

# The Burren

Naturetrek Tour Report

3 - 6 June 2009

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*Dryas octopetala*



*Gentiana verna*



Group Photo



*Pinguicula grandiflora*

Images and report compiled by Derrick Donnison-Morgan



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## Day 1

Wednesday 3rd June

As two of the tour group had arrived the previous day directly to our hotel Sheedy's Country House Hotel at Lisdoonvarna, the three of us greeted the remainder of the group at Shannon Airport just after 10 am.

After collecting our minibus we made our way in very hot and unseasonal weather to Bunny Lough where we had our first experience of Lough and Limestone pavement on either side of the road. We found examples of *Dactylorhiza incarnata* (Early Marsh Orchid) on the Lough side of the road - some very close to the water's edge. A longer than anticipated drive to the nearest pub at Ballyvaughan gave us an opportunity to sample the delights of Irish hospitality, food and drink.

A short walk in the afternoon up Cappanawalla, brought us the floral highlights of a few remaining *Gentiana verna* (Spring Gentian); *Polygala vulgaris* (Milkwort), *Fragaria vesca* (Wild Strawberry), the ubiquitous *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody Crane's-Bill), *Pinguicula grandiflora* (Large-flowered Butterwort), and several Orchid species including *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath spotted-orchid); *Listera ovata* (Twayblade); *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine) the last of which was identified by its habit as it was perhaps just a week to ten days away from flowering. We then drove the short journey to Lisdoonvarna and our hotel.

## Day 2

Thursday 4th June

A pre-breakfast walk to the junction of the N67, R 476 & R478 brought many floral delights. In a meadow bordering our hotel we were able to find *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri* (Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid); *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid) in a variety of colour forms including white, various hybrid forms of *Dactylorhiza*; *Lychnis flos-cuculi* (Ragged-Robin) and *Iris pseudacorus* (Yellow Flag). At the Spa Gardens we saw several species of fern together with many cultivated marginal water plants by the stream.

After breakfast we headed west to Poll Salach (Poulsallagh), where we scoured the rocks above the cliffs for interesting flora. A few tenacious *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose) and *Primula veris* (Cowslip) were offering a last glimpse of spring in the hot summer sunshine and a few orchids, *Dactylorhiza occidentalis* (Irish Marsh Orchid); *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid) and no doubt hybrids which are indiscernible.

Onwards to Fanore where we immediately spotted *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid) in the short turf next to the car park. Although not in full flower, the pyramidal structure of the flower spike is unmistakable.

Our next stop was Black Head, where most of us climbed the hill to the summit where we decided to eat the packed lunches provided by Sheedys. During the climb and descent, we were able to see many of the plants for which 'The Burren' is rightly famous. *Gentian verna* (Spring Gentian); *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain avens); *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody Crane's-Bill) and *Helianthemum oelandicum* (Hoary Rockrose) were all growing within yards of each other. On the higher points we were able to find *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple Orchid) still in good condition.

Another stop by the Pinnacle Well, before walking down to the Rine, gave us a chance to photograph *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove), high up on the well wall. At the Rine, we were able to see many salt marsh plants, including a vast colony of *Almeria maritime* (Thrift); *Spergularia media* (Greater Sea-Spurrey) and *Salicornia europaea* (Glasswort).

After an abortive attempt to find the recently reported *Arenaria norvegica* (Arctic Sandwort) on the southern slopes of Gleninagh Mtn. we continued via the 'Khyber Pass' to our hotel at Lisdoonvarna.

## Day 3

Friday 5th June

After a leisurely breakfast we headed off to Kilfenora for the Burren Centre and the ruins of the Cathedral. After a few purchases of maps, guides and souvenirs and having had sufficient culture for the morning, we made our way to Lake Gealain and Mullach Mor. On a short walk towards the hills we were able to see several species of Orchid that we had not previously sighted. *Neotinea maculata* (Dense-flowered Orchid) in seed; *Dactylorhiza fuchsia* ssp. *okellyi* (O'Kelly's spotted-Orchid); *Dactylorhiza incarnate* ssp. *cruenta* (Leopard Orchid); *Platanthera bifolia* (Lesser Butterfly-Orchid); *Ophrys insectifera* (Fly Orchid), together with many *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid) that we had previously seen elsewhere. In this flora rich area, we also noted *Viola persicifolia* (Fen Violet). Lunch was taken by the Turlough, where we watched dragonflies emerging from dried nymph skins to dry themselves in the sun by the edge of the pool.

