



National Plant Monitoring Scheme

Introduction to Lowland Grassland: Dry Calcareous presented by Dominic Price



Plantlife



UK Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology



Botanical Society
of Britain & Ireland



JNCC



NIEA Northern Ireland
Environment
Agency
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
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General Characters

- Base rich, formed by weathering of rocks
- Thin porous soils = low nutrients
- Thin swards, often with bare patches
- Very high diversity ($\uparrow 40$ sp/m²)
- Fine rather than coarse grasses
- Can be quite ‘mossy’





Location

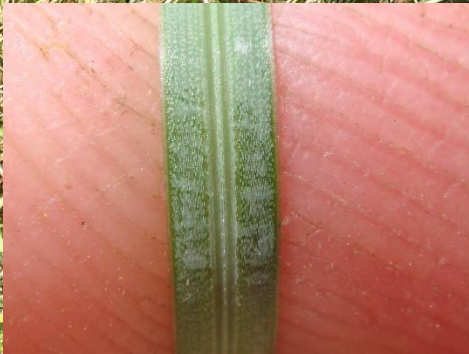
Mostly in south of England

Chalk grassland in the Brecks

To the north tends to occur on hard
limestone



Avenula pratense
Meadow Oat-grass



- Rigid leaves



Avenula pratense
Meadow Oat-grass



Oaty heads





Brachypodium pinnatum Tor Grass

- Big yellow clumps
- Rough leaves
- Stripy heads





Briza media Quaking Grass

- Droopy, loose pyramidal head of dancing sugar-puffs
- Bottom leaves in opposite pairs coming out at 90°





Bromopsis erecta Upright Brome

- Flowers red-tinted when fresh, borne on thin stems so they nod in the slightest breeze.
- Leaves with long individual hairs (camel's eyelashes) in loose tussocks.
- Can form quite dense tussocks in low-grazed habitats



