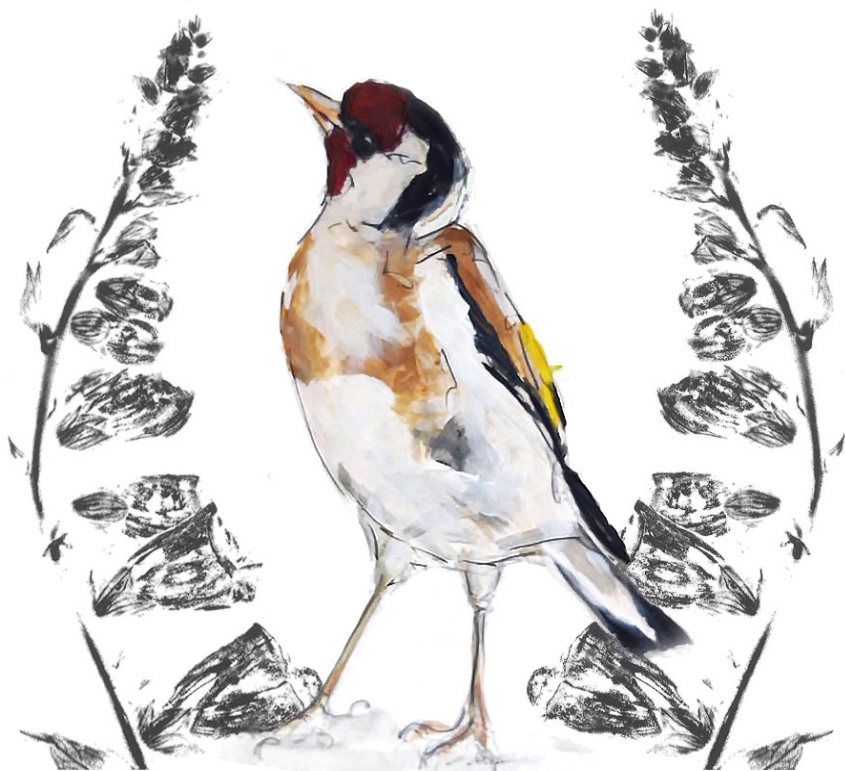


Impressions of Nature



June 26

June

Birth flowers Hawthorn & Rose

3rd June St Kevins Feast Day

5th June World Environment Day

8th June World Oceans Day

9th June St Columba Feast Day

10th June Celtic Month of the Oak begins

15th New Moon

21st June Summer Solstice

29th Full Moon called Strawberry, Rose, Planting or Hot moon

Recently, I have not felt as connected to the natural world as I usually do. For a variety of reasons my walks have been fewer, and not always in the wild places I love most. Even so, nature has continued to remind me of its resilience and beauty in small ways. I have found myself delighting in wildflowers pushing through the tiniest cracks in pavements and walls, bringing softness and colour to unexpected places. During the recent spell of unusually hot weather, I have also been reminded just how precious trees are, offering shelter, shade, and calm when the world feels overheated.

June always feels like a month of abundance. After the exuberance of May, with blossom and wildflowers spilling through the hedgerows, I often wonder what more nature can possibly offer. Yet June arrives with its own richness: fledgling birds testing their wings, bees drifting lazily through warm afternoons, pond life thriving, and young wild animals beginning to find their place in the world.

This month's booklet will focus particularly on foxgloves and finches, two very different but equally enchanting signs of the season. Foxgloves rise dramatically through hedgerows and woodland edges, full of folklore and beauty, while finches bring flashes of colour, movement, and birdsong to gardens and countryside alike. Both seem to capture something essential about June: abundance, delicacy, and the wildness woven through everyday life.

June's birth flowers are the Rose and the Hawthorn. Hawthorn, a member of the rose family, has long symbolised hope, protection, and happiness. In Celtic traditions it was associated with love and was often carried by brides. Roses, with their many colours and meanings, are perhaps most associated with friendship, joy, and affection at this time of year.

June's Full Moon is known as the Strawberry Moon, named after the wild strawberry harvest in North America. In Europe it is often called the Rose Moon, while other cultures know it as the Planting Moon or Hot Moon. Whatever the name, it always seems to arrive at a time when the natural world feels full and thriving.

With wildlife so active at this time of year, it is not unusual to come across young birds or animals that may appear vulnerable or in difficulty. If you ever find wildlife needing help, it is always best to contact a local rescue organisation or veterinary practice for advice. In the UK, vets are obliged to provide initial treatment for wildlife without charge to the finder, and many work closely with rescue groups who can rehabilitate animals wherever possible.

June also brings important reminders of our relationship with the natural world, including World Environment Day on the 5th June and World Oceans Day on the 8th June. They feel especially fitting at this time of year, when nature is at its most vibrant and generous, encouraging us to notice, appreciate, and protect the life all around us.

Finches are among the most familiar and cheerful birds of our gardens, hedgerows, and countryside. Their bright plumage, bouncing flight, and gentle musical calls bring life to woodland edges and feeding stations alike. Although finches occur across much of the world, they are absent from Australia, and many species are semi-nomadic, moving in response to the availability of seeds and other food sources.

One of the things that makes finches so fascinating is the remarkable variety in their beaks. Each species has evolved a bill shape specially adapted to the seeds and plants it prefers to feed on. Some species cling delicately to seed heads and teasels, while others forage on the ground beneath hedgerows and trees. During the breeding season, many finches also rely on insects to feed their rapidly growing chicks.

JUNE by Mary Elizabeth Blake

An odorous breath of drowsy noon
Creeping across the tangled grass;
The locust's hum, the cricket's tune,
The wild birds singing as they pass;

Mist where the distant mountains rise,
Mist where the valleys nearer lie,
Veiling the light of nature's eyes,
Wrapping together earth and sky;

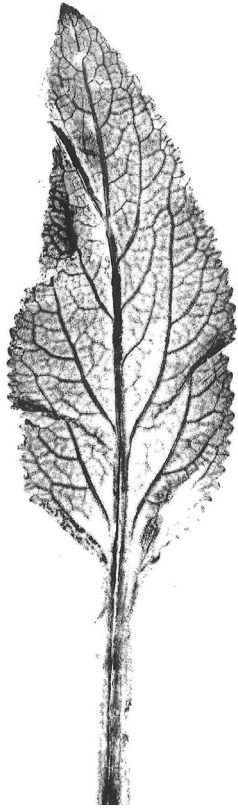
Tremulous boughs of waving trees
Raining down shadows cool and fair,
Murmurous sighing summer breeze
Falling across the tranced air;

Mirroring back the azure dome
Lies the lake by the pine-crowned hill,
Only the swell of its silver foam
Making the silence deeper still.

Wonderful days of love and life,
Magical days whose siren kiss
Hushes to rest the inward strife,
And life alone is perfect bliss.

Beautiful days to sit apart,
With but one friend to share your throne,
Feeling the pulse of that dear heart
Beat through the silence with your own;

Until the twilight pale and gray
Woke on the shadowy evening's breast,
And breathed above the dying day
Her evening hymn of peace and rest.



Monoprint on Paper

Plant Focus
Foxglove
Digitalis purpurea



Monoprint on Paper

Foxglove

Foxgloves have long been one of my favourite plants to work with creatively. I love monotyping their tall spires and beautifully marked flowers, as well as casting both the blooms and leaves. Their shapes feel almost architectural, yet still delicate and wild. Even so, I have a feeling I have only just begun to explore their possibilities creatively.

At this time of year foxgloves rise through the hedgerows and woodland edges like something from folklore, their tall stems crowded with tubular flowers in shades of purple, pink, cream, and white. They seem to belong equally to the natural world and to the world of stories. Wherever foxgloves grow in abundance, old legends and whispers of enchantment are never far behind.

The botanical name, *Digitalis purpurea*, comes from the Latin *digitus*, meaning “finger”, referring to the way each flower fits neatly over a fingertip like a thimble. The common name is less certain and far more mysterious. Some believe it derives from the Anglo-Saxon *foxes-gleow*, meaning “fox bells”, linked to Norse legends in which foxes wore the bell-shaped flowers around their necks to protect themselves from hunters and hounds. Others think the name evolved from “folk’s glove”, referring to the fairy folk long associated with the plant. Across Europe foxgloves were often known as “fairy gloves” or “fairy thimbles”, and were believed to grow where the little folk had passed. Here in the West Country there is a lovely old belief that foxgloves sway and bow even when the air is perfectly still because they are nodding to passing fairies. In Devon and Cornwall, children were often warned never to pick foxgloves for fear of offending the piskies and elves who treasured them. Some stories claimed the tiny speckles inside the flowers were fairy fingerprints, while others said the dew gathered from foxglove blossoms could help people communicate with the fae.

Foxgloves have gathered layers of symbolism through the centuries. They have been associated with intuition, creativity, healing, pride, ambition, and mystery. In the Victorian language of flowers, gifting foxgloves meant “I am ambitious for you”. Earlier folklore connected them with riddles, secrets, and hidden knowledge. There is something about them that feels both beautiful and slightly dangerous, as though they belong on the edge between worlds. That sense is not entirely imagined, because foxgloves are indeed highly toxic. Every part of the plant, from the leaves and flowers to the seeds and stems, contains powerful compounds including digitoxin and digoxin. Ingesting even small amounts can affect the heart and may be fatal to humans and animals. I

am always careful when handling them in my artwork and garden. Yet within that toxicity lies medicine. Foxglove has been used as a heart remedy since Celtic and Roman times, and in the eighteenth century the English physician William Withering carefully studied the plant's properties. His work led to the development of digitalis-based medicines still used today to treat certain heart conditions. It is remarkable to think that such a beautiful woodland flower contains chemicals capable of both healing and harm.

Despite their dangers to mammals, foxgloves are incredibly valuable to wildlife. Their tall tubular flowers are rich in nectar and loved by bees, especially bumblebees, who disappear almost completely inside the blossoms while feeding. Butterflies visit them too, and several moth species rely on foxgloves as part of their life cycle. One particularly fascinating moth, the foxglove pug, lays its eggs within the flowers, where the caterpillars feed and develop hidden inside the blooms themselves.

Foxgloves also hold connections to women's folklore and ancient spirituality. In Roman mythology the goddess Flora touched Hera with foxglove, leading to the conception of Mars. Later, in medieval Mary gardens, the flowers became known as "Our Lady's Gloves", associated with the Virgin Mary and contemplation. Herbalists, wise women, and midwives all worked with the plant carefully, respecting both its potency and danger.

Perhaps this balance between beauty and peril is what makes foxgloves so endlessly captivating. They are impossible to ignore when they flower, towering above bracken and hedges like candles lit along woodland paths. They carry echoes of folklore, medicine, magic, and midsummer abundance all in a single plant.

The Foxglove by Arlo Bates

In grandmamma's garden in shining rows,
The box smells sweet as it trimly grows ;
The sun-dial quaint the hours tells,
'Mid foxgloves tall with spotted bells ;
And all is dear, and all is fair,
As childhood's self had dwelling there.

In grandmamma's garden a child I played
With naught save bees to make afraid ;
I counted the spots on the foxglove's cheek,
And knew it could tell, if it would but speak,
How cunning fairies painted them
And made each like a shining gem.

In grandmamma's garden the foxgloves gay
With every wind would nod and sway ;
Full well I knew that they were wise,
And watched with childhood's eager eyes
To see them whisper each to each,
And catch the secrets of their speech.

In grandmamma's garden still I walk,
And still the foxgloves seem to talk.
Their speech not yet my manhood learns,
But when I see them youth returns ;
I wonder at them still in vain,
But with them am a child again.



Monoprint on Paper

Featured Creatures

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis



Gold Finch *Carduelis carduelis*

Few garden birds are as instantly recognisable or as striking as the Goldfinch. With its vivid red face, black-and-white head, and flashes of brilliant gold across the wings, it is easy to see why this beautiful bird has captured the imagination of artists, naturalists, and bird lovers for centuries. Often arriving in small chattering flocks, Goldfinches bring colour, movement, and a delightful musical quality to our gardens and countryside.

The Goldfinch belongs to the finch family, a diverse group of seed-eating birds found throughout much of the world. Finches are known for their cheerful songs, bouncing flight, and specialised beaks, each species having evolved a bill shape perfectly adapted to the seeds it prefers to eat. Goldfinches are particularly fond of teasel, thistle, and dandelion seeds, often clinging acrobatically to seed heads that would defeat many larger birds. During the breeding season they also feed insects to their young, providing the protein needed for rapid growth.

Britain is home to a wonderful variety of finches, including the Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Bullfinch, Linnet, Brambling, Twite, Hawfinch, and of course the Goldfinch. While the Chaffinch remains one of our most widespread birds, the Goldfinch has become an increasingly welcome sight in gardens over recent decades, aided by the popularity of bird feeders and the planting of wildlife-friendly gardens. I do love to watch them hanging upsidedown on my feeders in the winter, they always seem such cheerful busy birds.

