

Wild for Nature Biodiversity Week in Merlin Woods Galway May 22nd-May28th

Friends of Merlin Woods will host a week of events for Biodiversity week May 22nd-May28th celebrating all the natural beauty and wildlife of Merlin Woods. Bringing together people, groups, schools, and National Organisations to showcase the amazing high biodiverse amenity through walks, talks, showcases and family days.

Galway City is home to many different habitats and species and has been awarded the European Green Leaf City for 2017. Merlin Woods, Galway city's largest oldest urban woodland holds many of these habitats and species and it is always an immense pleasure to highlight how fortunate as a city we are to have this woodland and its species which have survived for many generations and hopefully will continue to thrive into the future.

On Monday May 22nd, International Day for Biological Diversity, Kate Mc Aney Vincent Wildlife Trust will lead a bat walk at 10pm. Merlin Woods is an ideal habitat for foraging and roosting bats and it is a delight to hear the bats or to catch a glimpse as they fly over the woodland trees. As part of the week, Friends of Merlin Woods will provide educational walks for two local schools. The first of these schools' trips will be going out on Tuesday 23rd. Merlin Woods Primary School will take an exploratory walk looking for butterflies, bugs, birds, wildflowers and more led by Friends of Merlin Woods.

Wed May 24th 7pm Nature Walk with Padraig Keirns Conservation Volunteers Galway. Padraig has been involved with Conservation for many years and his knowledge of plants, trees and wildlife is a joy to behold. Always offering interesting and informative facts he has gathered over the years from his close relationship to nature. A fabulous way to spend an evening walking among the trees.

Thursday May 25th 8pm Bird Song Workshop with John Lusby Birdwatch Ireland at Schull Enterprise Centre Ballybane. **Have you ever wondered why birds sing?**

This workshop will explore different aspects of bird song, including why birds go to so much effort to make themselves heard, and the significance of bird song in our lives. We will focus on tips to identify local birds by their songs and calls. This event is a precursor to our dawn chorus on the 27th of May in Merlin Woods and is a wonderful way to increase appreciation and understanding of the dawn chorus...and hopefully help to identify some of the individuals responsible for all that magical noise in the mornings.

On Friday May26th the next school visit will be with Gael Scoil Dara Renmore who will enjoy the sights and sounds, exploring all the woods has to offer in an educational walk led by Friends of Merlin Woods.

Morning birds and adventurers join the Dawn Chorus led by John Lusby Birdwatch.

Saturday May 27th, a 4.30am start will allow us to hear the first early riser of the Bird Kingdom of Merlin Woods and a chorus of song will bring us into the early dawn. A truly magnificent start to anyone's day and one worth experiencing!

On Sunday May 28th Forest Day Friends of Merlin Woods will join the Polish Community for a fantastic family day in the woods supported by Galway's Green Leaf.

11am with a communal clean up with prizes, followed by creative activities for children, fresh air fitness classes for all ages.

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2pm Animal Magic Birds of Prey showcase at the Merlin Woods info point, roundabout on the main path. The showcase allows families to get up close and learn about the beautiful birds of prey which can be found in the woodlands and elsewhere.

All events are free to attend. All public walks will leave from Merlin Woods Community Garden near Doughiska entrance to Merlin Woods, just past the playground in the park, unless otherwise stated. The entrance road to the area is just off the Doughiska Rd between the Centra shop and the Wooden School.

People are asked to dress appropriately for the weather and wear suitable footwear. No dogs are allowed at the events. Thanks to the support of Galway City Council. For more information please contact Caroline on 0852484380 or contact via email friendsofmerlinwoods@gmail.com . Event info can also be found on Friends of Merlin Woods Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofMerlinWoods/>