

Youngwilders Wildflower Meadow Atlas



A non-exhaustive journal of
observations documenting
Duncan Terrace over 8 months.

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2024-2025



Seed stage

In October 2024, Youngwilders and 45 volunteers planted around 30 native wildflower species in the Duncan Terrace site.

This atlas was compiled over my repeated visits in the six months following, tracing the meadows development and noting patterns, surprises, and the subtle (but strong) ways it shifted the character of the space and how life moved through it.



Growth progression - 6 months later

Mapping Ecological Roles

Seasonal Markers

Regulators (keep
balance)

Nectar & Pollen
Sources

Soil Improvers &
Nitrogen Fixers

Seed Dispersers &
Food Web Connectors

Structural & Textural
Contributors

Yellow Rattle
(Rhinanthus
minor)

Cornflower
(Centaurea
cyanus)

Common Poppy
(Papaver
rhoeas)

Yellow Pot
Marigold
(Calendula
officinalis)

Common
Wallflower
Erysimum
cheiri)

Tufted Vetch
(Vicia
cracca)

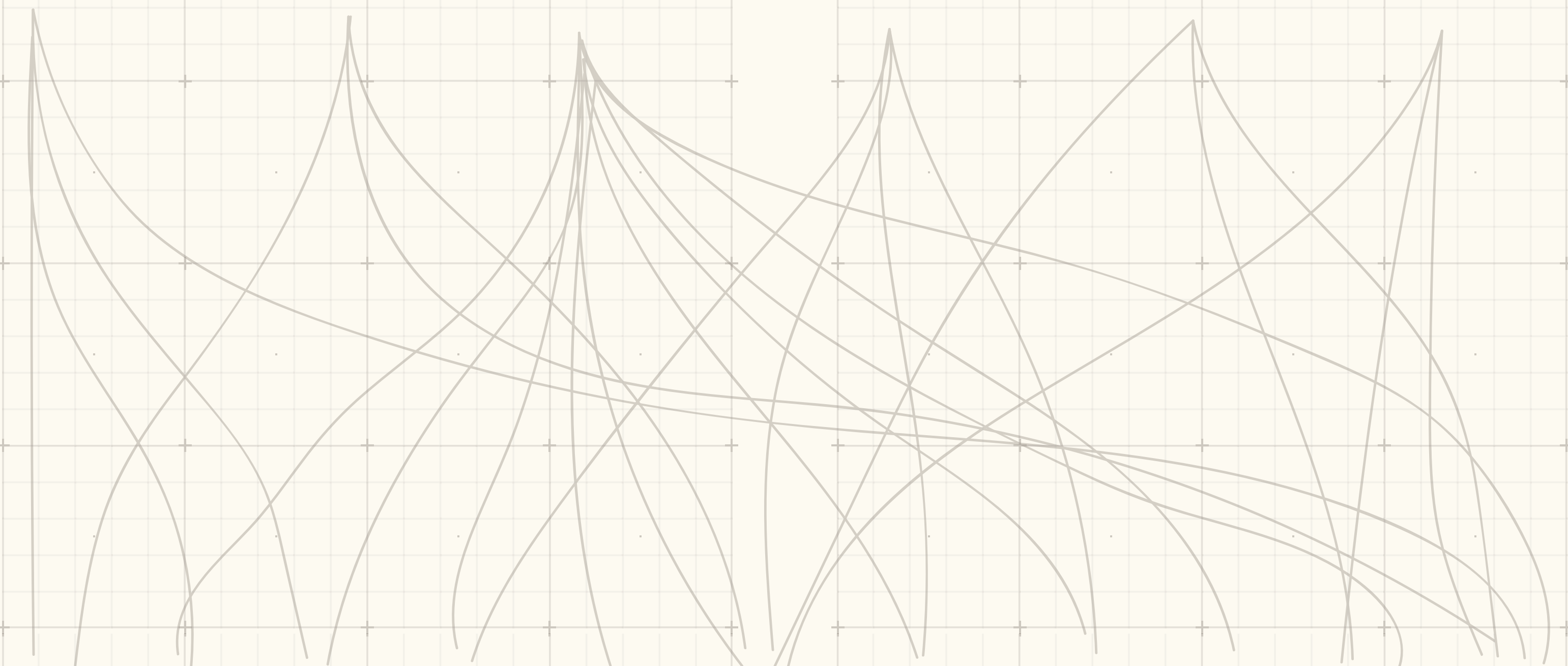
Mayweed
(Tripleur-
ospermum
inodorum)

