

Nature News

A green perch in the Willow Den

YOUNG nature lovers visiting the 'Willow Den' classroom at Attenborough Nature Centre now enjoy their wild lessons using 30 shiny new green chairs, thanks to a donation by NES Arnold, a leading educational resource supplier.

More than 4000 children will benefit each year from this gift as they visit the specially equipped classroom to take part in a variety of

fun, educational activities. The classroom forms a base for young people to explore and investigate wildlife at Attenborough Nature Reserve.

Speaking about the donation, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's Karen Bennett said: "The Attenborough Nature Centre is a great place for children of all ages to get closer to nature and learn about wildlife in

a hands-on way, and the new chairs will brighten up the Willow Den classroom, which is used by so many groups of young people and families."

NES Arnold, which has a distribution centre in Nottingham, supplies educational resource materials to schools and nurseries. Their gift forms part of the company's Community Support

programme, which helps good causes in areas near to their facilities. The company now joins 43 other businesses in becoming a Wildlife Guardian, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust's corporate support scheme.

Looking out for Green Guardians

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Wildlife Trust is once again on the lookout for the county's environmental champions with the launch of its annual Green Guardians Awards.

Since the Green Guardians Awards were first launched in 2000, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) and its partners have invested almost £50,000 in environmental projects across the county.

The search is on for individuals, schools, community groups and businesses that are making a real contribution to safeguarding the local and global environment.

Eight awards will be made, including Environmental Community of the Year, Environmental Business of the Year and Young Environmentalist of the Year.

New awards for 2010 include a category designed to reward innovation, either in terms of the use of new technologies or new ideas, and a 'First Steps to Sustainability' award, which has been established to help recognise the achievements of new initiatives.

Speaking on behalf of NWT, Marketing & Communications Manager Erin McDaid said: "Our aim each year is to highlight the efforts made in seeking to tackle environmental problems.

"Since the launch of the Green Guardians Awards a decade ago, the scale of environmental problems has certainly increased but the determination and drive shown by the people of Nottinghamshire to tackle them has grown even faster."

The closing date for applications is Monday, September 27 and NWT is hoping that 2010 will bring a record number of applications. The awards will be presented at a gala event in November.

This year's Award supporters are the Attenborough Nature Centre, EDF Energy, Notts County Council, Novozymes Biopharma, RWE npower, Siemens and The University of Nottingham.

For further details, please contact Erin McDaid on tel: (0115) 958 8242, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Attenborough Nature Notes

IN the last week, there has been an exciting new addition to the Nature Reserve that strangely coincides with the discovery of a locally rare bee orchid found on Corbett's Meadow after an absence of over 20 years, and a species of bee that has been spotted for the first time at Attenborough.

Last Thursday, under the cover of darkness (when bees are back in their hives and settled), six beehives were put into position by Park's Apiaries on one of our flower rich meadows. The bees, it is hoped, will augment the wild bee population on the reserve and help to pollinate the diverse wild flower assemblages that can be found here.

They will also provide a tasty treat of locally sourced and sustainable Attenborough honey that will be sold in the Nature Centre later in the year.

Sixteen different species of wild bee have been recorded on the nature reserve since records began, including the tree bumblebee (*Bombus*

hypnorum), which was seen for the first time at Attenborough this June. The tree bumblebee, which likes to nest in holes in trees, is common and widespread over much of mainland Europe and first arrived on the south coast of England from France in 2001. It has slowly moved north, reaching nearby Leicestershire in 2009. It has a distinctive brown thorax, black abdomen and white tail so is unlike any other native species. This species can often be seen along the Wet Marsh Path towards the observation point overlooking Clifton Pond.

Despite this new arrival, native UK bee populations have suffered a catastrophic decline over the last 30 years. Three species have recently become extinct and many more are now seriously threatened. This is thought to be the result of a number of factors including loss of wildflower habitats, agricultural intensification, use of pesticides and emerging parasites and diseases. As bees play an important role in pollinating wild flowers and almost

a third of all commercial crops, the recent declines are cause for concern. Albert Einstein is reputed to have once said that, without bees to pollinate our food crops, humans would die off in just four years!

Meadow habitats

To help restore valuable meadow habitats, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust are giving away *Mini Meadow seed packs* which will provide all you need to share your garden with nature. Each pack contains enough seed to create a 1m² Mini Meadow wherever you have space, and the mix has been specially selected to attract pollinating insects such as bees. You could sprinkle it on a bare patch of soil, or use it to transform an area of your lawn. You could even create a Mini Meadow in a window box or a hanging basket. Packs are available to Nottinghamshire residents from support@nottswt.co.uk or the Attenborough Nature Centre (one pack per household).

Another first

Elsewhere on the reserve, a marbled white butterfly was seen as it flew through Corbett's Meadow on July 8, becoming another first for Attenborough. This medium sized butterfly, with black and white checked wings, is actually a member of the brown butterfly family. Marbled whites are widespread in southern Britain and have slowly expanded their range northwards over the last 20 years.

Birdwatching highlights include seven black-tailed godwits and four little egrets seen on Clifton Pond on July 9, and a rare sighting of a Common Crane, which flew over the reserve on July 11.

If you would like to register to find out more information about the bees of Attenborough, please contact the Nature Centre on 0115 972 1777 or email enquiries@attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk

Tim Sexton
Attenborough
Nature Centre