More culture was called for, so a short detour to Carcomroe Abbey allowed us to see the celebrated carved flowers in the Abbey architectural ruins and the colony of *Umbilicus rupestris* (Navelwort) on the outbuildings walls. A drive back past Lisdoonvarna took us to Doolin where we had hoped to see *Dactylorhiza occidentalis* (Western Marsh Orchid), but we did not seem to be in the right place or in the terrain that these orchids prefer. We did however find an exceedingly large population of *Lycnis flos-cuculi* (Ragged-Robin). A drive-past the Cliffs of Moher was sufficient to satisfy the group's need, before we headed back to our hotel and our last night in The Burren.

## Day 4

Saturday 6th June

Another leisurely breakfast and check out for all of us in the group. We left our bags at the hotel and headed out for a last glimpse of The Burren's wonderful flora. We tried once again to find the elusive *Arenaria norvegica* (Arctic Sandwort) and after an hour or so of trying, decided to abandon the search and visit more limestone pavement on north facing slopes near Formoyle. Here we found more *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid); *Pinguicula vulgaris* (Common butterwort) and *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Maidenhair fern), deep in the grikes.

Moving on to Fanore, we explored the beach and sand dunes, finding *Euphorbia paralias* (Sea Spurge); *Calsteigia soldanella* (Sea bindweed) and *Eryngium maritimum* (Sea-Holly). Another packed lunch provided by the hotel was taken on the beach, although the weather that had been glorious during the previous three days, was now threatening rain and by early afternoon we had been caught in several heavy showers. We repaired to the Tea Rooms at Ballyvaughan, where tea and cake was provided in a lush conservatory, overlooking a colourful and interesting garden.

Back at the hotel, we collected our bags, said our goodbyes to those who were not travelling with us to the airport and made our way back to Shannon and the flights back to various parts of the UK.

**Summary:** The above does not do justice to the quantity or variety of plant species that we were able to see and photograph and I have therefore included a full plant list which you will find attached.

The weather was wonderful for the first two days, sunny and hot. By Friday it had cooled a little and the breeze became stronger. Saturday was variable, with sun, cloud, rain and wind consecutively and at times simultaneously. The hotel was excellent and the meals provided, including the packed lunches, exceedingly satisfying.

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## Species List

### Plant List

| Scientific Name                                 | Common Name                     | Notes         |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Dicotyledons</b>                             |                                 |               |
| <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>                      | Sycamore                        |               |
| <i>Ilex aquifolia</i>                           | Holly                           |               |
| <i>Hedera helix</i>                             | Ivy                             |               |
| <i>Antennaria dioica</i>                        | Catsfoot                        |               |
| <i>Aster tripolium</i>                          | Sea aster                       |               |
| <i>Bellis perennis</i>                          | Daisy                           |               |
| <i>Carlina vulvaris</i>                         | Carlina thistle                 |               |
| <i>Centaurea nigra</i>                          | Knapweed                        |               |
| <i>Cirsium arvense</i>                          | Creeping thistle                |               |
| <i>Cirsium dissectum</i>                        | Meadow or bog Thistle           |               |
| <i>Cirsium palustre</i>                         | Marsh thistle                   |               |
| <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>                          | Spear thistle                   |               |
| <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>                    | Hemp-agrimony                   |               |
| <i>Hieracium anglicum</i>                       | Irish hawkweed                  |               |
| <i>Hieracium pilosella</i>                      | Mouse-ear hawkweed              |               |
| <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>                     | ox-eye daisy                    |               |
| <i>Matricaria discoidea</i>                     | Pineapple weed                  |               |
| <i>Mycelis muralis</i>                          | Wall lettuce                    |               |
| <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>                         | Ragwort                         | Not flowering |
| <i>Solidago virgaurea</i>                       | Golden rod                      |               |
| <i>Sonchus asper</i>                            | Prickly sow-thistle             |               |
| <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>                        | Smooth sow-thistle              |               |
| <i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>                     | Feverfew                        |               |
| <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>                     | Dandelion                       |               |
| <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>                          | Alder                           |               |
| <i>Betula pendula</i>                           | Silver birch                    |               |
| <i>Betula pubescens</i>                         | Downy birch                     |               |
| <i>Myosotis arvensis</i>                        | Forget-me-not                   |               |
| <i>Symphytum officinale</i>                     | Comfrey                         |               |
| <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>                    | Honeysuckle                     |               |
| <i>Sambucus nigra</i>                           | Elder                           |               |
| <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>                     | Snowberry                       |               |
| <i>Viburnum opulus</i>                          | Guelder rose                    |               |
| <i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>                   | Thyme leaved sandwort           |               |
| <i>Cerastium arvense</i>                        | Field mouse-ear                 |               |
| <i>Honkenya peploides</i>                       | Sea sandwort                    |               |
| <i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>                      | Ragged Robin                    |               |
| <i>Minuartia verna</i>                          | Spring sandwort/Vernal sandwort |               |
| <i>Silene uniflora (vulgaris ssp. maritima)</i> | Sea campion                     |               |
| <i>Silene vulgaris</i>                          | Bladder campion                 |               |
| <i>Spergularia media</i>                        | Greater sea-spurrey             |               |
| <i>Stellaria graminea</i>                       | Lesser stitchwort               |               |
| <i>Stellaria holostea</i>                       | Greater stitchwort              |               |
| <i>Beta vulgaris ssp. maritima</i>              | Sea Beet                        |               |
| <i>Salicornia europaea</i>                      | Common glasswort                |               |
| <i>Helianthemum oelandicum (carnum)</i>         | Burren rockrose                 |               |
| <i>Calystegia soldanella</i>                    | Sea bindweed                    |               |
| <i>Corylus avellana</i>                         | Hazel                           |               |

