

Five Flowers for Fownhope

August - September

The greatest variety and number of wild plants in Fownhope grow in the woodland and grassland on the Silurian limestone ridges. Many wild plants also grow along the river bank, roadside verges, hedgerows and in old orchards.



Wild Basil – dry verges and grassland on limestone. A short, soft, faintly aromatic plant growing with late summer grass. Oddly named because it neither looks nor smells like the culinary herb basil. The small pinkish-purple flowers grow in whorls above the leaves.



Hoary Plantain – dry grassy verges and grassland. Three or four strikingly white ('hoary') spikes of flowers growing from a base of rounded, ribbed leaves. Fresh and white in late summer sunshine. It has a particular liking for the grass around churches.



Ragwort – verges, overgrazed fields, dry grassy places, commons. The summer golden, warm yellow flowers in dense flat-topped clusters are a valuable source of nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects. The ragged-edged leaves have a strong smell. It is toxic for most grazing animals, particularly when cut and wilted, but the yellow and black striped caterpillars of the cinnabar moth will feed communally on the leaves and stems.



Wild Marjoram – dry verges and grassland mostly on limestone. A pleasantly fragrant culinary herb that can grow up to two feet in height and frequently ‘flops over’ into the late summer grass. The purple, pink and occasionally white flowers in bunches at the top of reddish stems are a very attractive nectar source for butterflies, hoverflies and bees. A joy in the garden.



St John's Wort – verges, open woods and lightly grazed grassy banks. A flower of summer but still beautifully present in early autumn grassland. The remaining five-petalled golden yellow flowers with many stamens are held up on a tracery of small stems and reflect the sun shining on warm grassy banks.