, described Troopers Hill as “the barren and quarried hill, with its yellow spots of gorse and broom, and its purple shade of heath”. Not much has changed in the last 180 years. Broom was blooming in glorious shades of yellow in May and the bushes are now covered in green pods of seeds that will dry to black in July and August and burst with sharp, snapping sounds spraying their seeds around them. Spiny gorse blooms all year round and provides dense cover for nesting birds. The purple, bell-like heather blossoms will flower through June to August, attracting a range of pollinators.



The shrill sound of grasshoppers rubbing their legs against their wings and crickets stridulating with their wings becomes louder as the weather becomes warmer. To find out more about what crickets, grasshoppers and other insect-life are to be found on Troopers Hill why not come to the Bugs and Beasties event on top of Troopers Hill on Saturday 12th August? The event will run from 4pm. Nets and bug pots will be on loan and expert, Rupert Higgins will be there to identify your finds. Bristol Astronomical Society will be making solar observations and sharing information about what is happening on the sun and helping people view our local star and its activity. There will also be a display of the results of the “Ways to Nature” survey that will show whether local people have given their support to Friends of Troopers Hill applying for up to £100,000 to improve access to Troopers Hill and carry out protective measures.



The Bugs and Beasties event will have finished by 6pm and those with the forethought to have brought a picnic and stayed on, might then be lucky enough to see hot air balloons ascend from Ashton Court as part of this year's Balloon Fiesta. As always the Friends are making clear in all their publicity that there is no parking on Troopers Hill and the best way for people to make their way there is on foot, bicycle or bus.

www.troopers-hill.org.uk



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