| Scientific Name                        | Common Name                  | Notes                     |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Sedum acre</i>                      | Biting stonecrop             |                           |
| <i>Sedum album</i>                     | White stonecrop              |                           |
| <i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>             | Navelwort, Pennywort         |                           |
| <i>Arabis hirsuta</i>                  | Hairy rockcress              |                           |
| <i>Cardamine pratense</i>              | Lady's smock or Cuckooflower |                           |
| <i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>          | Scurvy-grass                 |                           |
| <i>Crambe maritima</i>                 | Sea kale                     |                           |
| <i>Hesperis matronalis</i>             | Dames Violet                 |                           |
| <i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>    | Watercress                   |                           |
| <i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>           | Hedge mustard                |                           |
| <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>                | Heather, Ling                |                           |
| <i>Erica cinerea</i>                   | Bell heather                 |                           |
| <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>           | Rhododendron                 |                           |
| <i>Euphorbia paralias</i>              | Sea spurge                   |                           |
| <i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>            | Kidney vetch                 |                           |
| <i>Lathyrus linifolius (montanus)</i>  | Bitter vetch                 |                           |
| <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>              | Meadow vetchling             |                           |
| <i>Lotus corniculatus</i>              | Trefoil, bird's foot         |                           |
| <i>Medicago lupulina</i>               | Black medic                  |                           |
| <i>Trifolium campestre</i>             | Hop trefoil                  |                           |
| <i>Trifolium pratense</i>              | Red clover                   |                           |
| <i>Trifolium repens</i>                | White clover                 |                           |
| <i>Vicia cracca</i>                    | Tufted vetch                 |                           |
| <i>Vicia sativa</i>                    | Common vetch                 |                           |
| <i>Vicia sepium</i>                    | Bush vetch                   |                           |
| <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>                 | Beech                        |                           |
| <i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>          | Yellow wort                  |                           |
| <i>Gentiana verna</i>                  | Spring gentian               |                           |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium ssp. dunense</i> | Dune storksbill              |                           |
| <i>Geranium dissectum</i>              | Cut-leaved cranesbill        |                           |
| <i>Geranium lucidum</i>                | Shining Cranesbill           |                           |
| <i>Geranium molle</i>                  | Dove's foot cranesbill,      |                           |
| <i>Geranium sanguineum</i>             | Bloody cranesbill            |                           |
| <i>Geranium robertianum</i>            | Herb Robert                  | White flowered also found |
| <i>Escallonia macrantha</i>            | Escallonia                   |                           |
| <i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>           | Tutsan                       |                           |
| <i>Hypericum canadense</i>             | Irish St. John's wort        |                           |
| <i>Ajuga reptans</i>                   | Bugle                        |                           |
| <i>Mentha aquatica</i>                 | Water mint                   |                           |
| <i>Origanum vulgare</i>                | Marjoram                     |                           |
| <i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>             | Wood sage                    |                           |
| <i>Thymus polytrichus (praecox)</i>    | Wild thyme                   |                           |
| <i>Pinguicula grandiflora</i>          | Greater butterwort           |                           |
| <i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>             | Common butterwort            |                           |
| <i>Linum catharticum</i>               | Purging flax                 |                           |
| <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>              | Ash                          |                           |
| <i>Circaea lutetiana</i>               | Enchanter's nightshade       |                           |
| <i>Epilobium montanum</i>              | Broad-leaved willowherb      |                           |
| <i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>             | Fuchsia                      |                           |
| <i>Papaver rhoeas</i>                  | Common poppy                 |                           |
| <i>Plantago coronopus</i>              | Buck's horn plantain         |                           |
| <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>             | Ribwort plantain             |                           |
| <i>Plantago maritima</i>               | Sea plantain                 |                           |
| <i>Armeria maritima</i>                | Thrift                       |                           |