Campanula rotundifolia Harebell

- Delicate nodding blue flowers
- Basal leaves lobed



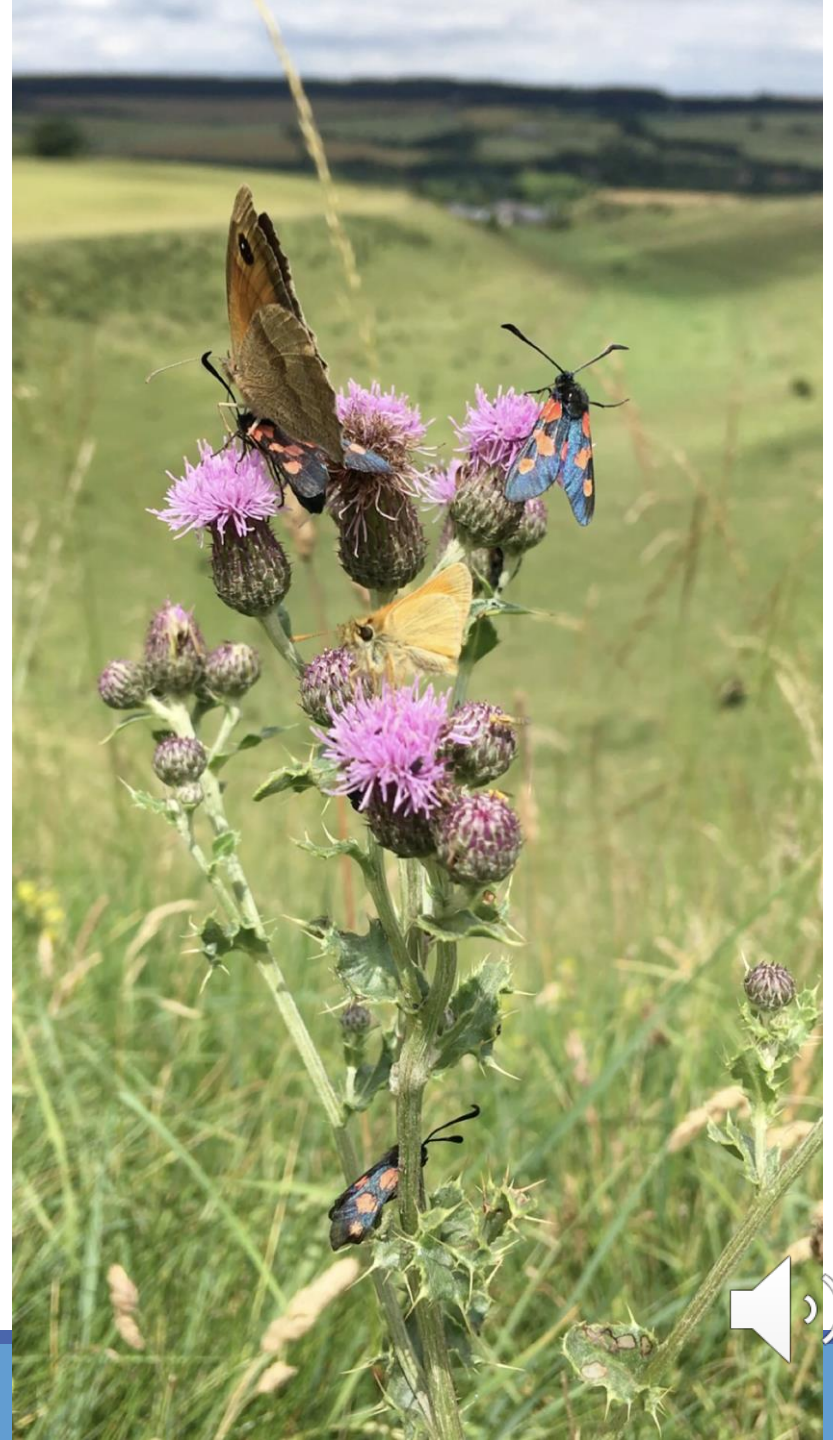


Cirsium acaule
Dwarf Thistle

- Very prickly
- Prostrate on ground
- Flower sits in leaf axis



Cirsium arvense
Creeping Thistle





*Filipendula
vulgaris*
Dropwort

- Rows of opposite toothed leaves
- Head of fluffy cream flowers





Galium album
Hedge Bedstraw

- Whorls of leaves
- Doesn't stick to you
- Multitude of creamy flowers
- Sweet honey odour





Gymnadenia conopsea Fragrant Orchid

- Tall pink/purple spikes
- Long hypanthia
- Fragrant





Hypochaeris radicata
Common Cat's-ear

- Small black-tipped 'cat's-ears' on stem
- Filaments on leaf base
- Hairs on leaves unforked





Hippocrepis comosa
Horseshoe Vetch

- Leaflets in opposite rows
- Multiple flowers in horseshoe or even full circle
- Crazy seedpods



Leucanthemum vulgare
Oxeye Daisy

- Giant daisy heads
- Spatula shaped leaves becoming more divided





Linum catharticum
Fairy Flax

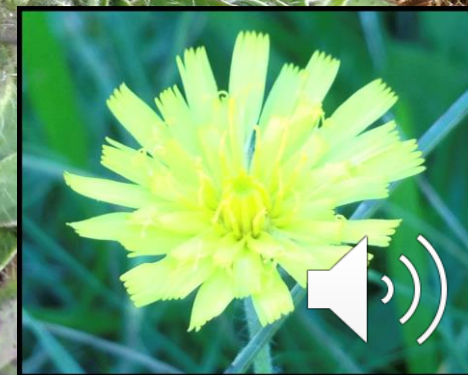
- Threadlike stems with pairs of tiny oblong leaves
- Delicate flowers ripening to hard stripy seedpods





Pilosella officinarum
Mouse-ear Hawkweed

- Leaves very hairy with white undersides
- Sulphur yellow flowers



Plantago media
Hoary Plantain

- Leaves oval
- Beautiful pinky white clustered flower





Primula veris
Cowslip

- Heads of nodding tubular flowers
- Leave has clear stem at base

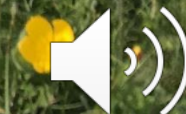




*Ranunculus
bulbosus*
Bulbous
Buttercup



- Leaf intermediate between Creeping and Meadow
- Bulbous stem base
- Backwards sepals





Thymus vulgaris Thyme

- Mat forming with small opposite slightly hairy leaves
- Tightly bundled light purple flowers
- Mildly scented





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