

the flora of Grattan Beach SALTHILL



GRATTAN FLORA STUDY
MAY 2026



What types of flora can we discover on Grattan Beach?

Since the development of the Sand Fences on the upper shore it has led to a huge increase in the amount of flora and diversity that can be found.

Last year we did record some of the flora as we were inspired by the Clean Coasts Observer training with The National Biodiversity Data Centre that encouraged us to record everything!

This is what we found in May, 2026.

The Keys

This project was also inspired by the wetlands for life campaign and that is why that logo is included.

We have Common Name, Latin, and Irish names in the key.

For Educational Purpose Only
We have included some of the Culture, medicinal, and stories.



Inspired by Explore Your Shore!
Ireland's Wild Flowers from Aquarium GiftShop.

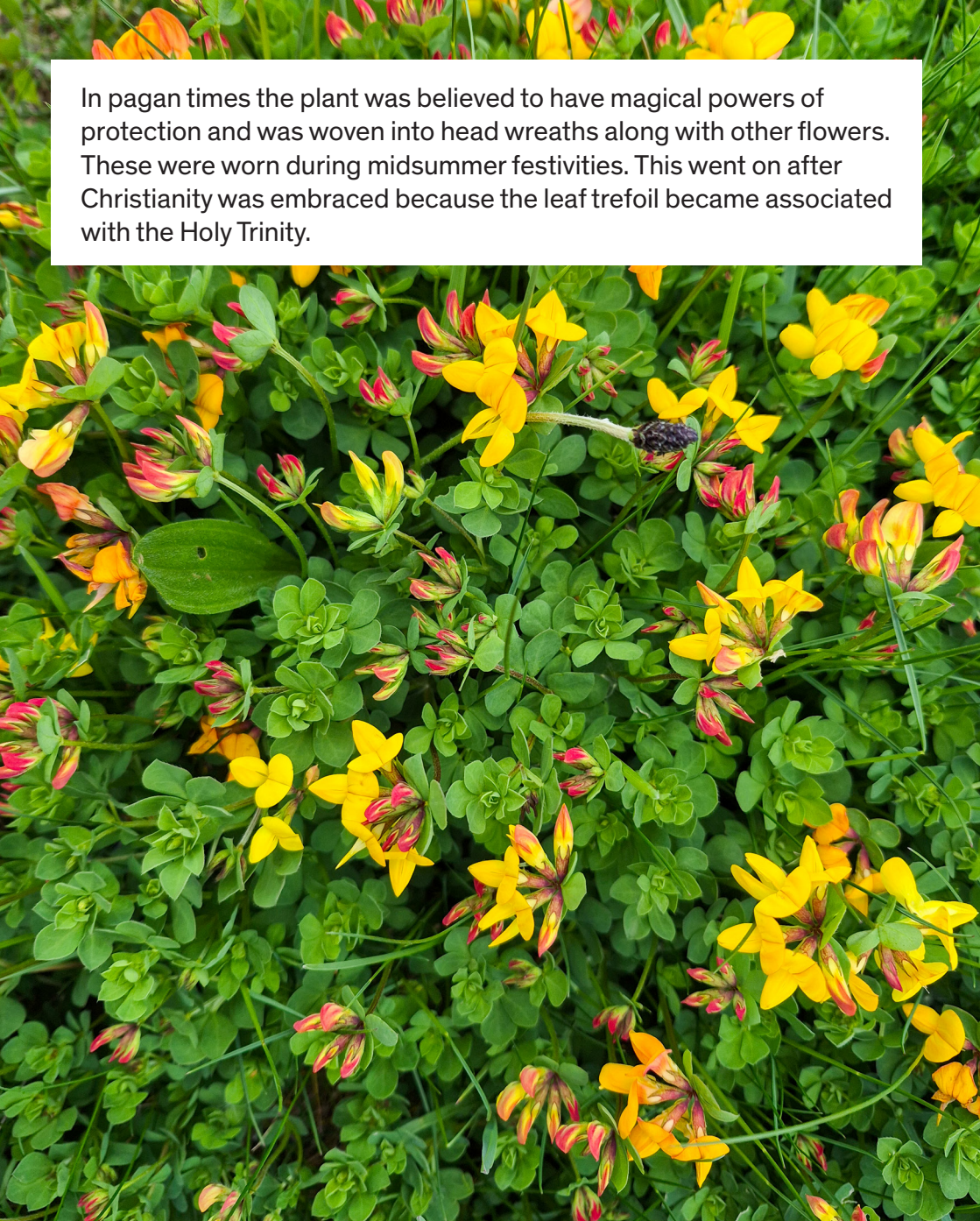
Marmalade hoverfly
Episyrphus balteatus
Beach ghabhair mharmaláide



