



Plantlife



**Explore
the
colourful
Welsh
coast**

**Wild about Welsh
...Coastal cliffs**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
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The colourful coastal cliffs...

A walk along the towering cliff tops of the Welsh coast can be a spectacular experience. The shimmering sea stretches to the horizon and wild flowers bloom along winding paths

The Welsh coastline is home to a rich variety of wildlife, thanks to a unique collection of habitats. The coastal grassland and heaths on the cliff tops are particularly important for wild plants, some of which are very rare.

For example, the heathland of Great Orme's Head in North Wales has little changed since the last Ice Age and is the only known site of the critically endangered native cotoneaster.

In South Wales, the Gower cliffs are the only place in the UK where the dainty yellow whitlow grass can be found.

Harsh sea winds, stormy weather, thin soils and grazing all help to keep the grasses and shrubs short, giving flowers room to thrive.

Keeping our cliffs full of colour...

Unfortunately, coastal wild flowers have been crowded out of cliff tops due to a lack of grazing, or overgrazing in the summer months when plants need to flower and set seed. On Great Orme's Head, Plantlife is working with the National Trust, the tenant farmer and other partners to establish a system to graze the grass and make room for wild flowers.

Invasive plants can also put added pressure on space and light. Varieties of non-native cotoneaster, popular in gardens and parks, are also a favourite of birds who enjoy the berries and spread the seed into the wild. They are a particular problem on limestone cliffs where many rare native plants can also grow. At Southgate on the Gower, we are helping the National Trust to remove these plants which are threatening juniper, yellow whitlow grass and others.

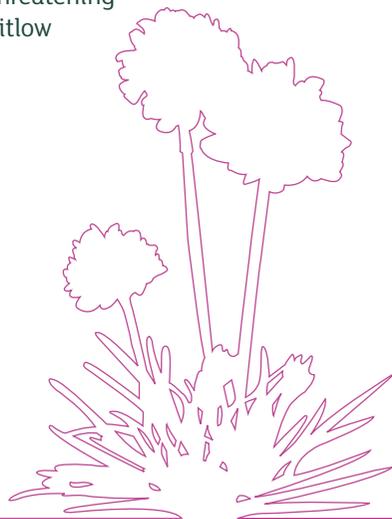
We can all play a part in celebrating and protecting the wild flowers on our sea cliffs.

Here are some ways you can get involved...

Support our work Become a member and help us protect flowers and fungi across Wales – www.plantlife.org.uk

Share your finds Record the species you spot via your Local Environmental Records Centre – www.lrcwales.org.uk

Celebrate our sea cliffs Share your photos with us via Facebook (PlantlifeCymru) or Twitter (@plantlifecymru)



How to explore...

Help children learn more about wild flowers on our sea cliffs through these activities



Bumblebees are important for coastal grasslands. They transfer pollen between flowers and help plants reproduce

Many bumblebees prefer to visit one type of flower at a time.

Imagine you are a bumblebee and choose your favourite flower.

Can you move from flower to flower in no more than three steps?

Can you visit 10 flowers like this?

If so, this means there are lots of the same type of flower close together which is great for bumblebees!



Bumblebees can have short or long tongues.

Look at the shape of your flower and find where the nectar might be (usually in the middle of the flower).

Do you think you would need a long or short tongue?

How would this help you get the nectar?

Where to find them...

Many coastal grasslands and heathlands are within Important Plant Areas (IPAs). Here are some to visit...

- 1 **Great Orme's Head** – Conwy County Borough Council
- 2 **South Stack Cliffs** – RSPB
- 3 **Llyn Sea Cliffs IPA**
- 4 **Penderi Cliffs** – WTSWW
- 5 **Cemaes Head** – WTSWW
- 6 **Stackpole** – National Trust
- 7 **Southgate** – National Trust
- 8 **Cwm Colhuw** - WTSWW

WTSWW - Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

For links to these sites please visit: www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/our-work/publications/welshseacliffs



What to look for...

The best time to see coastal wild plants is between May and August.

These plants along the coastline vary, but you should see some of these common species...

What have you spotted?

Share your photos via Twitter – @plantlifecymru or Facebook – PlantlifeCymru

We are Plantlife Cymru

Wild flowers, plants and fungi are the life support for all Wales' wildlife and their colour and character light up our valleys, mountains and coastline. But without our help, this priceless natural heritage is in danger of being lost.

From the open landscapes of our nature reserves to the corridors of the Senedd, we raise their profile, celebrate their beauty and protect their future.

HRH The Prince of Wales is our Patron



Plantlife Cymru
 Forest Farm Conservation Centre
 Forest Farm Road, Whitchurch
 Cardiff CF14 7JH
 Tel: 02920 376193
 Email: cymru@plantlife.org.uk

www.plantlife.org.uk

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Plantlife
 Brewery House, 36 Milford Street
 Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2AP
 01722 342730
 enquiries@plantlife.org.uk

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Tufted vetch ▶
 This member of the pea family blooms later in the summer



Lady's bedstraw ▼
 Can you guess why this plant was given its name?
 Take a sniff of the flowers...

Bird's-foot trefoil ▶
 This plant is a popular source of nectar for insects



Thrift ▲
 This plant has appeared along inland roadsides due to winter salt spreading



Gorse ▲
 The sunshine-yellow flowers have a distinctive coconut smell



Tormentil ▲
 Its roots contain a red dye used to make artists' colours



Viper's bugloss ▲
 Its name comes from the Greek *bou* (ox) and the Latin *glossa* (tongue) due to the shape of its leaves



Spring squill ▲
 Best seen in April and May, this plant is very tolerant of salt spray



Wild thyme ▲
 This plant forms mats close to the ground and fills the summer air with fragrance



Bell heather ▼
 In late summer, you can often hear the hum of countless insects feasting on its blooms

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