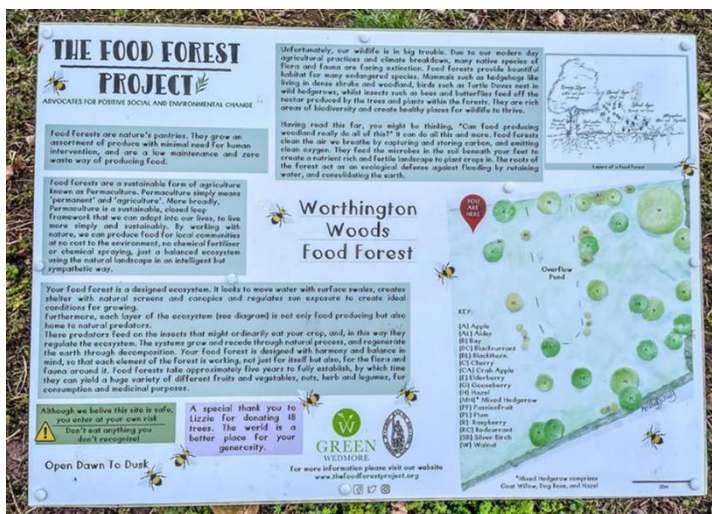


Welcome to Worthington Woods

In 2019 Green Wedmore (GW) was approached by Wedmore Parish Council (WPC - the owners of the land) to develop a woodland. This piece of ground has not enjoyed public access for some time - so it was great to be opening it up again. By the time Covid 19 arrived we were ready to start planting up the first main layer.

We were very fortunate to have teamed-up early on with the Food Forest Project (FFP) to help deliver this initiative for the village and the wider community. The land is a two-acre plot providing much-needed biodiversity and a natural space for the community to enjoy.



You can find it on the Eastern side of the village. Access is from the village carpark - the nearest postcode is BS28 4EE or you can use What-3-Words App and find it at:

pages.cleanser.idea

Read more about The Food Forest Project [here](#)

Here is a map to help you find it



So, what is a Food Forest?

It seeks to include and promote all or many of the following:



1. Community

The community aspect is an important one for us, the project is designed to be available to all, and a place to meet people and to make new friends. It is a place where a new community can take root bringing us closer together. A place to observe nature and harvest food.

2. Free food and foraging

In time when the trees and bushes have matured a little it will be the village place to harvest things like walnuts, plums, apples, hazel nuts and other fruits and herbs. The produce belongs to us all and is free to take home. In a few years' time the site will take on a maturer look, each tree will have its own "space" in to which it can grow and can be accessed by one of the many mowed foot paths created on site. Everything has been selected with thought, from the species planted, to their location.

Looking at the physical site itself - it is quite a challenging piece of land as there is an attenuation basin for any village flood that may occur, 11kv power lines running right across the site and many underground pipes from nearby houses and also from the water treatment plant that we wouldn't want tree roots to upset – however, bearing all of these issues in mind we feel we have a great design with mowed pathways, benches, and a designated 'grassy' area (the Mendips side of the attenuation bason) for a community project/next layer/raised beds/function area – should it ever be needed as such.

3. A safe space to be in a natural environment

The woodland is open daily, dawn to dusk, for all to enjoy. It is a place where you can be in nature, it is not meant to be a manicured site, but a site carefully managed with as little interference by humans as possible, it has been partially left as a wild space and that for us is important – we need wild spaces – they are good for us! You will notice that apart from the food producing trees and bushes, we have also added new hedging by kind donation of The Young Farmers Tree Project, and Re-imagining the Levels. Other trees that have been added are some small leaved limes and several oaks (One being the **Remembrance Oak** within the hedging by the brook and the other being the **King Alfred Peace Tree** - both have little notices on them so do look out for them when you visit.

Should we have need for composting anything on site we have 3 bays in place under the field maple constructed by (GW) volunteers that were made from old pallets. We have a water butt on site that is filled when necessary, using a solar pump to fill it from the brook.

The only artificial light (as in light pollution on the site) would be a 'blue light' that would be used whilst observing moths. These sessions only last for a few hours. We hope to go bat monitoring on the site in future as we are in a 'bat area' and have some boxes installed high up in the poplar trees.