In pagan times the plant was believed to have magical powers of protection and was woven into head wreaths along with other flowers. These were worn during midsummer festivities. This went on after Christianity was embraced because the leaf trefoil became associated with the Holy Trinity.

The Farmer's Curse

Due to its relentless rhizomes, it was (and still is) considered one of the hardest weeds to eradicate. Rural sayings warned that "if you leave even an inch of root, it will come back twice as strong."



With its glossy yellow flowers and relentless spread, the Creeping Buttercup has a dual reputation in folklore—both cheerful and sinister. Known as “Crazy Weed,” “St. Anthony’s Turnip,” or “Granny’s Curse,” this plant appears in old tales as a bearer of both light and poison.



The Wishing Plant

If you blow on the seed head, thus dispersing its seeds for the plant, you should make a wish. The dandelion is widely known as the ‘bainne bó bleachtáin’ because of the milky juice the stem produces when broken. This ‘milk’ was highly regarded as a cure for warts.

Creeping Buttercup
Ranunculus repens
Fearbán

Common Dandelion
Taraxacum officinale
Caisearbhán

The name “hawkbit” (and the related “hawkweed”) is derived from an ancient belief that hawks, eagles, and other birds of prey consumed these plants to sharpen their vision



In English folklore, the plant is often associated with the mischievous house goblin, Robin Goodfellow. It was believed that to destroy the flower was to court trouble with the fairies, but treating it well would bring luck and protection, as well as assistance with housework. It was frequently planted or hung near homes in medieval Europe to ward off evil spirits, sickness, and misfortune.

The Sand Binder

Known as “the rope of the dunes” in Dutch (helmgras), marram grass was believed to magically hold the land together, preventing the sea from swallowing villages.

In some coastal traditions, dried marram was woven into ropes or hung near doors to ward off storms and floods.



In Celtic tradition, nettles were considered protective and often hung around the home or scattered to ward off evil spirits.

Associated with the thunder god Thor (or Donnar) in Germanic mythology, people threw nettles onto roofs during thunderstorms to prevent lightning strikes, believing the plant’s sting mirrored the pain of a lightning bolt.



Fairy flowers

Slabhra Sí (fairy chains), were believed to protect children from being kidnapped by fairies, a belief also found in parts of England. The Old Norse name was “Baldur’s brow,” named for the beloved god Baldur. The Greeks sometimes dedicated it to Artemis, goddess of the moon, which explains the nickname “moon daisy,” as the flowers seem to glow at dusk.



Said to repel evil spirits, fairies were also believed to dance in clover patches. Used in folk medicine for purifying blood and treating coughs (contains phytoestrogens).



