

## Bushy Park – May 2022 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.

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 Rhododendrons have just started flowering.

**Evergreen azaleas include:** 'Amoena', with magenta flowers. "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 gardeners have been grass seeding along the new path edges. Mowing and weeding has commenced throughout the garden.

Plans are being drawn up to reinstate the glades within the garden after the ponticum clearance. Planting will take place over the next few years to create an attractive display for all year interest.

### Sky Larks

The Skylark is a small streaked brown bird, larger than a sparrow but smaller than a Starling. They are a ground nesting bird, which breed from March to September.

Due to pressure from increasing visitor numbers and notably from dogs not being kept under control, the Skylark is a fully protected species under the "Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981" (as amended), which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take an adult Skylark, or take damage or destroy an active nest or its contents.

Any person found contravening these notices or contravening the Wildlife and Countryside Act could be liable for prosecution. The Skylark population within Richmond and Bushy Park has declined rapidly over the last 5 years

To reduce the impacts on ground nesting birds such as the Skylark we require all visitors with dogs to keep them on a short lead and to stay on the paths during the nesting season (March to September) when walking through nesting Areas in Bushy Park.