

# Take a closer look at... IVY

It is often overlooked today but ivy helps lots of our local wildlife, especially during the long months of winter. It flowers in early autumn, and the ivy's nectar is a valuable food source for many insects before the winter, particularly bees and butterflies.

In addition its black berries provide many birds with a supply of vital food during the winter, when there is less food available to them. Dense ivy provides cosy hiding, roosting, hibernating and nesting places for various animals, birds and insects during the long months of winter.

- Covering the woodland floor, ivy acts like a warm blanket during the coldest parts of winter protecting the ground from frost, enabling birds and woodland animals to search for food in leaf litter underneath.
- The caterpillar of the Holly Blue butterfly as well as feeding on holly also is commonly found on ivy!
- In ancient Greece, priests would present a wreath of ivy to newly married couples. Today it is still the custom for bridal bouquets to contain a sprig of ivy.
- It was once believed that if ivy grew on the walls of a house the occupants were said to be safe from witches.



Visit Kew for more on ivy and the Council's website for more on Carmarthenshire's amazing wildlife.



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