

# Tale from the Garden!

With the rich bounty of berries ripening on trees & shrubs in our gardens at the moment, you might think that the birds have an easy life & that there is little need to make extra provision for their appetite. But not all birds eat berries, as some of them are just too small for such a fruity diet. Autumn is also a time when more of them will be looking for places to sleep in the warm & dry, so make sure your garden offers everything they need in the way of sustenance & accommodation – nest boxes, mixed grains in feeders & sprinkled on the ground, & unsalted peanuts for the tit family, greenfinches & other nimble-footed feathered friends. Balls of fat into which seeds are embedded are always a great success & will attract a variety of birds. And don't forget about water, which needs to be replaced & refreshed every day since birds like to bathe in it as well as drink it! An upturned dustbin lid, large plant saucers & other shallow bowls will all be useful as water containers. Start feeding, watering & sheltering birds now, secure in the knowledge that you'll be helping them through a long, hard winter.



**Viburnums** are the stalwart of any good shrub border and not surprisingly they are also equally important plants for creating good bird habitat. **Viburnums** provide everything from a canopy that shelters the nests of smaller songbirds to a plethora of coloured berries that birds love to feast upon.

We'll all have heard on the news about how communities have been rallying around families that need extra support, have offered to deliver food parcels, give free meals and provide children with snacks to keep them going, during October's half-term holiday. Businesses, community kitchens, supermarkets, charities, churches and more, stepped up to ensure that no child went hungry.

The attention on food poverty has never been more important as Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty estimate that over 500,000 people in the UK are now reliant on food parcels.

According to the World Bank, nearly two million people in the UK are undernourished. And that 36 per cent of the UK population are just one heating bill or a broken washing machine away from hardship according to Oxfam. Statistics like this, and his own experience, inspired footballer Marcus Rashford, to help try and end child poverty. He was recently awarded an MBE after forcing a Government U-turn on free school meal vouchers over the summer holidays. Blown away by news of local businesses stepping up to fill the voucher scheme deficit during the October half term, Marcus 'tweeted' "Selflessness, kindness, togetherness, this is the England I know."

Whether we're feeding the birds or donating to the Food Bank, we are all showing our own brand of selflessness, kindness & togetherness. We can all 'step up' & 'give back' to our local community simply through being 'Church', opening our doors, providing sustenance & shelter, spiritual & physical. We're making plans to help out the Salvation Army with a Toy Service in early December, so that toys can be delivered to families in need. We're going to hang our 2,641 knitted Angels on every front door in Stokesley, with a message of goodwill & cheer from the church, in time for Christmas. We hope to 'pack-a-picnic' Christmas afternoon tea for those in our church family who may be spending Christmas on their own & on Christmas Eve, we hope to be a distribution centre for food donated by the local shops in Stokesley as they close their doors for the Christmas holiday. And in the New Year, we hope to re-open our kitchen & offer soup lunches to those who need to come in from the cold.

Acts 20 v35 "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

1 Peter 3 v8 "Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

Psalms 104 v28 "When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things."