

Bryher season guide

Spring

Throughout March, April and May the very rare dwarf pansy (*Viola kitaibeliana*) grows in the sandy turf behind Rushy Bay. The pansy grows in large numbers but they are often very difficult to find. Seekers of this elusive flower can be seen on hands and knees in their quest to find this miniature botanical treasure. Fields of wild narcissi, soleil d'or and daffodils.

Summer

Puffins can be spotted around the islands until late July. The best way to spot them is to head out on an advertised boat trip where the skipper will search for them amongst the rocks and uninhabited islands. Seals— all the seals in Scilly are Atlantic Grey Seals (*Halichoerus Grypus*) and they are resident year round. Summer brings calmer weather and the opportunity to see them at close quarters. You may see them bobbing in the sea close to the shore or take a boat trip to find them hauled out on their favourite rocks. Clumps of Thrift or Sea Pink (*Armeria Maritima*) form a carpet of pink in some parts of the island. Its flowers are at their best in May and June. Many sub-tropical plants flourish in Scilly- Lampranthus and Mesembryanthemum from South Africa grow on many walls and Geranium Maderense, the largest geranium in the world, from Madeira, can be found on the verges beside the paths. The introduced South African Agapanthus flowers through late

summer. It is said to have been established by people scattering its bulbs as they walk around the islands.

August is fete month! Each island hosts a one day extravaganza in a bid to raise funds to help with island running costs. Bryher is renowned as one of the best and the cake stall is legendary!! It is usually held one Sunday in August— call your accommodation provider to check when.

The Miracle Theatre Company comes to Scilly! For the past 18 years the theatre company has brought its top quality productions to the Tresco Abbey Gardens. Wrap up warm and take a blanket to sit under the stars and enjoy a brilliant performance in a truly unique setting. Bryher Boat Services offer an evening boat trip from Bryher to Tresco to attend the show. Visit www.miracletheatre.co.uk for dates and details of their current show.

Autumn

Blackberries grow in abundance along the pathways. The beautifully clear, unpolluted air means they taste amazing! October is the main month for bird watching with the influx of migrating birds to the islands.

Winter

Strong winds lead to stormy sea and dramatic wave watching is guaranteed at Hell Bay. With the main tourist season over, Bryher is very quiet— you can often walk the whole island and not meet another person!

Birds to look out for all year round

- Oystercatchers** (*Haematopus Ostralegus*) with black and white plumage and long orange bills
 - Curlews** (*Numenius Arquata*) are large brown birds with extraordinarily long down-curved bills.
 - Meadow Pipits** (*Anthus Pratensis*) are about the same size as a House Sparrow with brownish-olive upperparts and obvious black streaking on the flanks and breast.
 - Little Egrets** (*Egretta Garzetta*), small white herons, are occasionally spotted on the shore or on the small islands in the channel between Bryher and Tresco.
 - Herring Gull** (*Larus Argentatus*) has pink legs.
 - Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus Fuscus*) has yellow legs.
 - Great Black-backed Gull** (*Larus Marinus*) is very dark grey with pale, flesh coloured legs.
 - Shags** (*Phalacrocorax Aristotelis*) are glossy purple-black sea-birds found on the rocks close to land and swimming and diving in the sea.
- Further out you may spot **Gannets** (*Morus Bassanus*), the largest sea birds found in British waters with a wing span of up to 6ft/180cm. Adults have stunning white plumage with yellow heads and black wing-tips. They can sometimes be seen diving, dagger-like, into the water from great heights to fish.

