Farming with Nature

M&S FOOD

Farm:
APS Isle of Wight
Growers:
A Pearson & Sons Ltd
Location:
Arreton, Isle of Wight
Produce:
Tomatoes

"After early assessments, we knew that some of the areas around the glasshouses were valuable habitats. However we hadn't appreciated just how many invertebrates would use the sand banks, piles of rubble and wet areas to live."

Brian Morely
Grower Manager

APS INDICATOR & INNOVATION FARM

Making the most of valuable micro-habitats around glass houses can be a really easy win for a wide range of biodiversity on site.

Glass house sites like the APS site at Arreton on the Isle of Wight can provide a range of micro-habitats that tend to be unique within an agricultural landscape and are much more akin to brownfield sites. Sand banks, rubble and hardcore piles and seeps and leaks from irrigation systems are all incredibly valuable for a range of reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The ruderal plants that grow in these transitionary habitats also support bird species like linnets and gold finches that feed on seeds and invertebrates.

REPTILE AND INVERTEBRATE HABITAT

ADDER

Sandy banks are fantastic habitat for a range of solitary bees and because they tend to be very infertile they also support flowering annuals that provide pollen and nectar for many different invertebrates.

Rubble & Hardcore piles provide lots of hollows and dips, voids and spaces under the rubble and this type of brownfield habitat is great for reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates especially if they are

Farming with Nature

Farm:
APS Isle of Wight
Growers:
A Pearson & Sons Ltd
Location:
Arreton, Isle of Wight
Produce:
Tomatoes

"Willow is taking over some of the wetland areas so we have a programme of rotational clearance to make sure the backwash filters remain functional and continue to support wetland wildlife."

Greg Wachenek, Composting & Waste Manager

located near water bodies or streams. Species like slow worms, grass snakes, common lizard and adder will thrive in and around these piles and the value of this habitat increases with a regular disturbance regime to prevent more mature plant communities from taking over.

Ruderal species like teasels, thistles and rose bay will herb often grow on these rubble and hardcore piles providing a fabulous seed source for finches and linnets.

SOLITARY BEE HABITAT

SOLITARY BEE NEST

GOLDFINCH ON TEASEL

Pools and wetland areas tend to occur around glass house sites either by design or accidently. At APS there are a series of filter pools to clean backwash water from irrigation filters and these have developed into habitats similar to tall herb fens which are fantastic for dragon flies & damsel flies. Smaller wet patches in and around sites can boost invertebrate diversity, providing an important part of many invertebrate life cycles like hoverfly.

WET HABITAT NEAR GLASS HOUSES

FILTER BED WETLAND AREA