

Bushy Park – May 2019 Diary

Ticks and Lyme disease

Ticks are small creatures related to spiders and mites and feed on the blood of humans, dogs and other animals. They cannot jump or fly, so they cling onto vegetation and wait until an animal or human brushes past to attach to their skin. Whilst the risk is very low, they can transmit diseases including Lyme disease.

During spring, summer and autumn, ticks are more numerous and more active. Park visitors are advised to guard against tick bites by avoiding tall vegetation (especially if wearing shorts) and by staying on well worn paths. Insect repellent can also be used. Check yourself after walking in the Park and remove ticks immediately. If concerned, you feel unwell or a rash appears, consult your GP immediately. For more information, please see The Royal Parks website or visit the Bushy Park Office for a leaflet.

Oak Processionary Moth

May is the time of year when the caterpillars of this invasive Moth are on the move. The hairs of the caterpillars carry a toxin which can be a threat to human health, causing skin rashes, eye irritation and respiratory problems.

In late April/early May pesticide spraying will take place on oaks in busy areas and those where they have been previously infested. This will be followed by careful surveying of the whole park in June and July to locate nests which are then removed by specialist operatives using protective clothing and equipment.

If you come across the caterpillars or their webbed nests, please do not touch them and keep children and pets away. Report any sightings to the Park office on 0300 061 2250.

The Woodland Gardens

The Azaleas and the species Rhododendron will still be in flower at the end of the month.

Evergreen azaleas include: 'Amoena', with magenta flowers. 'Rosebud' – opening buds resemble tiny roses. 'Vuyk's Scarlet', larger flowers of a deep silky red.

Deciduous azaleas: these flower slightly later and often have a rich spicy smell, particularly Azalea pontica, (*Rhododendron luteum*), which is yellow and some of the Rustica hybrids, Smaller double flowered deciduous Azs.

The volunteers are continuing to plant up areas in the gardens and the gardeners have been mowing and weeding out the first flush of weeds

Bird News – Important information

Bushy Park has 2 small colonies of Skylarks, the colony in the south-east corner of the park have been gradually squeezed into a smaller and smaller area by the spread of the Bracken. In the last couple of years, we have taken measures to control it, this has worked well and now the birds had began reclaiming old nesting sites. We are doing this because this species is in decline nationally and within the park, so needs your help. These measures were working, with numbers increasing by 3 or 4 pairs. If you are in control of a dog, please follow the instruction on the signs and put your dog on a lead. The other Skylark area is to the south of Upper Lodge Road, here the grassland is much healthier and is what the birds require.

Please adhere to our colourful signs in the park reflecting the wording below and requiring your help.

Thank you.

Skylark Protection Area

Please:

Keep dogs on a short lead

Stay on the path

Skylarks have declined by 61% in the UK

Non compliance could result in prosecution under The Royal Parks Regulations

By Order of the Secretary of State