

Meadowlands

The grassland covering much of Morden Park was close-mown until parts towards the western corner were returned to meadowland in the 1970's in order for people to enjoy the wild flowers in spring and summer and to encourage more wildlife.

Morden Park was one of the first London parks to adopt such changes to grass maintenance and this trend now continues throughout many of London's parks.

In the 1990's the area covered by this initiative was expanded to include the former ILEA playing fields at the northern end of the park. This area now displays the hallmarks of old grassland.



Fox



Field Vole

The meadows are managed by cutting for hay on an annual basis in July - a return to the traditional management of the park. This has improved the area in terms of its floral and invertebrate interest, which contrasts dramatically with the rest of the park's grasslands, which are still gang-mown and provide little ecological interest.

Yorkshire fog, common bent, meadow and red fescue and soft brome are the predominant grasses. These grasses are interspersed with colourful herbs such as autumn hawkbit, goat's-beard, cat's-ear and common bird's-foot trefoil, meadow buttercup, sorrel, oxeye daisy and hardheads.

Sources: Nature Conservation in Merton. Morden Park Management Plan.



The former ILEA playing fields are particularly diverse, with a great array of grass and wild flower species that includes tall fescue, sweet vernal-grass, slender soft-brome, grey sedge, bulbous buttercup, hairy tare, grass vetchling and meadow vetchling.

The diversity of flora provides a rich food source and habitat for many insects, birds and small mammals such as voles and mice. These in turn attract predators like foxes and kestrels. In summer a range of grassland butterflies can be seen on these meadows, including common blue, small and large skippers and meadow brown.



Autumn Hawkbit



Grass Vetchling



Field Mouse

For more information on Morden Park visit www.merton.gov.uk/mordenpark

