

A link between Camden Meadow, Hedgemoad Park and the American Museum

You are all aware of the hazel in Camden Meadow. A wonderful shrubby tree with its male catkins, female flowers, and nuts it is a haven for wildlife. Historically it has been associated with all sorts of mystical ideas – symbolisation of fertility, protection against evil spirits, and the branches used for water divining. In Celtic times it was a symbol of wisdom and inspiration.

Hazel can grow to a height of 12 metres. The practice of coppicing which has been carried out for 4000 years, involves cutting the stems down every few years. The shrub is maintained in a juvenile state potentially enabling it to live for several hundred years. The stems which are quite pliable were historically an invaluable resource for wattle-and-daub walls for houses and are still used today for making fencing and screens.

Volunteers working on Camden Meadow have been coppicing the abundant hazel to open up views and make space for planting fruit trees and installing bee hives.



Photo: John Long

This year coppiced hazel has a new role in providing a link between 2 local areas of volunteering – Camden Meadow and Hedgemoor Park



The Friends of Hedgemoor Park have taken over the bed known as Vegmead, but sadly no longer a community allotment. It is work in progress, but the fruit trees and bushes have been pruned and revitalised, with new planting gradually being added.

Hazel gathered from Camden Meadow has been used to start a woven edging, which will be continued next year to complete the circle.



The contrasting yellow stems are willow which was brought over to Hedgemoor from the American Museum garden by a volunteer who works on both sites, forming another link.



We work with nature, and nature works with us. All power to nature and volunteering in Bath!

Caroline Groom, April 2023