4. A place to learn and a place to heal

Nature and natural open spaces have long been associated with improved mental health, come down and have a few **mindful moments**, forget about things and just think about the NOW, this is a perfect time and place to do this, leave your worries at the gate and come on in... **But why?**

Why mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a science based practice that gets individuals to experience life in the present moment through a non-judgmental lens, where one can notice emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and all of life's experiences in a healthy non-reactive way. Mindfulness has been scientifically proven to improve the brain's optimal functioning.

Studies show that mindfulness rewires the brain and specifically decreases activity in the area of the brain most affected by stress and trauma, "MRI scans show that after an eight-week course of mindfulness practice, the brain's 'fight or flight' centre, the amygdala, appears to shrink. This primal region of the brain, associated with fear and emotion, is involved in the initiation of the body's response to stress. As the amygdala shrinks, the prefrontal cortex – associated with higher order brain functions such as awareness, concentration, and decision-making – becomes thicker."

Mindfulness literally changes the architecture of the brain so it can provide mental and emotional well-being. (From Mindfullifeproject.org)

The benefits are:

- Better focus & concentration
- Enhanced health
- Improved impulse control
- Increased sense of calm
- Increased self-awareness
- Decreased stress & anxiety
- Skilful responses to difficult emotions
- Increased empathy & understanding of others
- Development of natural conflict resolutions skills



5. A place to learn and creating a habitat for wildlife

We actively encourage groups and local children's clubs and school visits - we have a little outside class room that can be used made from some poplar logs that were retained when some tree felling work had to be done. Learn about some butterflies you might spot [here](#). Learn about some insects you might spot [here](#). Learn about tree species you might spot [here](#) Galls [here](#) and don't forget about the bees [here!](#)

We have increased local habitat by carefully introducing handmade (by our amazing volunteers) solitary bee hotels, 4 bat boxes, 2 hedgehog boxes and some bird boxes. We have a small mammal track going through this site which we have left alone for the animals to still use. Due to the disturbance the land has endured in connection with the installation of the attenuation basin, it has brought about nettles. In the areas where the ground has not been disturbed, we have grasses and wildflowers.

Stinging nettles support more than 40 kinds of insects - many nettle patches hold overwintering insects which swarm around fresh spring nettles and provide early food for ladybirds. These same aphids are eaten by blue tits and other woodland birds that dart around the stems.

In late summer the huge quantity of seeds produced are food for many seed-eating birds, such as house sparrows, chaffinches, and bullfinches.

Nettles are also a magnet for other insect-eaters such as hedgehogs, shrews, frogs, and toads, at all times of year.

Certain moths like nettles, as do many of the UK's most colourful and best-known butterflies, such as the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock Butterflies. Their larvae feed in large groups in silken tents at the top of the nettle stems.

Nettles are often regarded as a weed, and are removed as soon as they appear, but they are really good for many different types of wildlife. Allowing a patch of nettles to remain will help attract insects, which in turn will attract insect-eating birds and mammals.

Sticking-up for nettles and making our gardens and natural areas like Worthington Woods a haven for wildlife is one way we can **Step up for Nature** and make significant changes for wildlife.

The RSPB suggests cultivating a nettle patch in your garden and thinking twice before removing them as they can be easily managed by trimming and mowing, they also suggest that your nettle patch isn't relegated to a distant, shady corner, and that ensuring their growth in sunny areas will attract insects and encourage egg laying.

iNaturalist

In May 2022 (GW) launched our first **data capture site** for the village – working alongside the Somerset Wildlife Trust guidance to create a wilder Somerset and an ecologically richer Somerset we set about collecting and monitoring data*

For this we are using the globally recognised App 'iNaturalist' to record all sightings including flora and fauna at Worthington Woods, this is not only an opportunity to collect data but to give a chance for people to **learn about**

species (as the app is very good at identifying things too!) Be mindful in nature at the woodland – go and look for things whether its bugs or plant leaves/flowers and taking your time to enjoy it and record at the same time.

Uploads can be made immediately – we encourage everyone to download the app or access on a computer and add your sightings – you will see our '**place**' as Worthington woods, join the **group** and get recording! We look forward to seeing you there, and if you have any problems with using the App – just get In-touch. We plan to map other areas of the village soon - so watch this space!

- Some data will be used as citizen science and some data (if its identified and signed off by a qualified person) will be used for research.