| Scientific Name  | Common Name                   | Notes         |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Limonium recurvum</i> ssp <i>pseudotranswallianum</i> | Rock sea-lavender             |               |
| <i>Polygala vulgaris</i>                                 | Common milkwort               |               |
| <i>Rumex crispus</i>                                     | Curled dock                   |               |
| <i>Anagallis arvensis</i>                                | Scarlet pimpernel             |               |
| <i>Glaux maritima</i>                                    | Sea milkwort                  |               |
| <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>                                | Yellow pimpernel              |               |
| <i>Primula veris</i>                                     | Cowslip                       | Seedheads     |
| <i>Primula vulgaris</i>                                  | Primrose                      |               |
| <i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>                                | Columbine                     |               |
| <i>Caltha palustris</i>                                  | Kingcup                       |               |
| <i>Ranunculus acris</i>                                  | Meadow buttercup              |               |
| <i>Ranunculus bulbosa</i>                                | Bulbous buttercup             |               |
| <i>Ranunculus fammula</i>                                | Lesser spearwort              |               |
| <i>Ranunculus lingua</i>                                 | Greater Spearwort             |               |
| <i>Ranunculus repens</i>                                 | Creeping buttercup            |               |
| <i>Thalictrum minus</i>                                  | Lesser meadow-rue             |               |
| <i>Frangula alnus</i>                                    | Alder buckthorn               |               |
| <i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>                               | Purging buckthorn             |               |
| <i>Alchemilla glabra</i>                                 | Lady's mantle                 |               |
| <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>                                | Hawthorn                      |               |
| <i>Dryas octopetala</i>                                  | Mountain avens                |               |
| <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>                               | Meadowsweet                   | Not flowering |
| <i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>                              | Dropwort                      |               |
| <i>Fragaria vesca</i>                                    | Wild strawberry               |               |
| <i>Geum rivale</i>                                       | Water avens                   |               |
| <i>Geum urbanum</i>                                      | Wood avens/Herb Bennet        |               |
| <i>Potentilla anserina</i>                               | Silverweed                    |               |
| <i>Potentilla erecta</i>                                 | Tormentil                     |               |
| <i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>                              | Shrubby cinquefoil            |               |
| <i>Prunus spinosa</i>                                    | Blackthorn                    |               |
| <i>Rosa canina</i>                                       | Dog rose                      |               |
| <i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>                              | Burnet rose                   |               |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>                                  | Bramble                       |               |
| <i>Sanguisorba minor</i>                                 | Salad burnet                  |               |
| <i>Sorbus aria</i>                                       | Whitebeam                     |               |
| <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>                                  | Mountain ash                  |               |
| <i>Galium boreale</i>                                    | Northern bedstraw             |               |
| <i>Galium odoratum</i>                                   | Sweet woodruff                |               |
| <i>Galium sternerii</i>                                  | Limestone bedstraw            |               |
| <i>Galium verum</i>                                      | Lady's bedstraw               |               |
| <i>Populus tremula</i>                                   | Aspen                         |               |
| <i>Salix alba</i>  | White willow                  |               |
| <i>Salix caprea</i>                                      | Goat willow                   |               |
| <i>Saxifraga hypnoides</i>                               | Mossy saxifrage               |               |
| <i>Saxifraga rosacea</i>                                 | Burren saxifrage              |               |
| <i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i>                           | Rue-leaved saxifrage          |               |
| <i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>                                | Ivy-leaved toadflax           |               |
| <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>                                | Foxglove                      |               |
| <i>Erinus alpinus</i>                                    | Fairy foxglove                |               |
| <i>Euphrasia salisburgensis</i> var. <i>hibernica</i>    | Irish narrow-leaved eyebright |               |
| <i>Euphrasia</i> sp                                      | Eyebright                     |               |
| <i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>                             | Lousewort                     |               |
| <i>Rhinanthus minor</i>                                  | Yellow rattle                 |               |
| <i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>                               | Common figwort                |               |

