

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

Walks on the wild side near Edinburgh

The National Trust for Scotland has published a spotter's guide for visitors to Inveresk Lodge Garden.

The end of lockdown is in sight just as the first green shoots of spring start to emerge. And with the changing of seasons, a whole new world will come to life at a peaceful hillside garden near Edinburgh.

To mark UN World Wildlife Day in 2021, conservation charity, the National Trust for Scotland has published a series of spotter's guides for visitors to their nationwide network of properties and wild spaces.

One turns its eye to a walled garden tucked away in the charming village of Inveresk near Edinburgh, Inveresk Lodge Garden – a garden paradise, filled with tall trees, fragrant flowers and clear water.

While exploring the woodlands, walkers are being encouraged to keep a close eye open for some of the many animals and birds who call the woodland sanctuary home.

The guides are published as the charity runs a fundraising appeal in support of its work to protect Scotland's nature. Caring for countryside costs the charity millions each year. Supporters are being asked to donate to help the Trust help nature, now and in the future. Find out more at: www.nts.org.uk/help-nature.

Goldfinch

This brightly coloured finch is a real garden favourite and is easy to spot and identify thanks to its golden wing flashes and bright red face. And they're not just a pretty face - their song can be heard from quite a distance, rising and falling. Their beaks are cleverly designed to extract seeds from tricky plants, which other birds can't reach. In winter, they can gather in quite large groups.

Great spotted woodpecker

One of Inveresk Lodge's most noisy residents and a common sight in the woodland. The woodpecker's drumming on trunks and searching for insects is a welcome sign of spring. Smaller than its green cousin (it's about the size of a blackbird), this woodpecker is easily identified by the bright red neck patch (adult male) or bright red cap (juveniles).

Grey heron

A common sight near the pond at Inveresk, the Grey Heron's perfect poise and pose, combined with long neck, long legs and long beak make it instantly recognisable. And watch out when they take flight. This is a sight to behold and their wingspan can reach up to 1.9metres. Just be careful if you are walking the forest floor beneath their heronries. Like owls, they regurgitate non-digested fur and bones in pellets – which makes for a lovely surprise package for unsuspecting walkers.

Roe Deer

This medium-sized deer is native to Britain and has adapted to live in a wide range of habitats. Their large ears are often prominent when they're standing still or grazing; and their white tailless rump is a very common sight as they dash away. The bucks have small, three-pointed antlers. Roe deer normally have a rich brown coat, but this fades over winter to better help with camouflage. They tend to live alone in summer, but gather together in small groups for winter, after the rut.

Tortoiseshell butterfly

The small tortoiseshell is common throughout Scottish gardens and is one of the first to emerge in spring, making it a real favourite for many people as a sign of summer on its way. They commonly hibernate in sheds, garages or hollow tree trunks in woodland. This butterfly makes a cool caterpillar as well: it has a spiky back and vomits a green fluid to deter predators.

Treecreeper

Bring binoculars to spot these tiny birds climbing up trees with the help of their stiff tails, moving more like a mouse than a bird. They snap up insects from the bark with their sharp, curved beak as they go. Treecreepers are well camouflaged against the tree trunks, in brown and white. Interestingly, they only climb up – once they've reached the top, they fly off to the base of another tree and start again.

If you are thinking of travelling to a National Trust for Scotland property, please check Scottish Government Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions. You can also find out more about the properties at [nts.org.uk](https://www.nts.org.uk)

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Editor's Notes:

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.