A botanical survey was conducted at the start of the project which produced these results:

Worthington Woods (Food Forest Project), Wedmore, Somerset

Plant species recorded on the proposed site – October 2020

By Liz McDonnell

(This was made on several autumn visits in October – so may not be the complete list of species on site, but a snapshot in time)

Scientific name	Common name	Comments
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	Several hedgerow trees
<i>Acer plantanoides</i>	Norway Maple	One mature tree to the west of the flood basin
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	Mainly beneath Norway Maple
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	Occasional along the edges
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	A tall tussocky grass. Abundant in grassy areas
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome	A few clumps beneath Norway Maple
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	Occasional in the hedgerows
<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge	In grassy areas
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	In grassy areas
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i> ssp. <i>australis</i>	Dogwood (introduced)	Planted along the edge of the garden(s)
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i> ssp. <i>sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	Native species in hedgerows
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Hedgerows
<i>Cupressus x leylandii</i>	Leyland Cypress	Probably this species – planted along boundary of sewage works
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	Tussocky grass in grassy areas
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel	Occasional
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	Common Couch	Abundant in grassy areas
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb	Likes ditches and damp conditions. Occasional along northern boundary
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	Abundant in the hedgerows
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	Frequent in the hedgerow
<i>Hedera helix</i> .	Ivy	Frequent in shady habitats
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	In the hedgerows
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	In the edges and hedgerows
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick	In bare areas by entrance gate
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	In disturbed areas - by entrance gate
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass	In disturbed areas - by entrance gate
<i>Populus nigra</i>	Black Poplar	Large hybrids planted on boundary of sewage works,

		with large overhanging branches. Many suckers encroaching from the northern edge too
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	In the hedgerows and many suckers encroaching in the grassland areas
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	Abundant in grassland and damp areas
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Brambles	Several different species are present. Abundant in the hedgerows and creeping into grassy areas from the edge.
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	Occasional in grassy areas
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	Abundant by the entrance
<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	In the eastern hedgerow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	In the hedgerows
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	Tall Fescue	A coarse grass. One clump in flood basin
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel	By entrance
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle	Occasional in bare areas
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	In edges and hedgerows and beneath Norway Maple
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion	In grassy areas
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	One plant only recorded – in grassy areas
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	English Elm	Partially dead from Ditch Elm disease in eastern boundary
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	Dominant over large areas and especially on flood basin banks
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch	In the edges and hedgerows



The Alfred Tree

As a symbol of 'peace,' this oak tree now stands happily in our newly created community area called Worthington Woods. When the woodland opens to the public, be sure to visit 'Alfred' and say hello!

THE FOOD FOREST PROJECT

ADVOCATES FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE



Alfred the Great made peace in Wedmore AD 878 lets carry on the tradition....

Many thanks to the kind person who carefully selected, purchased and planted this tree for us

6. Rehabilitating the soil

We operate a no dig method on the site. Other than when we were planting, we are aiming for the land to experience no further disturbance – the benefits to that are:

- Protects the soil's food web
- Promotes natural aeration and drainage, and reduces erosion and soil compaction
- Saves time and energy
- Saves water
- **Helps soil retain carbon** and improves the release of nutrients
- Reduces watering

7. Combating carbon emissions

We promote and encourage people to walk and cycle to the woodland – we use it for our meetings too in the summer! It is also easily accessible if you use a car as we are next to the village car park.

Disabled/wheelchair access on the flat areas is possible too – if you need help accessing in this situation and need help – just let us know and we can meet you there.

Where we can we use shears, secateurs and scythes to manage areas, sometimes, but infrequently we use power tools like strimmer's. The paths are mowed by the council contractor who maintains the paths - this mowing is done once a month during the grass growing season only.

Some nettle clearance has been done by pulling them and scything by hand

We don't bring water onto the site as we use a solar powered battery and water pump to fill the water butt directly from the village brook.

We reuse timber in the construction of compost bins, bee hotels, hedgehog houses. We were given funds to purchase timber for the 3 little benches which were built by a volunteer. The church gave us an unwanted bench and WPC also donated a bench. We recycle and/or give away tree cages/guards/stakes and refrain from using any peat-based products. We have moth trapping events on site and our equipment is all solar powered. We have installed a little wooden gate in the hedging beside the brook in the event that the council should ever want to pursue the installation of a bridge over the brook (giving further pedestrian access from Wedmore Moor Drove) in the meantime, we anticipate letting the hedging grow giving adequate screening, and providing a safety barrier to visitors of the woodland.

