

Dorset Flora Group Events 2026

Overview of the Programme



APRIL	
Saturday 4 th	Woodland SSCI Surveys, near Beaminster
Saturday 25 th	Botanical Walk, Wareham Common
MAY	
Saturday 9 th	Grassland SSCI Surveys, location tbc.
Thursday 21 st	Outdoor Classroom Day, Shell Bay, Studland
Saturday 23 rd	Baseline Survey, near Cerne Giant
Saturday 30 th	Botany Blitz Recording Day, Rempstone Estate, Purbeck
JUNE	
Saturday 6 th	Grasses Identification Workshop, Kingcombe Meadows Nature Reserve
Friday 5 th	Early Gentian Survey at Hambledon Hill, Child Okeford
Saturday 13 th	Re-visit to Baber's Farm, Marshwood
Thursday 18 th	Evening Plant Survey, Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester
Saturday 20 th	Chickerell Range Survey, Weymouth
Saturday 27 th	Grassland SSCI Surveys, location tbc.
JULY	
Sunday 5 th	Botanical Walk (morning), Wareham Common
Sunday 5 th	Botanical Walk, The Arne Triangle
Saturday 11 th	Botanical Walk, Winfrith and Tadnoll Heaths
Thursday 16 th	Recording in Under-recorded Squares, Nether Cerne
Saturday 18 th	Chalk Grassland Plant Recording Day, Bell Hill near Belchalwell
Saturday 25 th	Yellow Bird's-nest Survey, Melbury Woods
AUGUST	
Saturday 1 st	Botany Blitz Recording Day, Rempstone Estate, Purbeck
Thursday 25 th	Autumn Lady's-tresses Count, Stonebarrow
Saturday 29 th	Recording Day, in and around Gillingham
NOVEMBER	
Saturday 15 th	AGM, Brooklands Farm, Forston
DECEMBER	
Saturday 5 th	Winter Wreath Making and Willow Weaving, Charminster Village Hall
JANUARY 2027	
Saturday 2 nd	Group New Year Plant Hunt, Wareham



Dorset Flora Group Events 2026

Full Programme. Published April 2026.

Saturday 4th April. Woodland SNCI Surveys near Beaminster

A survey day to cover SNCI survey methodology and woodland indicator species, focussing on two sites which include Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and a Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site.

When: 10am – 4pm.

Leader: Mariko Whyte.

Meeting point: Full details will be provided to those who have booked a week or so before the event.

Booking essential via: snci@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk; 07852 810191.

We may divide into smaller groups and cover a few sites. A great opportunity to visit sites which may not have public access and help support the SNCI monitoring programme. Participants to bring a packed lunch and be prepared for uneven terrain.

Saturday 25th April. Wareham Common – Botanical Walk for Early-season Species in Acid and Neutral Grassland

This is a botanical walk to enjoy this species rich flora including some SSSI areas. We'll be covering several different compartments of the site with a focus mainly on drier areas of short acid grassland where we'll be looking for species such as Mossy Stonecrop *Crassula tillaea*, Upright Chickweed *Moenchia erecta*, Suffocated Clover *Trifolium suffocatum*, Bird's-foot Clover *Trifolium ornithopodioides* and Hoary Cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea*. 113 Dorset Notables including 19 species on the Dorset Rare Plant Register have been recorded here in recent years.

When: 10am – 3pm.

Leader: Trevor Warrick and Tom Smith.

Meeting point: At the gravel parking area at the Western end of Streche Road near Wareham Hospital, nearest postcode BH20 4QQ (Wareham Hospital).

Grid ref.: SY9171 8745; What 3 words - ///totally.giggled.microfilm

If space isn't available at the parking area then Streche Road car park is about five minutes' walk from here at BH20 4QF; What 3 words - ///thank.valued.worth

Booking essential via: dorsetfloragroupprogramme@yahoo.com; site specific enquiries: trevorwarrick09@btinternet.com.



Saturday 9th May. Grassland SNCI Surveys – location tbc.

A survey day covering SNCI survey methodology and neutral grassland indicator species.

When: 10am – 4pm.

Leader: Mariko Whyte.

Meeting point: Full details will be provided to those who have booked a week or so before the event.

Booking essential via: snci@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk; 07852 810191.

We will divide into smaller groups and cover a range of sites. A great opportunity to visit sites which may not have public access and help support the SNCI monitoring programme. Participants to bring a packed lunch and be prepared for uneven terrain.

