

Aim for 7+ grass species and 3+ 2 star herbs anything extra up to and including Greater Butterfly orchids and Great Burnet is a bonus!

[illegible]

Notes/Rationale

The grading of the meadow species into groups to reflect their significance in terms of being positive indicators of flower rich, high biodiversity hay meadow species, is based on assessment of the NT meadows on the Lyn Peninsula. As the hay meadow project progresses it is expected that this list will be expanded and change to grading may be made as a greater understanding develops

Grasses and sedges

This is a full list of the grasses and sedges that might be found in the meadows of the Lyn Peninsula. They have been graded 1 -3 to reflect the ecological significance of each species in relation to what they indicate in the meadow sward.

Group 1 – these species are found across all types of grassland from silage improved fields of low biodiversity interest to flower rich meadows. Within flower rich meadows these species, such as rye grass and Yorkshire fog, are a component of the sward but tend to be scattered. With the addition of fertiliser so these species increase at the expense of the full range of grasses and particular those species in group 3.

Group 2 - these species tend to be rare in the more improved silage fields and are form a major part of the sward in semi-improved neutral grasslands. Within the richest areas of the meadows the fine leaved grasses such as sweet vernal grass, crested dogs tail, red fescue and common bent tend to be the dominant greases. With increasing use of fertiliser these species decrease as they are not so efficient in utilising the nutrient provided by the increasing fertility and thus are out-competed by the more robust fast growing species in group 1.

Group 3 – The 3 species of grass and the sedges are all largely confined to the richest areas of hay meadows and are thus considered as positive indicator species.

Herbs

Group 1 – These herbs are some of our commonest grassland herbs, finding a niche in even the most improved fertilised and grasslands of low biodiversity value. All will occur as a natural component of the richer swards, in particular white clover and ribwort plaitain. Nettles and docks and to a lesser extent hogweed are a sign of nutrient enrichment. White clover cultivars are is commonly sown as part of re-seeds.

Group 2 – These herbs are those that are not able to compete in the most productive of grasslands and suffer when a meadow is cut too early before the species have set seed. They are thus considered as a positive indicator in the meadows of the area and contribute to the overall biodiversity and attractiveness of the meadow sward. Under the UK Common standards monitoring these species are not recognised as positive indicators but the hay meadows project on the Llyn is aimed at retaining and restoring meadows as part of a viable farm unit so we are looking at the range meadow types not just the very best.

Group 3 – These species are those that are considered as the best positive indicators for the hay meadows,(as per CSM) All are limited in their distribution to the richest sites and all have specific ecological requirements and are relatively poor competitors, making them susceptible to intensive agricultural practices, such as increase use of artificial fertiliser etc. This list is likely to be expanded as more meadows are surveyed.