



## Get Millbrook Buzzing Project



### Newsletter March 2016

Although the bees have been asleep over the winter, the Get Millbrook Buzzing team have been busy, mostly with work in Millbrook Park.

Having planted 1000 daffodils in September we followed this with more bulb planting in November; this time it was native plants in the woodland area near the New Road entrance. Snowdrop and Winter Aconite will be the first to flower in January and February, then Wild Garlic, Bluebells and Wood Anemone in April and May. The aim is to create a woodland carpet of spring flowers that will provide a much needed source of nectar and pollen for the first insects that emerge after their winter hibernation. In February we did a second planting of 'in the green' Snowdrops, Wild Garlic and Bluebells. These were planted around the orchard and it will be interesting to compare how these fare when compared to the dry bulb planting last autumn but the garlic are already growing.



## Emerging Garlic plants 'in the green'

## Snowdrops 'in the green'

It was planned to cut back the large patches of bramble and create wildflower pathways and sheltered clearings and more tree planting space. Unfortunately the wet weather made it impossible to get a tractor onto the site and we had to wait until early March to get a low impact machine in to do the job. Even so this cut up the ground quite a bit and even got stuck on one occasion and had to be dug out. This was the last opportunity to get the work done before the bird nesting season so any further cutting will have to wait till next winter.



## New paths through bramble

The weather also hampered our orchard planting plans. Vix Hill-Ryder had researched and sourced a supplier for replacement fruit trees including several traditional Tamar Valley apples varieties. However,

the planned community planting event in February had to be postponed but the trees did get planted over the next few weeks. A list of the varieties and their characteristics can be found [here](#).

## Millbrook Park Community Orchard

As part of the Get Millbrook Buzzing project, several more fruit trees were added to the orchard in February 2016. The table below lists the varieties and their characteristics.

### Apples

Name of Variety	Type	Origin	Characteristics
Hocking's Green	Desse rt / Cooke r	Calling ton,	A hardy apple, tolerant of wet and windy weather that is a good keeper.
Lucombe's Pine	Desse rt	Exeter, 1800	Golden yellow fruit, said to have a pineapple flavour.
Tom Putt	Desse rt / Cooke r / Cider	Devon , 1700s	Bred by Rev. Tom Putt this dual purpose, mid-season, apple has mild, sharp flavour.
Tregonna King	Desse rt / Cooke r	Nr Launces ton	Large, golden flushed and slightly russeted apple that will keep till Christmas with improving flavour.
Star of Devon	Desse rt	Broadcl yst, Devon, 1905	Mid-late season, medium sized red apple with a sharp flavour; it is a good keeper and can be stored until March or April.
Cornish Aromatic	Desse rt	Cornwal l, 1813	Sweet, red flushed and smooth-skinned variety ripening late season with flavours of pineapple.
Beef Apple	Cooke r	Devon	Large, mid-season, sweet red apple that is scab resistant.

Exeter Cross	Desert	Long Ashton, 1954	Small to medium sized apple with red stripes over greenish yellow skin. Crisp, sweet and juicy with a sharp flavour.
Profusion	Crab	Early 1900's	Pink blossom and small dark red fruit. Excellent pollinator.

### Pears and Plums and Cherries

Name of Variety	Type, origin and characteristics	
Concorde	Pear	Bred from the 19 <sup>th</sup> century Conference and Doyenne du Comice varieties, this pear has good disease resistance and is a reliable cropper with an excellent flavour.
Beurre Hardy	Pear	A classic French late season pear from the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century with rich buttery flesh and excellent flavour.
Denniston's Superb	Gage	Introduced from the USA in the 1800's, a heavy cropper with sweet red flesh.
Opal	Plum	An early ripening, medium sized eating plum, with red fruit and straw coloured flesh. Can be used for jams and crumbles.
Stella	Cherry	The first self-fertile cherry developed in Canada in 1970's. It has very sweet and juicy, dark red cherries.
Lapins Cherokee	Cherry	A dark red/black, self-fertile cherry from Canada with large, dark fleshed fruits. A heavy crop produced later in the season.
Merryweather	Damson	A very hardy variety with large purple fruit with a distinctive rich flavour, ideal for jam and wine making.



### New Orchard Planting

In addition to the orchard, several Hornbeam trees have been planted in the raised beds around the Parade. These are 'fastigiata' cultivars that will develop an interesting compact conical shape as they grow.

The Parish Council grass cutting tender documents were drawn up in February and have been improved to include more long grass areas that will enable plants to flower and set seed. Within these areas it is planned to plant native wildflower plugs in April that will increase the diversity and flowering period. We will monitor and record the distribution and abundance of species over the next few years.

We have been working with local illustrator Sadie Barrow to design a new interpretation panel for the Park. Sadie who lives in Millbrook, recently graduated from Plymouth College of Art and it is fantastic that we have such a talented artist on our doorstep. Once briefed with our concept she drew the pictures and designed the layout, working with the local schools to get their ideas too. The panel is currently being printed but a proof can be previewed [here](#).

The panel will be A1 sized, similar to the Kingfisher one and will be sited in the meadow area of the Park.

Another thing the poor weather did not affect was the Enhancement teams' window display in the Peninsula Trust's Rame Centre, timed to coincide with tree planting in the Orchard and in planters around the village. Chris designed the layout that included model boats and orchard trees and it received numerous complimentary comments.

So what's coming up? The wildflower plug planting in April will our main spring event - look out for publicity material out soon. We also plan to have a flyer printed that will go out to all the homes in our village telling you how you can improve your garden or local patch for pollinators. And finally there is an exciting idea to produce an interactive wildlife map on this website. It will enable everyone to get involved by plotting what you've done to help the pollinators and wildlife of Millbrook.

**Bruce Taggart, Parish Councillor, Get Millbrook**

**Buzzing Co-ordinator.** 