Thursday 21st May. Shell Bay, Studland - Outdoor Classroom

Organised by the Dorset Coast Forum and National Trust, the Dorset Flora Group will have a stall at this event which encourages young people (years 5 – 13) to engage with their local environment. We'll be promoting all things botany through a range of activities on the beach. If you'd like to come along and help inspire the next generation to learn more about plants then please join us for the whole day, or just an hour or two.

When: 10am – 3pm.

Leader: Jo Stephen.

Meeting point: Shell Bay Car Park.

Booking essential via: jo.stephen@naturalengland.org.uk; 07982813814.

If you're interested in attending, please email Jo who will provide meeting point details nearer the time of this event.

Saturday 23rd May. Land near Cerne Giant – Baseline Survey

Baseline survey of arable and SSSI fields recently purchased by National Trust SSSI superb piece of lowland chalk grassland supporting many butterflies including the rare Duke of Burgundy, Marsh Fritillary and Adonis Blue. Also, Hazel Gloves has been recorded (a temperate rainforest fungi).

When: 10am – 3pm (People are welcome to leave whenever they would like to).

Leader: Adam Woolcott.

Meeting point: Cerne Abbas Village Hall Car Park, Kettle Bridge Lane, DT2 7GY
Grid ref.: ST 66372 01431, What 3 words - ///dislikes.supported.upwardly

Booking essential via: adam.woolcott@nationaltrust.org.uk.



Please bring a packed lunch and a drink. Some of the terrain is steep and slippery after rain, so suitable footwear and walking poles would be recommended.

Saturday 30th May. Rempstone Estate, Purbeck - Botany Blitz Recording Day

This is the first of two planned **Botany Blitz** days at Rempstone Estate, part of the Purbeck Heaths NNR. The estate is managed jointly by Forestry England and private ownership. Over the past 15 years, much of the Forestry England land has undergone significant restoration, transitioning from extensive conifer plantation to heathland and mire habitats.

Due to its history of being a private estate and partly plantation, Rempstone has been relatively under-recorded for several species groups, including vascular plants. These visits aim to improve our understanding of the site's botanical interest and contribute valuable records to ongoing monitoring efforts and management.

Across the two days, we hope to survey a range of habitats, including valley mire, wet and dry heathland, saltmarsh, bare ground and acid grassland. A more detailed breakdown of the specific areas and habitats to be covered each day will be shared closer to the date.

When: 10am – 3/3.30pm.

Leader: Jasper Iepema.

Meeting point: To be confirmed to booked participants nearer the time.

Booking essential via: jasper@purbeckecology.org.uk; 07353 069407.

Please take the following with you for the day:

- Clothes suitable for an outdoor day in the field
- Sufficient food (lunch/ snacks) and drink
- Plant ID books
- A hand lens

Friday 5th June. Hambledon Hill, Child Okeford - Early Gentian Survey

Walkover survey around the ramparts of Hambledon Hill alongside the National Trust's North Dorset Ecology Volunteer Group to survey for the beautiful, but diminutive, Early Gentian *Gentianella anglica* amongst the rich chalk flora of the hillfort.

When: 10am – 2/3pm.

Leader: Adam Woolcott.

Meeting point: Parking available in Markstone Field, DT11 8ET.

Grid ref.: ST 83882 12234; What 3 words - ///owner.stealing.currently

Booking essential via: adam.woolcott@nationaltrust.org.uk; 07811009014.

Please bring a packed lunch and drinks. There are no facilities available on the hill itself, but the nearby village of Child Okeford has a pub and a village shop.



Saturday 6th June. Kingcombe Meadows Nature Reserve near Toller Porcorum - Grasses (revision) Identification Workshop

Field-based workshop to help you improve your grasses identification skills. If you have a good grasses identification book such as BSBI handbook No13 Grasses of the British Isles (Tom Cope & Alan Gray) or if you're newer to grasses identification A Field Guide to Grasses, Sedges and Rushes (Dominic Price), please bring this along to refer to on the day.

When: 10am – 1pm.

Leader: Robin Walls.

Meeting point: Kingcombe Meadows Nature Reserve, Toller Porcorum, DT2 0EQ

Grid ref: SY5542 9905; What 3 words: ///gentle.stews.condense

Booking essential via: robin44walls@outlook.com.

This is a morning event, so feel free to explore the reserve more fully in the afternoon. Refreshments available in the café (suggest booking on arrival in the morning) or bring a packed lunch.

