



## Wildlife Friendly Addingham

# Brambles

Widespread and abundant, this prickly shrub, the Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) can be found in woods, hedges, waste places and gardens. In the UK there are over different 300 (micro-)species. Each one has a unique flower, shape, fruit and taste. It is a part of the Rosaceae (Rose) family along with raspberries, apples and strawberries.

*"The bramble groweth for the most part in every hedge and bush"* John Gerard, 16<sup>th</sup> C herbalist.



The bramble fruit, blackberries are picked in late summer to autumn to make jams, jellies, pies etc. The fruit is a very good source of vitamin C. The young shoots can be eaten in salads whilst the leaves make a tea, which is said to be good for a sore throat. The juice from blackberries was once used to dye cloth. So, that tells us why their purple stains are so difficult to get off our skin and clothes. It's certainly worth putting up with a few scratches to enjoy this delicious fruit – food for free!

*"But Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper"*

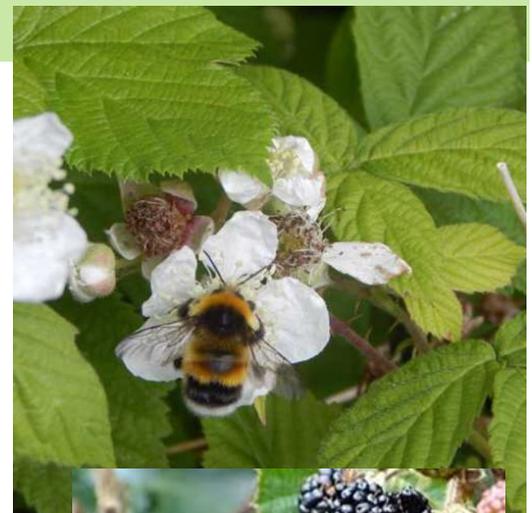
*Beatrix Potter, The Tale of Peter Rabbit.*

The value of Brambles to wildlife is immense. It is probably the most important source of pollen, nectar and fruit sugar for many species of insect than any other common British plant.

Bramble flowers usually appear in July and August and have white to pale pink petals.

The nectar and pollen is enthusiastically collected by bumble and Honeybees and many other pollinators such as butterflies, hoverflies, solitary bees and wasps. The blackberry fruit develops from these flowers. They are an important food source for many animals, not just ourselves, but mice, badgers and foxes.

The thick, thorny and tangled habit of Brambles provides a place of cover and shelter for many animals. They are a key nesting site for several species of bird such as the Wren, Robin and Blackbird.



***Brambles are great for wildlife. So, if you find a bramble hiding in your garden, think about leaving it there!***