

A Guide to the Orchids of the Chipstead Downs



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Violet Helleborine (*Epipactis purpurata*)



Found only in a small area of Banstead Woods, the Violet Helleborine is a robust orchid often with multiple flowering stems. The leaves are oval-lanceolate and spiral up the stem. Leaves are greyish-green above and purple flushed below. Stems are also purple flushed.

Flowering period - August/September

White Helleborine (*Cephalanthera damasonium*)

Found only on Coneyboro Hill where a single plant persists, although it has not been seen to flower in the past eight years - principally due to the flower spikes being eaten by either rabbit or deer. Unfortunately this means we cannot show you a photograph of the plant!

The flowering period is between June and July.

Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*)

Found only at one small site on Park Down, this is another orchid that is known to be present, but not yet photographed whilst in flower as the rabbits and deer seem content to munch the flower spikes!

Flowering period - June to July

Common Twayblade (*Listera ovata*)



The yellow/green flowers of the Common Twayblade and its habit of growing at the woodland edge make this plant difficult to see - although it is relatively common. It is usually found and identified by its basal leaves which are broad oval-elliptical, strongly ribbed and horizontally spreading.

Flowering period - June to July, but often earlier.

Man Orchid (*Aceras anthropophorum*)



Found only in a small area on Park Down and infrequently seen here! A tall, erect flower spike attaining 40 cm with many flowers. The flowers have a yellowish-green oval hood with a narrow lip hanging down with two 'arms' and two 'legs'.

Flowering period - May to June

Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*)



The commonest orchid found on the Chipstead Downs, often up to 30 cm tall. The flower spike can be variable, but is usually densely set with flowers and dome-shaped to conical. This beautiful orchid can be seen on Stagbury field, Great Parson's field, Barn field, Hither field, Coneyboro Hill, Hill Wood field and Fames Rough.

Flowering period - June to August

Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*)



One of most colourful orchids, the flowers can be quite variable from a nearly white background through to light pink. The leaves are distinctive with more or less transversely oval purple spots - however, occasionally spotless! Not as common as the Pyramidal Orchid and can be found on Great Parson's field and Hither field.

Flowering period - June to August

Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*)



This beautiful orchid has a velvety, insect-like lower flower lip with a complex and somewhat variable pattern of markings. It can attain a height of 40 cm tall, but is frequently much smaller requiring careful searching of its grassy habitat. It is also found in scrub areas where sufficient light allows its growth. It may be found on Hither field and Coneyboro Hill, but does not make its appearance every year.

Flowering period - June to July

Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*)



Restricted to woodland edge and open woodland habitats in one part of the site, this orchid flower resembles an insect hanging off of a small green flower. The Fly orchid depends on a single species of digger wasp for pollination.

Flowering period - May to June but frequently much earlier.

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