Saturday 13th June. Re-visit to Baber's Farm, Marshwood, West Dorset

A follow-up to last year's visit to Baber's Farm, Marshwood. This is a Countryside Regeneration Trust site and this year we will be carrying out some baseline surveys on fields with a view to restoring them to species rich grassland. We'll also visit one of the more species rich fields for a survey to update records.

In late 2025 a new farm track was installed, improving access to the Harmshay land. This work was supported by the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme managed by Dorset National Landscape. The track will enable easier machinery and livestock movements allowing the CRT to apply wildflower seed to suitable parcels in 2026 with a view to enhancing species richness. CRT hope to use green hay from other fields on Babers to enhance the sward. Where possible a hay cut will be taken, failing that, fields will be conservation or seasonally grazed to allow floral diversity to increase.

When: 10.30am - 3.30pm (*note later start time*).

Leader: Helena Darragh and Tom Smith.

Meeting point: Babers Farm, Mutton Street, nr. Marshwood, DT6 5PZ

Grid ref.: SY 384988; What 3 words - ///parkland.energetic.ranch

The farm is located on Mutton Street, off the B3165 between Marshwood and Marshalsea. Directions on where to park will be provided to those who have booked a week or so before the event.

Booking essential via: dorsetfloragroupprogramme@yahoo.com; 07717 437250.

Bring a packed lunch. Optional visit to a nearby pub afterwards for a drink.



More information on the farm is available on the CRT website:

<https://www.thecrt.co.uk/babers-farm>

Thursday 18th June. Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester - Evening Plant Survey

A survey in collaboration with Ruth Boyle, Nature Recovery Ranger at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, to record plants within the hospital grounds including a small wildflower meadow behind the radiotherapy unit.

When: 6pm – 8pm.

Leader: Ruth Boyle and Fiona Wood.

Meeting point: North Wing 1 main entrance, Dorset County Hospital, Williams Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2JY.

Grid ref.: SY 68560 90484; What 3 words - ///vocal.crusher.warms

Contacts: fiona.wood@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk; ruth.boyle@sustainablehealthcare.org.uk

No booking required.

Saturday 20th June. Chickerell Range, Weymouth – Survey

An opportunity to record on the MOD's Chickerell Range, some of it within the Chesil and Fleet SSSI. Neutral-calcareous grassland with a local abundance of Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* and previous records of rarities towards the shoreline.

When: 10am – 3/3.30pm.

Leader: Fiona Wood.

Meeting point: Chickerell Range, Chickerell Road, Weymouth, DT3 4DF.

Grid ref.: SY 64771 79560; What 3 words - /// lobby.length.body.

Booking essential via: fiona.wood@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk; 07599 441887.

ID may be needed to access the site. Arrangements will be shared with participants closer to the time, including the exact meeting spot.

Saturday 27th June. Grassland SNCI Surveys – location tbc

A survey day to covering SNCI survey methodology and neutral grassland and fen indicator species.

When: 10am – 4pm.

Leader: Mariko Whyte.

Meeting point: Full details will be provided to those who have booked a week or so before the event.

Booking essential via: sncl@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk; 07852 810191.

We will divide into smaller groups and cover different parts of one or two larger sites. A great opportunity to visit sites which may not have public access and help support the SNCI monitoring programme. Participants to bring a packed lunch and be prepared for uneven terrain.



Sunday 5th July. Wareham Common – Botanical Walk (morning)

Joint meeting with Wiltshire Botanical Society for the morning up to and including a lunch break.

This is a botanical walk to enjoy this species rich flora including some SSSI areas. We'll be covering some of the banks of the River Piddle, ditches and areas of wet neutral grassland as well as some acid grassland. 113 Dorset Notables including 19 species on the Dorset Rare Plant Register have been recorded here in recent years. Examples of special species we hope to see include Whorled Caraway *Trocdaris verticillata* and River Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fluviatilis*.

When: 10.30am until around 1pm.

Leader: Trevor Warrick and Tom Smith.

Meeting point: At the gravel parking area at the Western end of Streche Road near Wareham Hospital, nearest postcode BH20 4QQ (Wareham Hospital).

Grid ref.: SY9171 8745; What 3 words - ///totally.giggled.microfilm If space isn't available at the parking area then Streche Road car park is about five minutes' walk from here at BH20 4QF; What 3 words - ///thank.valued.worth

Booking essential via: trevorwarrick09@btinternet.com or

dorsetfloragroupprogramme@yahoo.com;

07831 423209 (Trevor) or 07717 437250 (Tom).