Planting woodlands is one of the most affective and cheapest ways of taking CO2 out of the atmosphere to tackle the climate crisis, according to scientists, who have made the first calculation of how many more trees could be planted without encroaching on crop land or urban areas. Global warming is happening at a faster rate than ever. Our polar ice caps are melting, and our forests are burning. We're in a climate and nature emergency and it's threatening our planet. According to experts, we're on track for an increase of between 3°C and 4°C by 2100. And these are only global average temperatures. At the poles and over land where people live, the increase may be higher - possibly even double - this is the challenge we face and a big part of Green Wedmore's mission.

8. Food stabilisation

We are all witnessing right now the soaring prices of food - if every community had a food forest offering food for free these 'permanent' places could help communities by providing food.

There is potential for the site to develop a further lower layer of growth by producing vegetables in raised beds (under the power lines NE of the attenuation basin) that could be explored if people so desired and the produce could be directed to our Local food Bank in Cheddar – we have a good working relationship with this food bank and perhaps in the future this could be a possibility. A sister FFP site in Shelton Mallet has already launched this scheme from Rock Farm FFP where it supplies fresh locally grown food to its local Food Bank in Shepton Mallet.

Having a food forest helps people to enquire more about foraging for food and was one of the catalysts for the production of our successful publication Green Wedmore's second cook book 'Close to home' encouraging everyone to consider buying and foraging more locally to reduce ones carbon footprint.

Foreword

When initially asked to write the Foreword for 'Close to Home', I was honoured, but felt like a charlatan. I thought to myself, "but I'm not from Wedmore, how can I be trusted with such a personal and auspicious task for the community there?" But later that evening, I was reminded as to why I started the Food Forest Project, what drives me to spend most of my free time working so hard to plan and plant these special places: interconnectedness. The need to look after ourselves, those around us and the planet has never been greater. From the soil to the sea, we are all inextricably and inexorably linked to the web of life. Food forests are a microcosm of that web, showing us the necessity of balance and the delicacy but resilience of the natural world. Like the pioneer for organic biodynamic farming, Rudolf Steiner, once said, "feelings are for the soul what food is for the body."

In January 2021, we worked alongside other community caretakers in Wedmore to plant the beginning of Worthington Woods food forest. Worthington Woods is a space of unification; a place for contemplation, to nourish one's body and soul, and learn how each element of the wood is an integral part of a broader ecosystem that, if cared for and expanded upon in accordance with traditional philosophies, can grow a wealth of food for the community, whilst also providing space for the life that survives outside of our usual spheres, but that is no less important.

The word community is derived from the Latin word 'communitas', which means fellowship. The prefix 'com' signifies "with, together, joint". Worthington Woods is a seed, like all our food forests, a seed that brings the community together, the food that they produce stimulating the health and wellbeing of the local people directly, and indirectly. More broadly, the subtle nuances in which nature works are perhaps some of the most special but least obvious, and where our connection to nature is most fragile. 'Close to Home' is part of the joining process, the balance, helping us all learn how to use and process that which the earth gives us, bringing together local producers, recipes and ingredients all handpicked to work in unison with the local community. When did you last ask yourself where your food came from? Your meal this evening, where and how was it grown? What was needed for it to grow? Which of your neighbours is part of that process, or could be part of that process? What is best for you and your family? These are important questions, and they need to be asked.

The global issues that we face can seem daunting, but the solutions remain embarrassingly simple. Perhaps we need to look to our neighbours and love our place, the cumulative effect of which would surely lead to resilience and abundance. We must remember, for the times ahead, we have the power. Our roots are buried deep within the soil, blanketed in mycorrhizal fungi and microorganisms. Our atonement must be swift, but the seeds of hope are all around. May this book and your food forest help us grow into a new dawn.