Corn Marigold
(Glebionis
segetum)

Starflower
(Borago
officinalis)

Common
Knapweed
(Centaurea
nigra)

Wild Carrot
(Daucus
carota)



YELLOW RATTLE

(Rhinanthus minor)

Family
Orobanchaceae (Broomrape family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to Europe and the UK; widespread across unimproved grasslands and wildflower meadows.	Flowering Period:
	May - July
	Seed Set:
	July - August
Keystone annual	

Meadow Role

Keystone: Called the “meadow maker” because its parasitic effect reduces grass dominance, allowing delicate annuals and perennials (Poppies, Cornflowers, & mayweed) to establish.

Biodiversity: Plays a hugely important role in maintaining high species richness.

Management tool: Widely used in meadow restoration projects to restore balance between grasses and wildflowers.

Ecological Interactions

Hemiparasitic: Yellow Rattle attaches to the roots of neighbouring grasses and draws nutrients, suppressing vigorous grasses that would otherwise dominate the meadow.

Pollinators: Flowers are visited by bumblebees and other long-tongued bees.

Seed dispersal: Rattling pods release seeds that fall near the parent plant.

Meadow influence: By weakening grasses, it creates space for a greater diversity of wildflowers.



MAYWEED

(Tripleurospermum inodorum)

Family
Asteraceae (daisy family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to Europe and Asia; widespread across the UK in meadows, field margins, and disturbed ground. Sometimes confused with Chamomile.	Flowering Period: May - October
	Seed Set: Summer to autumn
	Stabiliser

Meadow Role

Pollination: Provides a long, reliable nectar and pollen supply, (especially valuable later in the season when other flowers fade.)

Wildlife Bridge: Supports generalist insects, abundance makes it a consistent forage point.

Resilience: A tough coloniser species, often filling gaps left by shorter-lived or less competitive flowers, stabilising meadow dynamics.



Ecological Interactions

Pollinators:

Visited by hoverflies, solitary bees, honeybees, and small beetles; outer white ray florets are attractive landing pads.

Herbivores:

Leaves browsed by some caterpillars and insects.

Competition:

Can be prolific, sometimes dominating patches and shading out smaller wildflowers.

Soil ecology:

Dense root system helps bind soil, reducing erosion in disturbed ground.



MAYWEED

(*Tripleurospermum inodorum*)



COMMON POPPY

(Papaver rhoeas)

Family
Papaveraceae (poppy family)



Origin	Phenology
Native across Europe, North Africa, and western Asia. Strongly associated with disturbed soils and arable fields in the UK	Flowering Period: Late May - August
	Seed Set: Mid to late summer
	Pioneer Species

Meadow Role

Pollination: Sustains bee colonies. Produces abundant pollen but no nectar making them important for pollen-collecting insects.

Soil Memory: Long-lived seed bank means poppies can reappear decades later when soil is disturbed.

*The Common Poppy takes hold in disturbed soil, offering a burst of pollen for insects and clearing the way for other wildflowers to follow.



COMMON POPPY

(Papaver rhoeas)

Ecological Interactions

* Poppies were historically abundant in cornfields before herbicide use reduced its spread.

Pollinators:

Favoured by bees, produce abundant pollen but no nectar making them important for pollen-collecting insects.

Herbivores:

Young leaves sometimes grazed by rabbits. Plant contains bitter alkaloids deterring heavy herbivory.

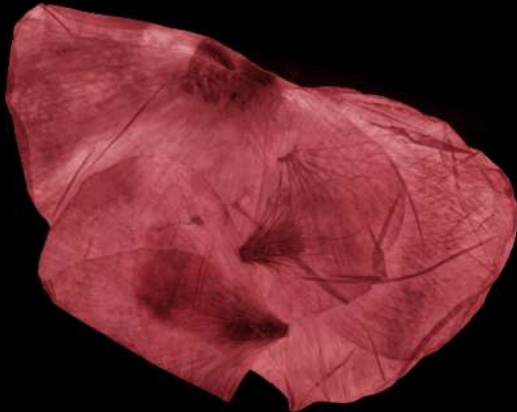




COMMON POPPY

(Papaver rhoeas)

Lifecycle of the poppy







CORNFLOWER

(Centaurea cyanus)

Family
Asteraceae (daisy family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to the Near East and Europe; historically widespread in UK arable fields but now uncommon in the wild due to agricultural intensification.	Flowering Period: June - September
	Seed Set: Late summer, self-seeder
	Specialist Feeder

Meadow Role

Pollination: One of the richest nectar sources among meadow annuals (sugar content of 34%), boosting insect diversity.