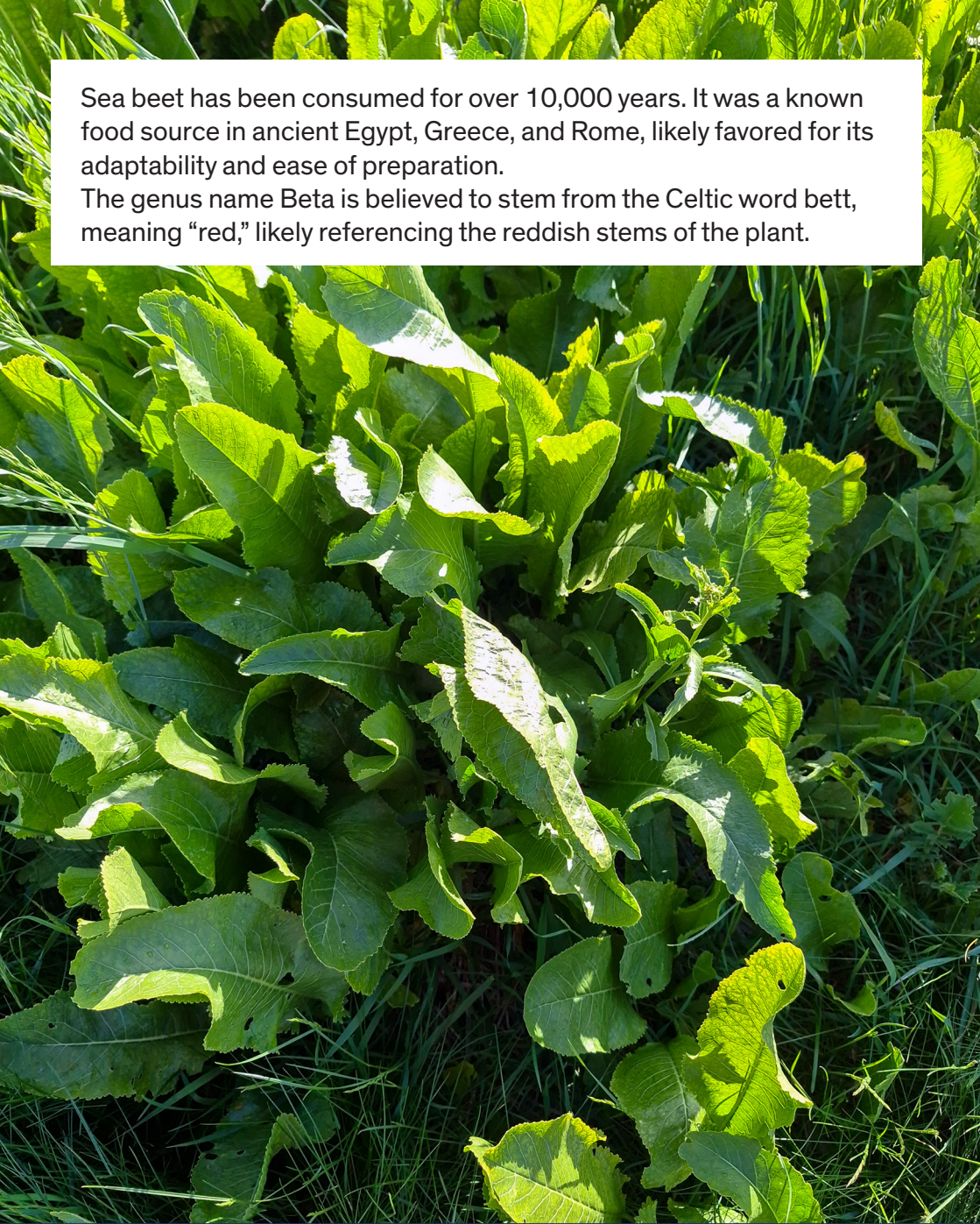
Snake's Tongue, also alled weybroed in Anglo-Saxon, meaning "waybread," as it grew along paths. Known as "Soldier's Herb" for staunching wounds (used on battlefields) and hung over doors to ward off evil spirits.

Games with ribwort plantain stems, known as 'na saighdiúiri' (soldiers). Two children would pick a stem each and take it in turns trying to whack the head from their opponent's stem.