Please bring a packed lunch and a drink. Nearest public toilets are at Howard's Lane beside the car park at BH20 4HU, so you may wish to visit these before this event as there is limited cover on site.

Sunday 5th July. The Arne Triangle - Botanical Walk

Joint meeting with Wiltshire Botanical Society to this part of the Purbeck Heaths NNR around Slepe Heath close to The Arne Triangle. This is an afternoon meeting, following on from the morning visit to Wareham Common. We'll be searching a variety of habitats for some local specialities such as Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, Yellow Centaury *Cicendia filiformis*, *Crassula tillaea*, Viper's-grass *Scorzonera humilis*, Brown Beak-sedge *Rhynchospora fusca* and some less common Potamogetons and Sedges.

When: Approximately 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Depending on when we leave Wareham Common.

Leader: Dave Green and Fran Sinclair.

Meeting point: Parking initially along wider verges on Soldiers Road.

Grid ref.: SY9458 8586; What 3 words - ///noted.cases.claim.

We will move on to the eastern side of Slepe Heath late (possibly car sharing), again parking along verge at approximately SY9858 5896; What 3 words - ///frogs.wages.match

No booking required.



Saturday 11th July. Winfrith and Tadnoll Heaths – Botanical Walk

Botanical walk at Winfrith and Tadnoll Heath, Dorset Wildlife Trust nature reserves. Both heathland reserves are divided by Tadnoll Brook and as well as dry heath include wet boggy areas of heath and meadows as well as small areas of acid grassland, so we'll see a good range of species. We'll be spending the morning at Winfrith Heath before moving on to Tadnoll Heath in the afternoon. Please bring a packed lunch.

When: 10am until 3.30pm.

Leader: Laurence Taylor.

Meeting point: At the gate to Winfrith Heath off Gatemore Road

Grid ref.: SY 80472 86323; What 3 words - ///respect.spud.stockpile

Parking in small lay-bys beside and opposite the gate and at a tarmac parking area a little further south at What 3 words - ///occurs.mailers.regard.

Nearest postcode: DT2 8GL.

Booking essential via: laurence804@btinternet.com; 07541 075844.

Thursday 16th July. Nether Cerne – Recording in Under-recorded Squares

A walk of approx. 4km up the side of this valley within two under-recorded grid squares. Habitats will include arable field margin, woodland and hedge.

When: 6pm – 8.30pm.

Leader: Fiona Wood.

Meeting point: **Nether Cerne**, nearest postcode: DT2 7AJ.

Grid ref: SY6713 9831; What3words - ///shed.blitz.chaos.

Booking essential via: fiona.wood@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk; 07599441887.

The landowner has kindly given us access to his land away from the footpaths. Some of the arable field margins have been managed for 25 years.

Saturday 18th July. Bell Hill near Belchalwell - Chalk Grassland Plant Recording Day

Recording day on a previously unsurveyed site owned by the Wessex Hang gliding and Paragliding Club. Open, cattle-grazed grassland, scrub and an old chalk quarry.

When: 10.30am – 3.30pm.

Leader: Wren Franklin.

Meeting point: Concrete splay and field gate off road – parking in field.

Grid ref.: ST79455 08179; What 3 words - ///solo.exchanges.songbirds

Booking essential via: wrenfranklin@yahoo.co.uk; 07776 100613.

Bring packed lunch. The site is sloping and steep in places. If time allows we may move to another area just to the west in the afternoon.



Saturday 25th July 2026. Melbury Woods (Near Compton Abbas airfield) – Yellow Bird's Nest Survey

A walkover survey of NT Melbury Woods looking for Yellow Bird's Nest *Hypopitys monotropa* alongside the National Trust's North Dorset Ecology Volunteer Group. Melbury Wood is the only site in Dorset where this epiparasitic plant grows, being associated with *Tricholoma* fungi within this beech woodland.

The NT volunteers did a count in 2024 and recorded over 8,000 flowering spikes(!) and identified several new areas where they had not been seen previously. The aim of this survey would be to thoroughly survey those new areas to get a good idea of the distribution across the site.

When: 10am-2/3pm (depends on what we find, weather and the enthusiasm of participants).

Leader: Adam Woolcott.

Meeting point: Layby near the entrance to the wood, nearest postcode is SP5 5AP. Parking is available in the layby (which has space for about 8-10 cars) or within the wood for 4x4 vehicles (there's a good-sized timber loading area with space for lots of cars, but the track to it is only suitable for higher vehicles).

