

Whilst you are out looking at the wonderful wildflowers, you could also make a note of what you see. You can help us to find out more about the wildlife of this area. We would like you to join us to record wildlife, view wildlife maps and receive free training in wildlife identification. To find out more or to register please see: www.limestonelandscapes.info/wildwatch

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The wonderful wildflowers of the Durham coast

Limestone Landscapes

Cascoop Environmental Extra
Working to develop a sustainable future

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The brilliant wildflowers of the Limestone Coast

A calendar guide to our crown jewels



* The Leas * Marsden * Whitburn
* Roker * Hawthorn * Seaham * Horden
* Easington Colliery * Blackhall Rocks * Crimdon

Why are Durham's flowers special?

Between 295 and 250 million years ago a tropical sea (The Zechstein Sea) covered the eastern part of what is now the Limestone Landscapes area.

The evidence is in the rock it left behind, magnesian limestone. Below this, of course, is the coal that shaped the history of the area.

Magnesian Limestone weathers into an alkaline soil similar to that on the chalk downs of southern England.

A unique and quite spectacular array of wild flowers flourish on this type of soil.

Only fragments of this flower rich grassland remain on the coast, clinging to the cliff tops and often found in the fields and denes along the edge of the coast. Old quarries, railway cuttings and even some roadside verges provide an additional refuge for these flowers.

All the flowers are protected by law and many consider them to be the area's crown jewels.



April

Flower of the month

Blue moor grass

This attractive grass species is a northern speciality, virtually restricted to limestone areas.



Also this month

Dog violet
Herb robert
Ground ivy
Jack by the hedge
Wild strawberry
Cowslip
Water avens
Wood avens
Oxlip
Crosswort
Bird's-foot trefoil

April, six of the best



Sea spleenwort



Hart's tongue fern



Juniper



Hairy violet



Primrose



Bird's-foot trefoil

May

Flower of the month

Common scurvy grass

Part of the cabbage family with a strong and peppery taste, this plant was eaten by sailors as a cure for scurvy



Also this month

Speedwell
Bird's-foot trefoil
Crosswort
Horseshoe vetch
Cowslip
Wood avens
Wid strawberry
Herb robert
Early purple orchid
Ground ivy
Bush vetch
Forget-me-not
Lady's mantle

May, six of the best



Common butterwort



Burnt orchid



Buckhorn plantain



Early Purple orchid



Birds eye primrose



Cowslip

June

Flower of the month

Thrift

Also known as Sea pink because of its colour, this plant can also produce purple, red or white flowers.



Also this month

Lady's mantle
Twayblade
Water avens
Tall melilot
Bladder campion

Milkwort
Germander speedwell
Red clover
White clover
Hawkbitt
Ox-eye daisy
Spotted orchid
Bird's-foot trefoil
Hayrattle
Wild thyme
White campion
Kidney vetch
Knapweed
Hoary plantain
Salad burnett
Creeping cinquefoil
Sheep's sorrel
Hop trefoil
Eyebright
White dead nettle
Wood avens
Hogweed
Herb robert

June, six of the best



Kidney vetch



Pyramidal orchid



Creeping willow



Round-leaved wintergreen



Grass of parnassus



Hoary plantain

July

Flower of the month

Bloody crane's bill

Look closely to see the
Cranes bill, this is where the
seeds are dispersed



Also this month

most of the June
flower list plus:

Viper's bugloss

Weld

Scabious

Pineapple weed

Self-heal

Agrimony

Basil thyme

Frog orchid

Carlina thistle

Rosebay willowherb

Ragwort

Greater knapweed

Lesser knapweed

July, six of the best



Purple milk vetch



Bee orchid



Fragrant orchid



Common rockrose



Sea plantain



Lesser meadow rue

August

Flower of the month

Sea rocket

A pioneer, one of the first plants to colonise barren sand banks



Also this month

most of the July flower list, Knapweed and Scabious come into their own, plus:

Yellowwort
Wild carrot
Viper's bugloss
Harebell
Tufted vetch
Autumn gentian
Agrimony
Bladder campion

Also look for the delicate quaking grass, local name 'dothery ducks'.

August, six of the best



Autumn gentian



Spiny retharrow



Yellow-wort



Sand leek



Carlina thistle



Wild privet

September

Flower of the month

Centaury

The herb, mainly prepared as tea, has been used since the Romans as a medicine to cure fevers



Also this month

Hawkbit

Viper's bugloss

Scabious

Knapweed

Carlina thistle

Ox-eye daisy

Centaury

Autumn gentian

September six of the best



Small scabious



Black knapweed



Greater knapweed



Common fleabane



Hoary ragwort



Devil's-bit scabious

This calendar is based upon recorded flowering plants and ferns along the Coast.

Recorded and Photographed
by Dr Dave Mitchell from
Natural England