

GARDEN TRAIL



Welcome to the Garden Trail at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel. Our trail features a host of beautiful flowers and plants and interesting creatures. See how many you can find! Explore and enjoy!

AIR BUG'N'BEE

Est. 2020 - Carlow's finest bug hotel.



Providing a comfy night's sleep for our guests is a priority at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel. While we provide this to our two-legged guests indoors, our resident wildlife and creepy crawlies are catered to outside.

Established in early 2020, our Air Bug'n'Bee Hotel welcomes creepy crawly guests, from frogs and toads; to solitary bees and bumblebees, ladybirds, woodlice, spiders and millipedes all year round.

With its eco-friendly architecture, the Air Bug'n'Bee is built from all-natural materials sourced on our hotel grounds. Woodford Dolmen-produced materials include straw, moss, grass, leaves, pine cones, bamboo, tree bark and plant and shrub stems constructed artfully by our groundskeeper to make a splendid getaway for our outdoor guests.

WOODFORD DOLMEN HOTEL

WE WELCOME MANY INTERESTING CREATURES TO THE AIR BUG'N'BEE

Here are some fun facts
about our guests:

The Solitary Bee

The quintessential solo traveller, solitary bees make up the majority of Ireland's bee population. Ireland boasts 99 bee species, of which 77 are solitary.

Solitary bees are different to bumblebees. They are much smaller in size and come in different shapes and colour variations. Some species are small and black; like ants with wings, while others have black and yellow striped bodies, like wasps.

A typical dinner for them during their stay are colourful flowers covered in pollen and full of nectar! We love having them around as they are great pollinators and help to keep our gardens full of flowers.



AIR BUG'N'BEE RESIDENTS

Butterflies & Moths

Butterflies and moths are some of the most stylish guests to the Air Bug'n'Bee and gardens.

While they are of the same family, there are some distinct differences between these cousins. The most obvious difference is the butterfly's vibrantly coloured and patterned wings in comparison to a moth's more muted and neutral colouring. Another key difference is that butterflies are more active during the daytime; while moths prefer to come out at night.

While relaxing, the butterfly folds its wings back. The moth instead flattens its wings against its body or spreads them out in a "jet plane" position. Butterfly antennae are thin with club-shaped tips, while moths' are feathery or comb-like. The moth is also stout and fuzzy, whereas butterflies are slender and smooth. One thing the butterfly and moth have in common is their love of mashed banana which we try to have in good supply for them during their stay with us.

A favourite activity for the moth is cocoon-making. A cocoon is a silk casing the moth builds around itself as it develops into a pupa or adult. Instead of a cocoon, the butterfly forms a chrysalis.

These are instead hard and smooth with no silk.

Many people believe that if you touch a butterfly's wing and "powder" rubs off, the butterfly will no longer be able to fly. While they don't like to be disturbed as guests, this is not true. This "powder" is in fact made up of tiny scales shed by the butterfly during its lifetime.



AIR BUG'N'BEE RESIDENTS

Ladybirds

One of our most elegant guests at the Air Bug'n'Bee is the ladybird. Ladybirds have oval, dome-shaped bodies with six short legs. Depending on the species, they can have spots, stripes or no markings at all.

With about 5,000 different species of ladybird in the world, the seven-spot ladybird is most common to Ireland. It has a shiny, red and black body with three spots on each side and one in the middle. Its head is black with white patches on either side.

Ladybirds are 1cm in length and have a lifespan of one to two years. We are very fortunate to welcome them as guests because in many cultures, they are thought to bring good luck. Farmers and gardeners love them because they eat aphids (green & whitefly) and other plant-eating pests. When very hungry they can eat up to 50 flies a day!

The ladybird is very clever. When it senses danger, it curls its legs under its body and "plays dead" in the hopes of avoiding any trouble.



AIR BUG'N'BEE RESIDENTS



Spiders

Our Air Bug'n'Bee is fully accessible for our eight-legged friends, the spiders. There are over 370 species of spider in Ireland.

They are often our most grumpy guest as all of these species bite! But we still welcome them to the hotel because we know very few of them are venomous. They are in fact quite friendly behind their dark, leggy exterior.

They rarely dine in our Air Bug'n'Bee restaurant as they like to spin webs and catch insects and flies to eat for themselves instead.

They are cold-blooded creatures who lay eggs in a safe damp place in late Summer.

6 MOST COMMON SPIDERS OF IRELAND:

Cardinal Spider

The Cardinal is the largest spider in Ireland and the UK at up to 14cm long. Because of their large size, incredible speed and nocturnal habits, they have a scary reputation among humans.

However, we have found them to be very pleasant and calm guests whose bites are rare and painless.



Daddy Long Legs

These creepy crawlies have small grey bodies with long, thin legs and can measure up to 45 mm.

Legend has it that the Daddy Long Legs spider contains the most potent venom but that their fangs aren't strong enough to penetrate human skin. This may explain why they usually enjoy soups and smoothies from our Air Bug'n'Bee restaurant.



6 MOST COMMON SPIDERS OF IRELAND CONTINUED:

Giant House Spider

Measuring up to 120mm, this hairy black critter is most often seen in Autumn and is a spider usually found in the bathtub. Excellent sprinters, they can run extremely fast but for a short time only.

Their sheet-like webs can be found in garages, attics, and wall corners where they are less likely to be disturbed. Giant house spiders do possess a potent venom and can bite, but they do not usually pose a threat to humans.



Missing Sector Orb Web Spider

Despite its long name, this spider is only around 15mm in size. Not harmful to humans, it is distinguished by its pale body and legs. It also has silvery-grey markings on its abdomen. It earned its name because of the distinctive web it spins; an orb shape with one full sector missing.