Tristan Faith
TheFoodForestProject
www.thefoodforestproject.org

9. Permaculture – what is it?

At Worthington Woods our stewardship falls under the banner of permaculture - here we have made a list of some of those core principles:

- Observe and Interact
- Develop a site that has permanence
- Catch and Store Energy
- Obtain a Yield
- Use and Value Renewables
- Produce No Waste
- Design from patterns to detail - whether designing a new vegetable growing area, or an entire new sustainable way of life, we have to look at the big picture before we get bogged down in the little things. Thinking wholistically, about the area can help us move forwards in a positive direction.
- Integrate Don't Segregate
- Use Small, Slow Solutions
- Use and Value Diversity on the site
- Creatively Use and Respond to Change
- **Finally, change is an inevitable part of life. It's important to remember that permaculture isn't just about now, but about the future. We design for change, understanding that things will alter over time. The changing seasons, changing attitudes, our changing climate... how we respond to these changes will shape sustainable progress in the years to come.**



These principles are a starting point for an understanding of permaculture and can begin to give us an idea of how we can translate thought to action, and transition to a more ethical - and truly sustainable - way of life.

Green Wedmore knows that to reach net-zero we have to preserve the carbon safely locked up in our peat, soils, woodlands and pasture and look to absorb more through peat restoration, tree planting and improving soils condition. Our precious nature is vital as well; when our soil is in good condition it not only keeps the carbon safe it is also full of life and helps bigger critters such as pollinators, birds, hedgehogs and more. But for many decades nature has declined in the UK, Somerset and Wedmore. Our country is now the most nature depleted country in the world.

We simply cannot fix climate without a restored natural world whether that means keeping Somerset's peat wet and in the ground, or planting the right tree in the right place to soak up and store that precious carbon.



Green Wedmore's Carbon and Nature group has two aims;

- Aim 1: To measure the carbon sequestration amount for the parish of Wedmore and work towards increasing it to help achieve our Net-Zero targets.
- Aim 2: To restore nature in the parish.

We were thrilled to introduce you to Green Wedmore's latest project, Wild for Wildlife in Wedmore (WWW)! We have adapted an idea from the amazing Transition Town Wellington team. This project is to help encourage and inform so we can all help more wildlife into our gardens and help protect the environment. Please find an information booklet in our website, competition (with prizes) and a map of the village showing where you may catch sight of an owl or hedgehog.

This competition is open to anyone living in the Isle of Wedmore and we have adopted as many of these features at Worthington woods as possible. Why not pay a visit and see how many we score?! More info [here](#)

We hope you can adopt our vision and we hope you enjoy your visit.
Please only leave footprints and fasten the gate upon leaving.



We have regular monthly 'Work or chill out' parties held at the woodland first Saturday of the month – please come along – help with mulching – meet us and have a chat.

Learn how to record species and grow your knowledge in permaculture and all things ecological.

With many thanks to The Food Forest Project team and Wedmore Parish Council – the Chair's Neil Ellis and Polly Costello.



Thank you

THE FOOD FOREST PROJECT
ADVOCATES FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Many thanks for the grant from The Food Forest Project to enable us to further develop the new woodland during our most recent work party day. We are very grateful for the funds.



The history of the land

This is a short summary of an article published in Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society 2017 vol 161, 181—183

By Hazel Hudson and Frances Neale

The Community Food Forest land is called Balls Close and is part of four fields with that name. It is named after the Ball family who lived in Wedmore in the 1500s. A few years ago a loose sheet of paper was found in Wells Cathedral archives belonging to Llewellyn's Almshouse who once owned some land in Wedmore. It is a hastily written note dated 1643 with blots and erasures by William Latcham one of their tenant farmers who is asking for a rent rebate in his field 'balles Close' because it has been taken over by the 'parliament Armie'. He has had to pay out expenses no doubt for hay and fodder for his animals. He complains that 'The Tropers did with their horses eate upp my grasse at the spring of the yeare'.

Later on that year he is paying out contribution for 'his Ma[jest]ies service for eleven months. One of his expenses is for bullets and powder probably to protect his family and animals. He also mentions the 'pye[ni]res' and 'piners'. These are the pioneers or troops that go on ahead of the armies to find a good place to set up camp, put up tents, dig latrines and fence round the land for the horses. No doubt the main body of troops were billeted in Wedmore causing many problems for the villagers.

William Latcham first of all had the Parliamentary Army taking over his land in the spring. and then when they moved on the Royalist Army came in for many more months, no wonder he wanted a rent rebate. He had had to find somewhere else to put his animals and pay rent for that field.