Biodiversity: Provides food for both insects and seed-eating birds, linking trophic levels. Goldfinches love the Cornflower seeds.

Conservation value: A symbol of farmland wildflower loss and recovery; its presence often indicates active restoration efforts.



CORNFLOWER

(Centaurea cyanus)



Ecological Interactions

Pollinators:

Highly attractive to bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies, and hoverflies. (Its composite flower head provides abundant nectar and pollen.)

Birds:

Seeds eaten by linnets, goldfinches, and corn buntings.

Companions:

Historically coexisted with corn cockle and field poppy.

Habitat niche:

Prefers disturbed, open ground (once an emblematic arable “weed”).





TUFTED VETCH

(Vicia cracca)

Family
Fabaceae (pea family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to Europe and Asia; widespread across the UK in grasslands, roadsides, woodland edges, and meadows.	Flowering Period: June- August
	Seed Set: Late Summer
	Engineer & supporter

Meadow Role

Soil: Adds nitrogen to the soil, enriching the meadow community and supporting neighbouring non-leguminous plants.

Pollinator: Extended flowering period overlaps with Poppy, Oxeye Daisy, and Wild Carrot. (helps sustain bees through summer)

Structural diversity: Creates a weaving, climbing layer through the meadow that increases habitat complexity.

Biodiversity: Acts as both a nectar source and a host plant,(anchoring multiple insect guilds in the meadow ecosystem).



Ecological Interactions

Pollinators: Flowers are rich in nectar and mainly visited by bumblebees, honeybees, and solitary bees, which are strong enough to trigger the flower’s “keel” mechanism.

Nitrogen fixation: Forms symbiotic relationships with root-nodulating bacteria (*Rhizobium*), improving soil fertility by fixing atmospheric nitrogen.

Food plant: Leaves are eaten by caterpillars of several moths, like the Grass Vetchling Moth. Seeds may be taken by small birds.

Climbing habit: Uses tendrils to scramble through taller plants, benefiting from meadow structure while also providing cover for insects.





BORAGE / STARFLOWER

(Borago officinalis)

Family
Boraginaceae (Borage family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to the Mediterranean, but long naturalised in the UK. Traditionally grown as a medicinal / culinary herb, often included in pollinator seed mixes.	Flowering Period: May - September
	Seed Set: Mid to late summer
	Provider Species

Meadow Role	Ecological Interactions
Nectar Well: Provides one of the most abundant and continuous nectar supplies, sustaining bees through summer.	Pollinators: Very rich nectar source, valued by honeybees and bumblebees. Flowers replenish nectar quickly.
Gap filler: Rapid growth allows it to take advantage of open soil, similar to Poppy, but with the added role of long nectar provision.	Flower form: Star-shaped, bright blue flowers with recurved petals; pollen and nectar accessible to a broad range of insects.
Self-seeding anchor: Ensures continuity year to year without heavy management.	Other wildlife: Leaves are somewhat hairy and not commonly grazed; seeds may be eaten by birds.
Pollinator bridge: Extends forage availability between early and late-flowering species in the meadow.	Companion benefits: Sometimes noted to improve honey flavour when bees forage heavily on it.





WILD CARROT

(Daucus carota subsp. carota)

Family
Apiaceae (carrot family)



Meadow Role

Biodiversity: Increases ecological balance in the meadow by attracting a range of small pollinators and predators.

Structural role: Tall, delicate umbels create vertical contrast.

Succession marker: As a biennial, it often signals a maturing meadow and fills gaps once annuals like Poppies fade.

Seed bank: Prolific seeder, ensuring continuity in mixed meadow plantings.

Origin	Phenology
Native to Europe & western Asia, naturalised widely elsewhere. Wild ancestor of the cultivated carrot. Very common in UK grasslands, road verges, & meadows.	Flowering Period: June- September
	Seed Set: Late Summer - Autumn
	Connector Species

Ecological Interactions

**Wild Carrot is a connector species, drawing in diverse insects and supporting natural pest regulation across the meadow.*

Pollinators:
Umbel flowers attract a wide range of insects—hoverflies, parasitic wasps, beetles, bees, and flies, offering easy access to nectar and pollen.