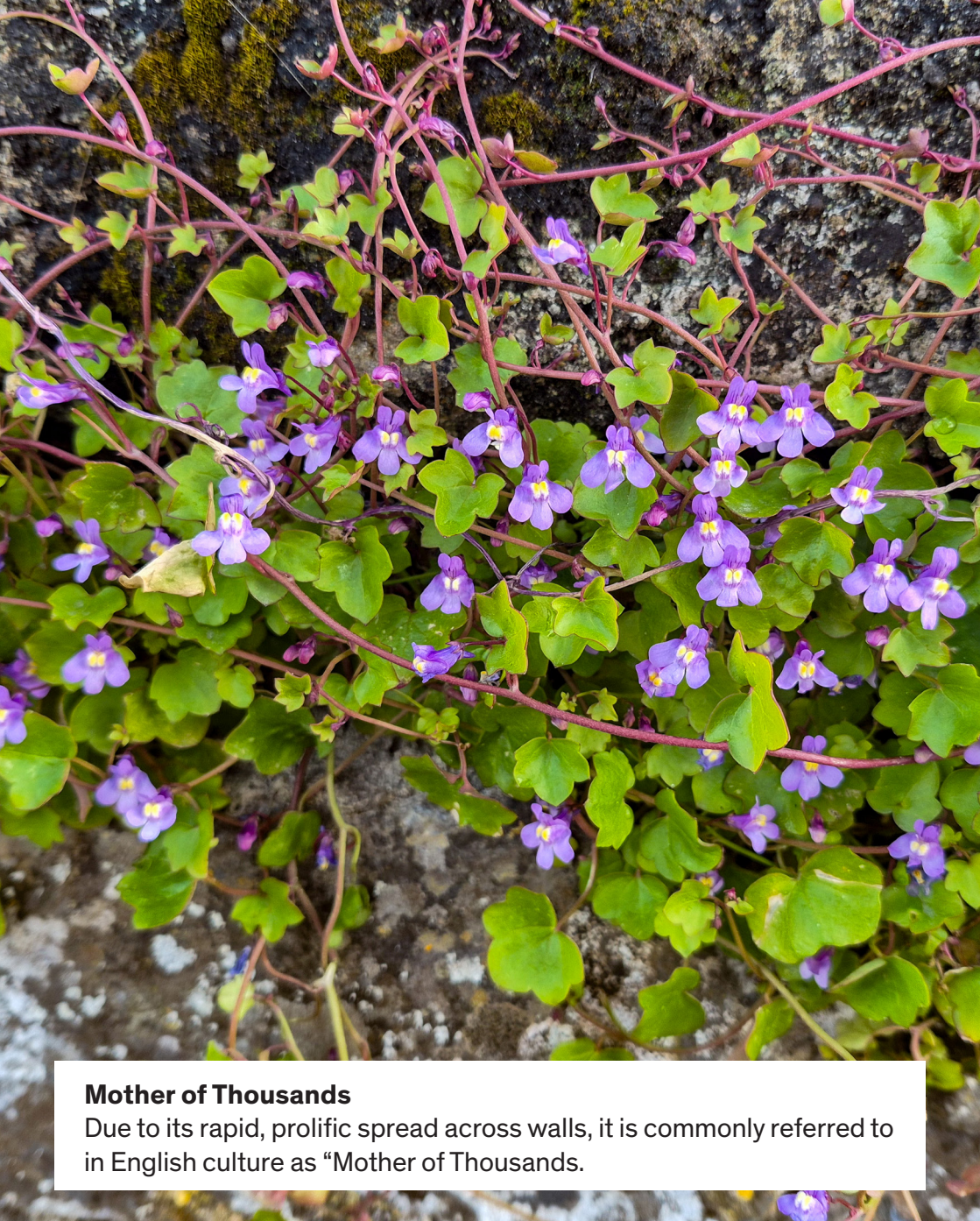
Historically, the plant was widely used by sailors on long sea voyages in the 17th to 19th centuries to ward off scurvy, a deficiency disease caused by lack of Vitamin C. The plant is sometimes called "Spoonwort" because its lower, fleshy leaves are shaped like a spoon, a key identification feature often used in old herbal guides.

Sea beet has been consumed for over 10,000 years. It was a known food source in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, likely favored for its adaptability and ease of preparation. The genus name Beta is believed to stem from the Celtic word beth, meaning "red," likely referencing the reddish stems of the plant.



In the southern part of Dungarvan Bay, Ireland, it is gathered and used in ways that reflect a deep, traditional, and respectful connection with the local environment, often in conjunction with other traditional, sea-related activities.

Sea radish has a history in, and is associated with, traditional folk medicine for treating various ailments, such as coughs, colds, and arthritis, and has also been used to treat skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis.



Mother of Thousands

Due to its rapid, prolific spread across walls, it is commonly referred to in English culture as “Mother of Thousands.



Historically, white clover was used in traditional remedies for ailments like coughs, inflammation, gout, and rheumatism