William Latcham's note is the first time we have any knowledge of the Civil War coming to Wedmore, The demands of the Royalist army caused outrage in some other villages such as East Brent and Lymsham but we have no record on what went on in our village but no doubt William Latcham wasn't the only farmer to have his crops destroyed.

Helpful links:

<https://www.thefoodforestproject.org/>

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/>

<https://reimaginingthelevels.org.uk/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/>

<https://www.permaculture.org.uk/knowledge-base/basics>

<https://www.soilassociation.org/>

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/>

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

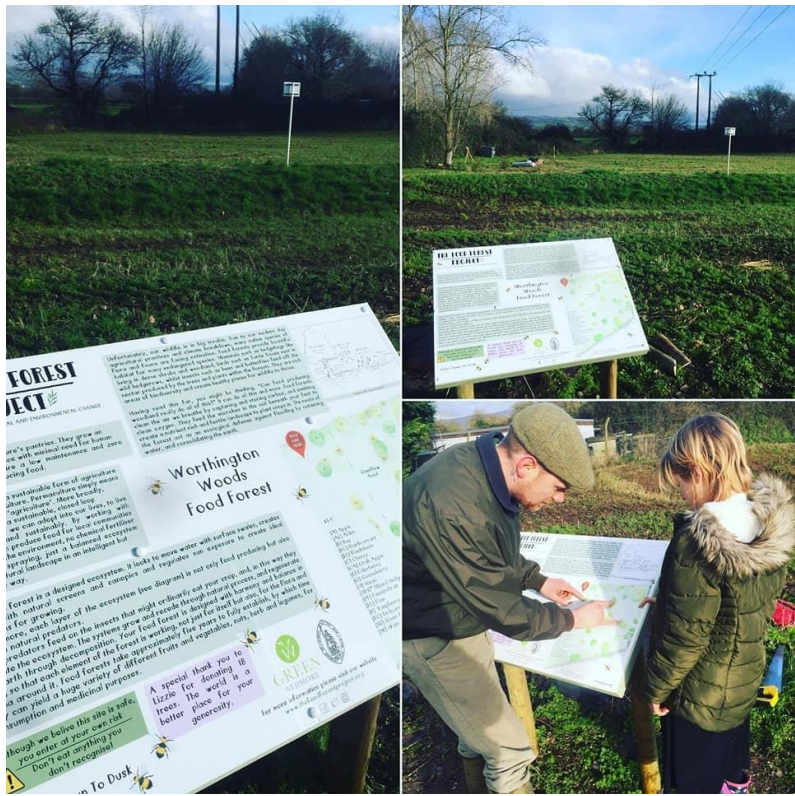
<https://cheddarvalley.foodbank.org.uk/>



The image shows an information board for the 'WORTHINGTON WOODS' project. The board is titled 'THE FOOD FOREST PROJECT' and 'Worthington Woods Food Forest'. It features a map of the site, a list of trees, and a 'GREEN' logo. The board is mounted on wooden posts and is surrounded by a large pile of cut logs and branches. In the top left corner, there is a blue butterfly icon and the text 'Nature recording opportunities'. The background shows a wooded area with trees and a blue sky.

First Saturday of the month 4 – 6pm
Work party/get together on site –
further details – please see our
website/FB page

Starts from 7th May and
continues EVERY month UFN













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Worthington Woods Food F...

LEAVE
NEWS
ABOUT

60	41	2	2
OBSERVATIONS	SPECIES	OBSERVERS	IDENT
Dock Bug	common daisy	Oak Gall Was...	
hogweed	field maple	Hazel	
Green Dock...	meadow butt...	common daisy	
Helicoid Lan...	cock's-foot	broad-leave...	





















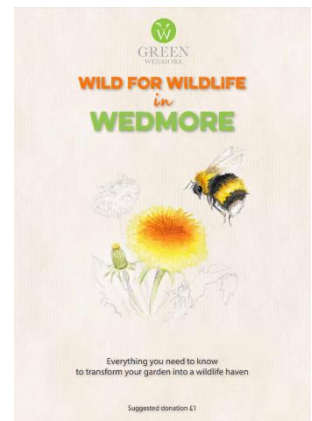






Please come and visit soon.....and if you want to join in with us please get intouch

it's a place where everyone is welcome



GREEN
WEDMORE