

U3A Gardening group November 25 report.

In November our guest speaker was Kate Bailey who is a Teesdale U3A Member and Convenor of the Climate Solutions Group. Kate came along to talk about Wildflower Gardening. Part of the mission for the Climate Solutions Group is to raise awareness of U3A Members about positive ways we can adapt to climate change and contribute to nature recovery. The UK is the most nature depleted country in Europe.

Much of the land in the UK is used for agriculture, farmers spray out unwanted weeds which are actually wild flowers. The farmers may also use chemical fertilisers, cut or remove hedges and heavily graze their fields. These farming practices have been significant contributors to the decline of nature impacting pollinators and wild life.

Wildflowers are an essential link to the food chain that supports all life on earth. They provide food, shelter and egg laying spaces for a wide variety of birds, insects and invertebrates as well as producing oxygen, absorbing carbon, adding nutrients to the soil, retaining moisture and preventing soil erosion.

There are some changes to the farming support systems which encourage a more nature friendly approach. Large organisations such as councils, the National Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society are establishing areas where wild flowers are allowed to flourish.

Those of us with gardens can help by having some wild flowers in our borders. Red campion, pulmonaria, meadow cranesbill, bluebells, snowdrops, vetch, bugle, white dead nettle and ox eye daisies are just some of the flowers which are attractive and also beneficial to nature.

This was an interesting and informative talk well received by the group who had plenty of contributions to make.

In December we will be having a coach trip to a Christmas event.

In January we will have a break and then our meetings will restart in February.

Julie, Fran and Kate