

3.7 PLANTING FOR BIODIVERSITY

The following pages illustrate the proposed planting typologies within Marble Hill Park. These typologies combine to create a planting composition that; pairs nature conservation with the conservation of cultural heritage, reinterprets heritage planting features such as the Flower Garden, Grove, Thicket, Orchard, Wilderness, Avenues and Sweet Walk. It aims to enhance biodiversity, improve wildlife habitats, diversify plant species through specific selection for the character areas within which they are located, and introduce alternative maintenance regimes to promote seasonal variation and new planting mixes for changing environmental conditions such as warmer temperatures and drought conditions.

Sweet Walk

The current wooded area to the west of the path will remain as it is, retaining an important habitat for low and ground nesting species such as song thrush, which are known to be present. Additional, more diverse planting is proposed to the east of the path, including deciduous and evergreen shrubs and groundcover, prized for their scent and areas of new tree planting with tall grassland understorey, to improve the setting of the tennis courts.

Habitat Edges

The existing woodland edges and belts of trees with tall grassland understorey will be extended with new tree planting and expanded zones of relaxed mowing. This will improve movement corridors for mammals such as badgers and encourage more flying insects along bat foraging routes.

Avenues and Groves

Proposed avenue and grove tree planting will increase tree canopy cover within the park, providing larger commuting and foraging routes for bats. The mowing regime below will be relaxed to encourage taller grassland species, expanding cover for mammal movement routes and attracting insects for bird and bat foraging.

Woodland Quarters

Two areas of the woodland quarters will remain untouched as part of the proposals, and will undergo a slower pace of woodland management to allow existing resident species to adapt. Currently the woodland quarters are closely canopied with limited understorey and ground flora predominantly of ivy. Whilst this is good habitat for a few species, the proposals aim to diversify the habitat typologies to encourage a greater range of wildlife in the park. New areas of orchard, flower garden, dense thicket, and flowering shrub understorey will provide a rich source of nectar and foraging opportunities

for insects, birds and mammals. The aim is to reinstate the gradated woodland edge where meadow grasses flow into groundcover perennials beneath a shrubby understorey and then large tree canopy cover, each layer providing a different habitat and feeding opportunity for a variety of wildlife. By ensuring a long supply of nectar rich plants and cover for insects, this will in turn provide good foraging for small birds and mammals, which in turn provide prey for a larger birds, such as tawny owls which have previously been seen in the park.

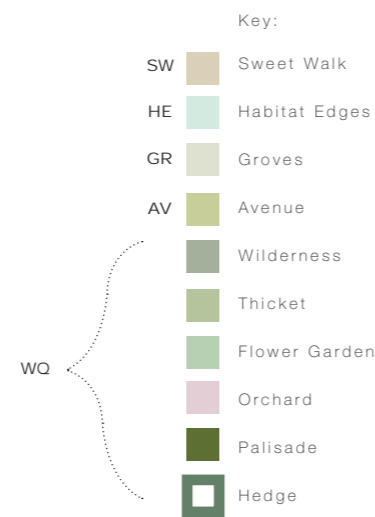


Diagram of proposed planting typologies