Lace Web Spider

Generally around 20mm in length, the lace web spider is brown with yellow markings on its abdomen. The Lace web enjoys hanging out on outdoor walls and fencing. They generally visit us in the summer as they normally retreat inside in the Autumn months to avoid heavy rainfall.

Beware, the lace web bites! They are not the friendliest spider and a bite from one of them is painful with localised swelling lasting up to 12 hours. Best not to disturb them on their holidays!



Money Spider

The smallest of them all, money spiders are 5mm long with a leg span of just 2mm.

This spider weaves hammock-shaped webs and paralyzes its prey with a bite before wrapping it in silk and eating it. Despite this elaborate form of hunting prey, the money spider poses no harm to humans.

It gets its name from an old superstition. It is said that if one gets stuck in your hair, you will have good luck and increased wealth.

AIR BUG'N'BEE RESIDENTS CONTINUED:



Woodlice

We have a lot of woodlice come to stay at the Air Bug'n'Bee. They are frequent travellers around the island of Ireland and particularly enjoy Ireland's Ancient East.

Of the world's 3,500 species of woodlice, 32 are present in Ireland.

Woodlice are fascinating little creatures. Turn over a rotting log or large stone in the garden and you'll find a teeming mass of them scurrying underneath it. Woodlice have 14 legs, a hard exterior skeleton and can roll into a spherical shape when in danger.

They always request our darkest rooms at the Air Bug'n'Bee because they don't like bright light. They also rarely take showers as they prefer mainly dry conditions. Because they tend to congregate in dark, damp places, they are often labelled as pests but this couldn't be more untrue.

Woodlice do a lot of good in our garden. They are essential to nature's waste disposal system and love recycling! They help to break down materials in soil so that vital nutrients get through.

WOODFORD DOLMEN GARDEN TRAIL

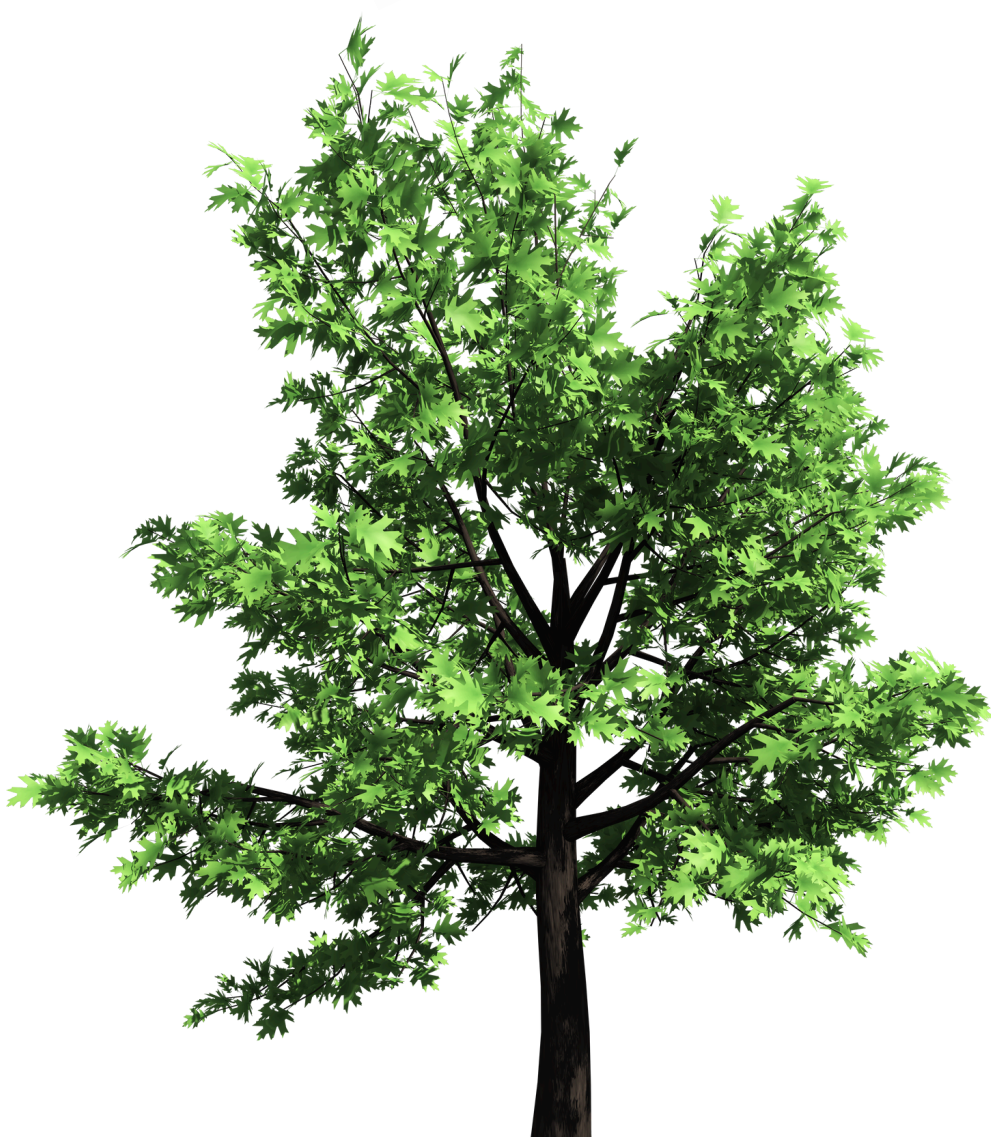
Here are some of the
beautiful flowers and plants
to be found in our gardens:



Crab Apple Tree



Copper Acer Tree



Oak Tree



Evergreen Tree

WOODFORD DOLMEN GARDEN TRAIL



Lavender



Cardinal Beardtongue



Copper Beech Tree



White Hydrangea



Fuchsia



Veronica Salicifolia

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