Grid ref.: ST91575 19798; What 3 words - ///carry.mermaids.subjects

Alternative parking available at NT Win Green 3mins up the road and we can shuttle people to site if needed.

No booking required, however it is always useful to know numbers.

adam.woolcott@nationaltrust.org.uk; 07811009014.

Please bring a packed lunch and a drink. Unfortunately, there are no facilities in Melbury Wood (though there are ice creams and coffee at Compton Abbas Airfield 5mins up the road).

Some of the terrain is steep and quite slippery with beech leaves and mast, so suitable footwear and walking poles would be recommended.

Saturday 1st August. Rempstone Estate, Purbeck - Botany Blitz Recording Day

This is the second of two planned **Botany Blitz** days at Rempstone Estate, part of the Purbeck Heaths NNR. The estate is managed jointly by Forestry England and private ownership. Over the past 15 years, much of the Forestry England land has undergone significant restoration, transitioning from extensive conifer plantation to heathland and mire habitats.

Due to its history of being a private estate and partly plantation, Rempstone has been relatively under-recorded for several species groups, including vascular plants. These visits aim to improve our understanding of the site's botanical interest and contribute valuable records to ongoing monitoring efforts and management.

Across the two days, we hope to survey a range of habitats, including valley mire, wet and dry heathland, saltmarsh, bare ground and acid grassland. A more detailed breakdown of the specific areas and habitats to be covered each day will be shared closer to the date.



When: 10am – 3-3.30pm.

Leader: Jasper Iepema.

Meeting point: To be confirmed to booked participants nearer the time.

Booking essential via: jasper@purbeckecology.org.uk; 07353 069407.

Please take the following with you for the day:

- Clothes suitable for an outdoor day in the field
- Sufficient food (lunch/ snacks) and drink
- Plant ID books
- A hand lens

Tuesday 25th August. Westhay Fields, Stonebarrow – Autumn Lady's-tresses count

Annual monitoring of Autumn Lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* in Westhay fields, on the National Trust's Golden Cap Estate.

When: 10 am – 1pm.

Leader: Adam Woolcott.

Meeting point: Car Park charge – if a NT member please register. If not please do pop a note in car – Dorset Flora Group – National Trust Orchid Surveyor
Grid ref.: SY382933; What 3 words - ///seashell.broke.depth

Booking essential via: adam.woolcott@nationaltrust.org.uk; 07811009014.

Bring lunch, mat to kneel on for counting if needed! We will sweep a number of fields which are monitored annually. Numbers usually good but lower in 2025 after drought.

Saturday 29th August. Recording Day In and Around Gillingham

Join us for a general recording day in under recorded squares in north Dorset in and around Gillingham. We may record as a single group or if numbers allow split into smaller groups to cover more ground and then meet up at the end of the day to share what we found with each other. Suitable for all abilities, all welcome.

When: 10am – 3pm.

Leader: Jo Stephen.

Meeting point: Gillingham, exact location tbc. Details will be emailed to booked participants in advance of the day.

Booking essential via: jo.stephen@naturalengland.org.uk; 07982813814.

Gillingham has a train station, but if a lift to the event is an issue, please contact Jo and we can try to arrange lift-sharing.



General Information

Many of our events require booking in advance, please book by contacting the meeting/workshop's leader.

The majority of events are outdoors so please wear and bring clothing suitable for our changeable weather, as well as water and sunscreen. For longer meetings/workshops please bring a packed lunch and drink along with you. Please be tick aware.

Dates for your Diary for Autumn and Winter

Sunday 15th November. AGM at Brooklands.

10am – 1pm. Save the date. Details to follow nearer the time.

Saturday 5th December. Wreath Making and Willow Weaving, Charminster Village Hall.

Saturday 2nd January 2027. Group New Year Plant Hunt in Wareham

Other Group Botanical Surveys:

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Recording on DWT reserves on Fridays between May and September

Contact: Colleen Smith-Moore;

csmith-mooore@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

National Trust Purbeck Botany Group

Groups based in:

- West Dorset (Tuesdays) and North Dorset. Contact Adam Woolcott, adam.woolcott@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Kingston Lacy (one Wednesday a month). Contact Adam Scott; adam.scott@nationaltrust.org.uk

Purbeck Natural History Forum

Botany in the summer months and bryophytes and lichens in the winter, meeting on a

Thursday plus a monthly Bioblitz

<http://purbecknaturalhistory.org.uk>