| Scientific Name              | Common Name           | Notes |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| <i>Veronica beccabunga</i>   | Brooklime             |       |
| <i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>   | Germander speedwell   |       |
| <i>Veronica montana</i>      | Wood speedwell        |       |
| <i>Veronica officinalis</i>  | Common speedwell      |       |
| <i>Tilia x europaea</i>      | Lime                  |       |
| <i>Angelica sylvestris</i>   | Angelica              |       |
| <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> | Cow parsley           |       |
| <i>Conopodium majus</i>      | Pignut                |       |
| <i>Crithmum maritimum</i>    | Rock samphire         |       |
| <i>Eryngium maritimum</i>    | Sea holly             |       |
| <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> | Hogweed               |       |
| <i>Oenanthe sp.</i>          | Water dropwort        |       |
| <i>Sanicula europaea</i>     | Sanicle               |       |
| <i>Parietaria judaica</i>    | Pellitory of the wall |       |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i>         | Nettle                |       |
| <i>Centranthus ruber</i>     | Red valerian          |       |
| <i>Valeriana officinalis</i> | Valerian              |       |
| <i>Valerianella locusta</i>  | Common cornsalad      |       |
| <i>Viola canina</i>          | Heath dog violet      |       |
| <i>Viola persicifolia</i>    | Fen violet            |       |
| <i>Viola riviniana</i>       | Dog violet            |       |

### Monocotyledons

|   |                             |             |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Arum maculatum</i>                         | Lords & Ladies              |             |
| <i>Carex panicea</i>                          | Carnation sedge             |             |
| <i>Carex pulicaris</i>                        | Flea sedge                  |             |
| <i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>               | Common cotton grass         |             |
| <i>Ammophila arenaria</i>                     | Marram grass                |             |
| <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>                  | Sweet vernal grass          |             |
| <i>Briza media</i>                            | Quaking grass               |             |
| <i>Catapodium rigidum</i>                     | Fern grass                  |             |
| <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>                     | Cocksfoot                   |             |
| <i>Holcus lanatus</i>                         | Yorkshire fog               |             |
| <i>Sesleria caerulea</i>                      | Blue moor grass             |             |
| <i>Iris pseudacorus</i>                       | Yellow flag                 |             |
| <i>Triglochin maritima</i>                    | Sea arrow-grass             |             |
| <i>Allium ursinum</i>                         | Ramsons                     |             |
| <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>                 | Pyramidal orchid            |             |
| <i>Dactyloriza fuchsii</i>                    | Common spotted orchid       |             |
| <i>Dactyloriza fuchsii ssp. okellyi</i>       | O'Kelly's spotted orchid    |             |
| <i>Dactyloriza incarnata ssp. cruenta</i>     | Early marsh/ Leopard orchid |             |
| <i>Dactyloriza maculata (ssp ericetorum)</i>  | Heath spotted orchid        |             |
| <i>Dactylorhiza majalis ssp. occidentalis</i> | Western marsch orchid       |             |
| <i>Dactyloriza traunsteineri</i>              | Narrow-leaved marsh orchid  |             |
| <i>Epipactis atrorubens</i>                   | Red helleborine             | Leaves only |
| <i>Neotia (Listera) ovata</i>                 | Twayblade                   |             |
| <i>Neotinea maculata</i>                      | Dense flowered orchid       | Seed pods   |
| <i>Ophrys insectifera</i>                     | Fly orchid                  |             |
| <i>Orchis mascula</i>                         | Early purple orchid         |             |
| <i>Platanthera biflora</i>                    | Lesser butterfly orchid     |             |
| <i>Potamogeton natans</i>                     | Broad-leaved pondweed       |             |

### Gymnosperms

|                           |         |  |
|---------------------------|---------|--|
| <i>Juniperus communis</i> | Juniper |  |
|---------------------------|---------|--|



| <b>Scientific Name</b>            | <b>Common Name</b>    | <b>Notes</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Taxus baccata</i>              | Yew                   |              |
| <b>Ferns</b>                      |                       |              |
| <i>Adiantum capiullus-veneris</i> | Maidenhair fern       |              |
| <i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>     | Wall-rue              |              |
| <i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>      | Maidenhair spleenwort |              |
| <i>Ceterach officinarum</i>       | Rusty-back fern       |              |
| <i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>    | Hart's tonge fern     |              |
| <i>Blechnum spicant</i>           | Hard fern             |              |
| <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>        | Bracken               |              |
| <i>Dryopteris felix-mas</i>       | Male fern             |              |
| <i>Polystichum setiferum</i>      | Soft shield fern      |              |
| <i>Polypodium vulgare</i>         | Polypode              |              |
| <i>Anthyrium felix-femina</i>     | Lady fern             |              |
| <b>Equisetales</b>                |                       |              |
| <i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>       | Water horsetail       |              |
| <i>Equisetum telmateia</i>        | Great horsetail       |              |