Specialist relationships:
Supports beneficial predatory insects (hoverfly larvae feed on nearby aphids).

Seed dispersal:
Wind- and animal-dispersed, with bristly seeds that catch on fur.

Herbivores:
Occasionally browsed by rabbits and deer. Also a host for Swallowtail caterpillars (rare in the UK, mainly in the Norfolk Broads).



CLIMBER-HOST INTERACTIONS



The host provides physical scaffolding, while the climber can offer benefits such as nitrogen fixation (in legumes like vetch) that enriches the surrounding soil and benefits the community as a whole.

Climber-host interactions increase the vertical complexity and spatial diversity of the meadow and create microhabitats for insects making the meadow more resilient and productive.

Vetch—likely Common Vetch (Vicia sativa) is the one doing the wrapping. The one being wrapped is Knapweed.





CORN MARIGOLD

(Glebionis segetum)

Family
Asteraceae (Daisy family)



Origin	Phenology
Native to Europe; common in arable fields, historically abundant in cornfields.	Flowering Period:
	June- October
	Seed Set:
	Late summer - early autumn
Sustainer Species	

Meadow Role

Pollinators: Supports pollinator continuity by extending the period of forage availability.

Biodiversity: Helps sustain the presence of “cornfield annuals” in meadow systems (maintaining genetic and ecological diversity that might otherwise be lost).

Ecological Interactions

Pollinators: Very attractive to bees, hoverflies, and other insects, especially in midsummer when nectar resources thin.

Birds: Seed heads may be eaten by finches, linking the floral layer to higher trophic levels.

Companion: Provides a nectar and pollen bridge between spring and later summer flowering species.

Soil: Functions as a shallow-rooted annual that occupies disturbed or open soil patches. (reduces erosion and supporting soil microbial communities.)

COMMON KNAPWEED

(Centaurea nigra)

Family
Asteraceae (Daisy family)



Origin	Phenology	
Native to the UK and Europe	Flowering Period:	June-September
	Seed Set:	August-October
	Sustainer Species	

Meadow Role

Late-season forage: Keeps pollinators fed as other flowers fade.

Supports wildlife: Flowers attract 70+ pollinator species; seeds feed birds; stems shelter overwintering invertebrates.

Persistent structure: Perennial roots stabilise soil and provide year-to-year continuity.

Biodiversity: Promotes richer, more resilient invertebrate communities.

Ecological Interactions

A crucial nectar source for bees, hoverflies, and butterflies such as the Marbled White and Meadow Brown.

Seeds feed finches, especially goldfinches.

Provides late-season continuity of forage when many other species have finished flowering.







YELLOW POT MARIGOLD

(Calendula officinalis)

Family
Asteraceae



Origin	Phenology
Southern Europe, long naturalised in the UK	Flowering Period: May - October
	Seed Set: Summer - autumn
	Illuminator

Meadow Role

Insects: Ac as a reliable food source during times of floral scarcity.

Self-seeding memory: Leaves a trace in the soil seed bank, returning in following years even in disturbed patches.

Ecological Interactions

Pollinators: Favoured by bees, hoverflies, and butterflies for its open, easily accessible nectar and pollen.

Companions: Traditionally grown alongside vegetables (beans, tomatoes) as it deters certain pests and attracts beneficial insects.

Decomposition: Petals and foliage break down readily, adding organic matter back into the soil.





COMMON WALLFLOWER

(Erysimum cheiri)

Family
Brassicaceae



Origin	Native to south-eastern Europe and the Mediterranean; widely naturalised in the UK.	
Phenology		
Flowering Period:		April-June
Seed Set:		Summer
Reviver Species		

Meadow Role	Ecological Interactions
Offers nectar when most meadow flowers are not yet awake in early spring.	Pollinators: Attractive to butterflies, bees, and moths; especially valued by early pollinators in spring when few nectar sources are available.
Provides a strong orange flame against yellows and blues, (supporting diversity of meadow palette).	Habitat niche: Often thrives in poor, dry soils, walls, or rocky edges—hence its name.
Thrives in marginal soils, filling gaps in the sward where other species may not persist.	Companions: Supports Lepidoptera larvae (e.g., cabbage whites) though not usually heavily damaged in meadows.





