The Goldfinch has long held a special place in folklore, art, and symbolism. Throughout the Middle Ages it was associated with good fortune, devotion, endurance, and spirituality. Its fondness for feeding on thistles led to connections with themes of suffering and redemption in Christian art, and it appears in numerous famous paintings including Carel Fabritius' *The Goldfinch*, Raphael's *Madonna of the Goldfinch*, Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna Litta*, and Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Sadly, its beauty also made it a target for trapping, and Goldfinches were once commonly kept as cage birds. Thankfully, legal protection and changing attitudes have ensured that today they are far more likely to be admired in the wild.

Despite their delicate appearance, Goldfinches are remarkably resilient. Although the average lifespan is thought to be around two years, the oldest

ringed Goldfinch recorded by the British Trust for Ornithology lived for more than ten years. Other members of the finch family can also achieve surprising ages, with Greenfinches living over eleven years and Chaffinches approaching fourteen years.

Whether feeding among thistles in a meadow, gathering at a garden feeder, or filling the air with their tinkling calls, Goldfinches seem to embody the joy and abundance of summer. Their vibrant colours, sociable nature, and enduring presence in art and folklore make them one of Britain's most cherished birds and a worthy ambassador for the wider finch family.



The Goldfinch by Jennie Earngey Hill

Oh, tiny goldfinch richly clad,
Your joyousness bespeaks the morn,
Whose beauty tends to make you glad,
And eager just that you were born.

You dart about o'er crag and moor,
To us bequeath your choicest boon,
Your silvery note so soft and pure,
A simple, mellow twitter-tune.

You ride away on rippling crest,
Over hill and stony shallow,
You seek the thorny thistle-pest,
As it thrives on field and fallow.

Your sheaves of down you garner in,
And store them in your covert-mow,
Away from human noise and din,
To fluff your nest in bush or bough.

The Hoary Alder catkin-hung,
Where tinkling waters wander round,
And Marigold is Music's tongue,
Here holds your cup in fork fast-bound;

A leafy canopy of green,
Above eggs touched by sea and sky,
Which ling'ringly, you laid unseen,
Save by the pale Day-moon on high.



We are delighted to have you join us on this journey of discovery. This newsletter and research project explores a different bird, animal, plant, or tree each month, inviting you to look more closely at the seasonal wonders of our natural world.

You can find more of my work on the website, including step-by-step guides, tutorials, and online workshops.

You may have noticed I love gathering poetry, songs, facts, and stories that celebrate the profound connection between humans and the natural world. Drawing from medieval bestiaries, mythology, folklore, and fables, I aim to uncover the often intriguing lessons and allegorical meanings behind these tales in this newsletter.

Disclaimer: Please remember that this booklet serves as a starting point for your own exploration. Some of the information is rooted in folklore, storytelling, and non-scientific hearsay, so please approach it with caution and always conduct further research.

I hope you will join us in exploring your own creative practice and perhaps discover something that resonates with you.

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Things I try to do

- Join conservation groups
- Support Charities who protect habitat and wildlife
- Share good practice in Fishing, Farming and Land management
- Vote with my purse, dont support substandard practice in anything.
- Sign petitions to protect birds and habitat
- Share my love of wildlife with friends and family
- Sign petitions to end persecution and improve understanding
- Dont use pesticides, herbicides or poison in the Garden
- Let the grass grow, insects love dandelions and daisies.
- Grow wildflowers, plant native trees and plants that support pollinators.
- Encourage insects to the garden, it all starts with the insects.
- Put up bird Boxes
- Mulch flowerbeds to keep moisture in
- Grow some food... no matter how little.
- Have as many waterbuts as I can.
- Leave the leaves to provide habitat for insects etc.
- Plant trees
- Only ever forage sustainably and responsibly

Some links for further information:-

[British Trust for Ornithology](#)

[RSPB](#)

[Birdlife](#)

[The Wildlife Trusts](#)

[The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust](#)

[Plantlife](#)

[The Hare Preservation Society](#)

[The Badger Trust](#)

[RSPCA](#)

[Woodland Trust foraging guidelines](#)

[Curlew Action](#)

See You In....



July 2026

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