

The badgers ate all the tulips

Badgers ate thousands of tulips which had been gifted to Scotland's leading botanical garden and planted there.

More than 10,000 tulip bulbs were donated to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) by a generous supporter.

Horticulturalists planted them on the approach to the historic Botanic Cottage, anticipating a stunning display of flowers.

But only a few hundred grew as more than 9,000 were dug up and devoured by hungry badgers living in and around the Garden.

Raoul Curtis-Machin, RBGE Director of Horticulture and Visitor Experience, said: "From time to time we get big gifts from other nurseries and individuals.

"We had a fantastic donation of about 10,000 tulips that went in the ground but only about 700 actually appeared because, who knew, badgers love them.

"We were looking forward to the wonderful display. It was still very attractive but just not as impactful as it might have been."

The RBGE has a diverse ecosystem of plants and animals including badgers, foxes and squirrels.

There are several badger setts. Although the omnivores are rarely seen by staff or visitors, at night they target slugs and snails and make holes in the lawns looking for worms.

In the past, staff have tried putting out pairs of flashing “night eyes” in a bid to prevent the badgers from uprooting and eating plants.

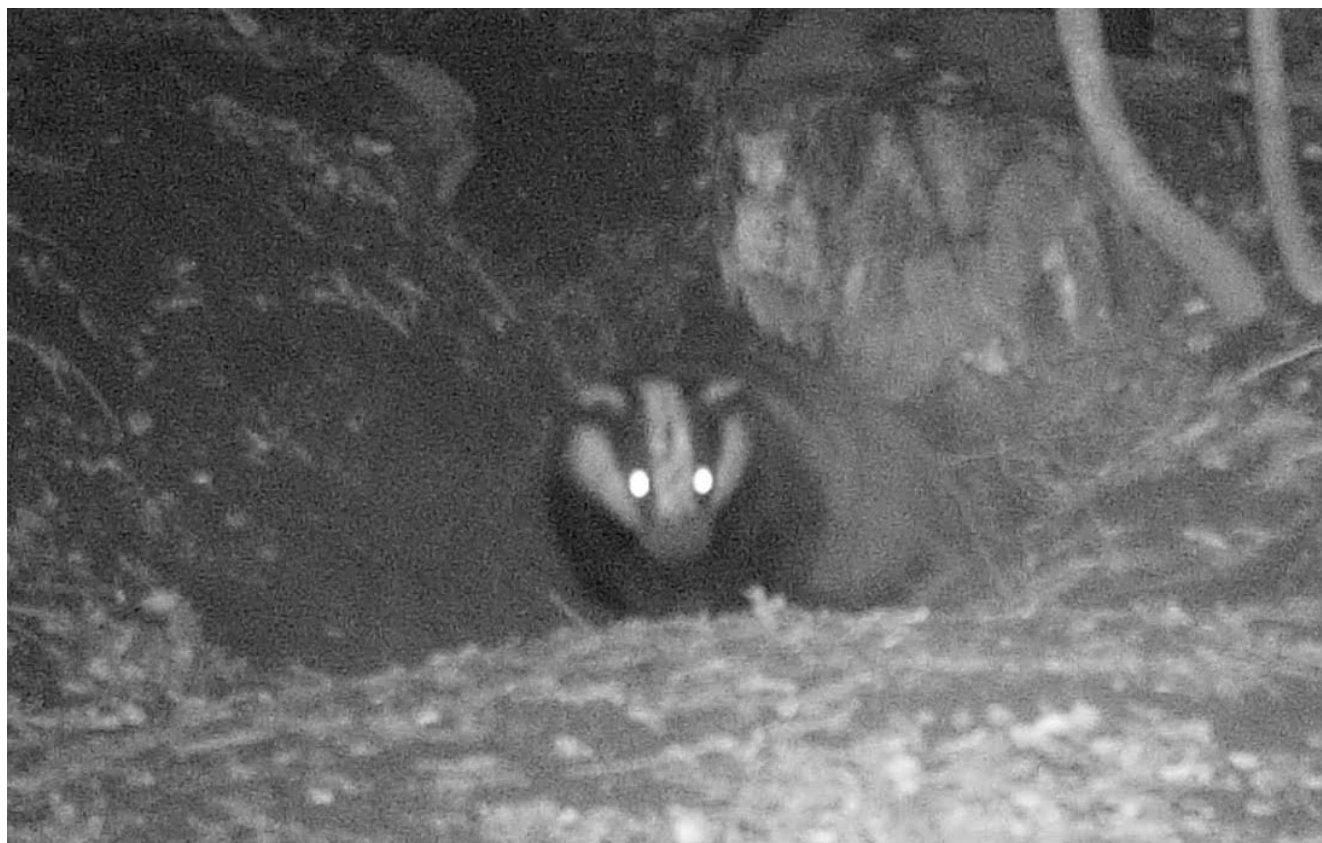
The “eyes” – red lights triggered by movement sensors – were supposed to trick the nocturnal creatures into thinking there was another badger there. But the clever animals finally rumbled the ploy and began to ignore them.

Mr Curtis-Machin added: “We celebrate all the wildlife in our gardens – even the stuff that’s eating our plants.

“Badgers are protected so you wouldn’t think of moving them anyway, but because we’ve got them in the neighbourhood we just accept that they are part of the population.

“It’s just one of those things. Everything you think is a baddie in the garden does have a positive as a general rule.

“We just don’t plant as many tulips and focus on plants they don’t eat.”



A badger in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh