

Malvern Gate

Make your way down to the main entrance of the University and notice the rows of American Oaks on either side of the roadway. These trees form part of a wildlife corridor that stretches from this entrance to the additional entrance at the Severn Gate on St Johns campus. The Plane trees on the eastern edge of the University grounds are important roosts and singing posts for many birds. Here you may be serenaded by the churring of greenfinches, the eclectic scratches and whistles of starlings, the tinkling tune of goldfinches and the gentle cooing of woodpigeons and stock doves. Be sure to cross the road safely at the zebra crossing to make your way to the Conservation Area.



Conservation Area

Conservation Area

Managed by staff at the University, the conservation garden provides a teaching aid for students to carry out environmental research, as well as being an important wildlife area. From March to April the entrance to the garden is full of colour from the planted spring bulbs, including orange crocus, deep blue scilla, yellow daffodils and bluebells with some rare pink and white colour forms. These flowers are equally attractive to spring insects as early nectar sources. Listen for the humming of queen bumblebees and look out for bee flies, which look like brown bumblebees but are silent and constantly on the wing.



Bee Fly, Rosemary Winnall

Moving through the garden you will come to a lawn with some specimen trees. A look at the cherry tree next to the path shows not only its delicate pink early blossom, but also a dead branch with peck marks from woodpeckers. In late summer, the old leaning mulberry tree bears tasty fruits which can be enjoyed by birds and people alike.

The lawn comprises two halves. The first half is closely mown, whilst the second half is managed as hay meadow and mown only twice yearly, providing different habitats for plants and animals.

A wildflower mix has been planted in the hay meadow section to benefit pollinating insects such as bees in the university beehive and bee hotel. Even the mown lawn has wildflowers including white clover, the umbrella-like yarrow, and the distinctive white flowers of sweet violet.



Wild Violets

Under the canopy of the huge Plane tree, the log pile and leaf pile provide important refuges for insects, spiders and other small animals.

The University pond comes alive with activity in spring. A closer look reveals teeming insect life including pond skaters on the water's surface,

water boatmen and diving beetles below. If you are lucky you may see colourful damselflies and dragonflies flying around the pond or perched on the pondside plants.

Common frogs and smooth newts also breed in the pond and you may see tadpoles and larvae swimming amongst the other pond life.



Smooth Newt, Bluebells, White Bluebells

Severn Gate

The treeline along the footpath to the Severn Gate is a good place to see bird life including blue, coal and great tits in the trees, as well as robins and blackbirds rummaging around in the leaf litter. Grey squirrels are common here and are quite tame.

Crossing to the other side of the field you can see the University student and staff allotments. The student Environment and Conservation Society regularly maintain the allotments, growing their own fresh fruit and vegetables close to home.

Walking along the footpath you will notice the row of trees. These young trees are Fastigate Oaks. Some old poplars remain near the allotment and they support mistletoe growing on their branches.

Going through the car park, the native mixed-species hedge provides an important habitat for a variety of wildlife. As you come to the pylon at the end of the car park, the University's own badger sett is to your left!

Walking around the back of the halls of residence you will come to the new University orchard.

The 12 trees were planted in 2009 and include apple, pear, and plum trees. As they grow, the trees will bear fruit for students to enjoy. Flanking the field are coppiced hedges. Coppicing involves regularly cutting the trees to a low level and allowing them to regrow. This prolongs the life of the trees and creates an open, lush habitat which benefits many insects, birds and hedgerow flowers.

Bredon Building

After walking through the halls of residence you will come to the single storey, flat roofed Bredon building. Behind the building is a shady, secluded garden where some larger apple trees grow. These are eating apple varieties and have been used by students for making juice. A few pine trees add to the mix of wildlife habitat and the leaf mould and rock piles also provide habitats/homes for small animals.

Near the sign round the front of Bredon, you will see a cherry tree with mistletoe growing on its branches, offering a rare opportunity to see this plant up close. You can see how the mistletoe grows directly from the tree itself so it can tap into the tree's water supply.

As you walk past the student halls of residence to the next part of this journey, you may see the mud nests under the eaves of the buildings, made by swallows and house martins that arrive here in summer to breed.



Apple Trees

Secret Garden

Despite its location near the main entrance and car park this shaded, tranquil garden is the perfect place for relaxation. Take a rest on a bench and soak in the atmosphere. Admire the blossoming cherry and apple trees, and when the leaves are just opening in spring you can detect the strong smell of the Balsam poplar. Look out for woodland birds such as the robins which are often seen here, and goldcrests, Britain's smallest bird, hopping around in the trees. Their calls are so high pitched that only the younger students may hear it!



Gold Crest, Cream Spot Ladybird, Forget-me-not

When you are ready to conclude your walk, make your way to the end of the garden and take the hidden trail along the fence and coppiced hedge. You should now be outside the Pierson Building.

We hope you have enjoyed the experience provided by the Wildlife Walk and the campus' green spaces. Come back again later in the year to see what different wildlife is out and about. Why not stop off at the Pear Tree Cafe for a drink after your walk?

If you would like more information about the environmental sustainability initiatives at the University of Worcester, visit <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/sustainability.html>

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University of Worcester Nature Trail

SPRING/SUMMER

Welcome to the University of Worcester Nature Trail and Wildlife Walk. This walk ties together the many green areas of the University of Worcester St John's campus for you to enjoy. Whether you are visiting the University for the day or are a regular student or staff member, there are many wild surprises in store. There are two routes: one suitable for wheelchairs and buggies which follows paths, and the other which covers some un-surfaced paths. Both can be walked with normal footwear.

This guide covers the features you will see in spring and summer.



Secret Garden

The circular walk takes approximately 45 minutes though you may wish to take longer to enjoy the features and the atmosphere. This guided walk starts and finishes at the Malvern Gate. Please consult the map provided at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/university-mile-university-worcester.pdf> for the best route. We hope you enjoy this peaceful and informative walk.