

Huw's muse: The Bramble – What a plant!



It's that time of year again when the Bramble produces its tasty fruit. I have a begrudging respect for this beast of the plant world, on the many occasions when I have tried to deal with it, I have usually come second best and suffered to its defences. It has scratched and stabbed me more times than I can remember, I'm convinced it's shoots actually reach out and hook into you and don't let go!

It's not only its defences that impress me but its ability to spread and reproduce itself, during the growing season it must grow inches by the day, it travels over ground by layering its shoots, underground by its root suckers, and also by spreading its seeds via the fruit that it produces. I have a theory that if humans didn't contain it, it would take over the world!

We have been enjoying its fruits for nearly 3000 years, its leaves have been used for medicinal purposes, and its stems can be used in the making of string and rope etc. Needless to say, that wildlife loves them!

The word Bramble actually means 'impenetrable thicket' which is very appropriate as I would defy anyone to get through a hedge of brambles! According to folklore you should not eat the berries after 'Old Michaelmas day' (Oct 11th) as the devil has made them unfit to eat, there may be some truth in this as by this date they've usually gone mouldy.

So, in my many fights and battles with this old adversary I have to admit that it has mostly got the better of me, and I have the scars to prove it!

Huw.