

Hay meadow grasses

Sweet vernal grass

Anthoxanthum odoratum

Flowering time:
April-July

Characteristic sweet,
'freshly mown hay' smell
when stem base crushed.

Tufts of hairs where
leaf meets stem.
Spike-like flower head.



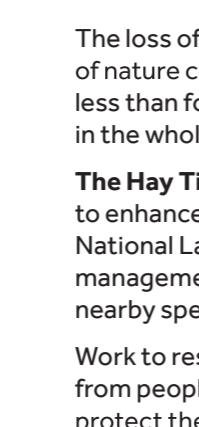
Size: 10-100cm

Common bent

Agrostis capillaris

Flowering time:
June-August

Spikelets are very small
and often purple when
young. Triangular leaves
at 45° to stem.



Size: 10-70cm

Red fescue

Festuca rubra

Flowering time:
May-July

Variable grass
that generally has fine,
needle-like leaves
that can't be unfolded.
Spikelets are often reddish.



Size: 20-100cm

Crested dog's-tail

Cynosurus cristatus

Flowering time:
June-August

Bristled, one-sided,
spike-like flower head,
often with lilac pollen.

Dark green leaves
at base, that are glossy
and grooved on the
upper surface.



Size: up to 75cm

Yellow oat-grass

Trisetum flavescens

Flowering time:
June-July

Yellow spikelets
with bent awns.
Flower head can appear
'fluffy' when dry.

Downwards pointing
hairs at base of stem.



Size: 20-80cm

Quaking grass

Briza media

Flowering time:
May-August

Very distinctive grass
with delicate, triangular,
flat, purplish spikelets
that 'quake' in the breeze.



Size: 15-75cm

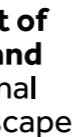
Hay Time

The loss of species-rich meadows and grasslands is unparalleled in the history of nature conservation in the UK. When the Hay Time project first started in 2006, less than four square miles of species-rich hay meadow habitat remained in the whole of the UK.

The Hay Time project, managed by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, is working to enhance and restore upland and lowland meadows throughout the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and Yorkshire Dales. It does this by providing advice on meadow management and by actively restoring meadows using seed harvested from nearby species-rich donor meadows.

Work to restore species-rich hay meadows is possible because of donations and support from people like you. Together we can save these precious and complex habitats and protect the wildflowers, plants, pollinators and other wildlife that depend on them.

Visit ydm.org & forestofbowland.com to find out how you can get involved.



**Forest of Bowland
National Landscape**

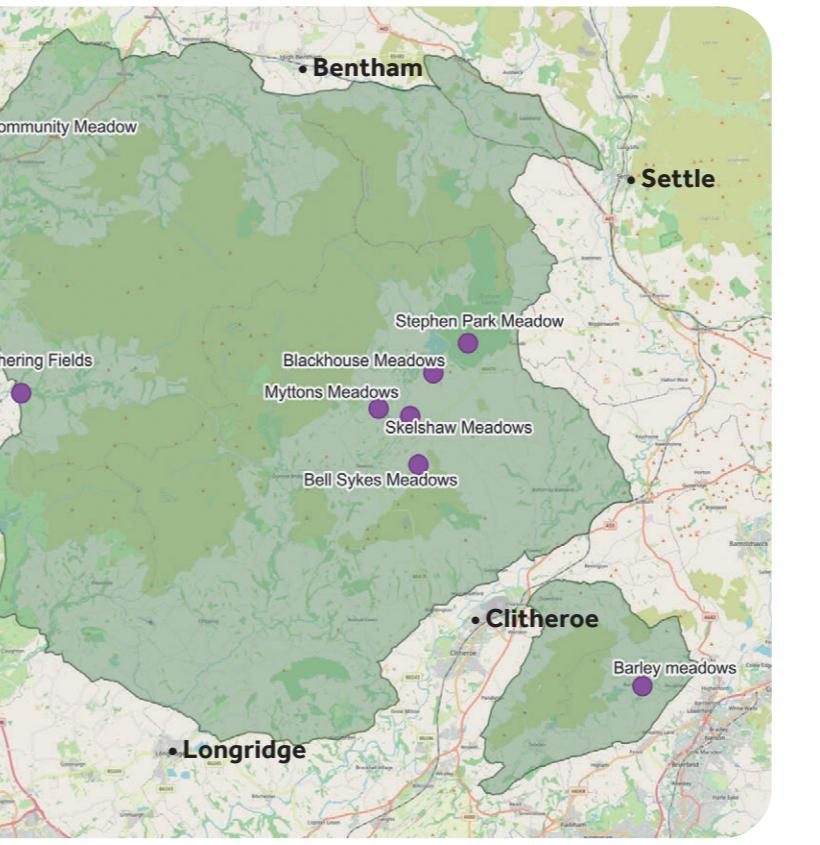


Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

This guide has been adapted from the guide produced through the Stories in Stone Project in the Yorkshire Dales, through the Forest of Bowland Hay Time Project and funding from DEFRA for the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Meadows on your doorstep

Flower-rich meadows can be found across the Forest of Bowland and generally look at their best in June, when they can be seen in full flower. Please respect these fragile habitats by sticking to footpaths and taking care not to trample the hay crop.



For more information & walk guides visit:
www.forestofbowland.com/walking and
www.forestofbowland.com/hay-time
or scan the QR code with your smart phone.

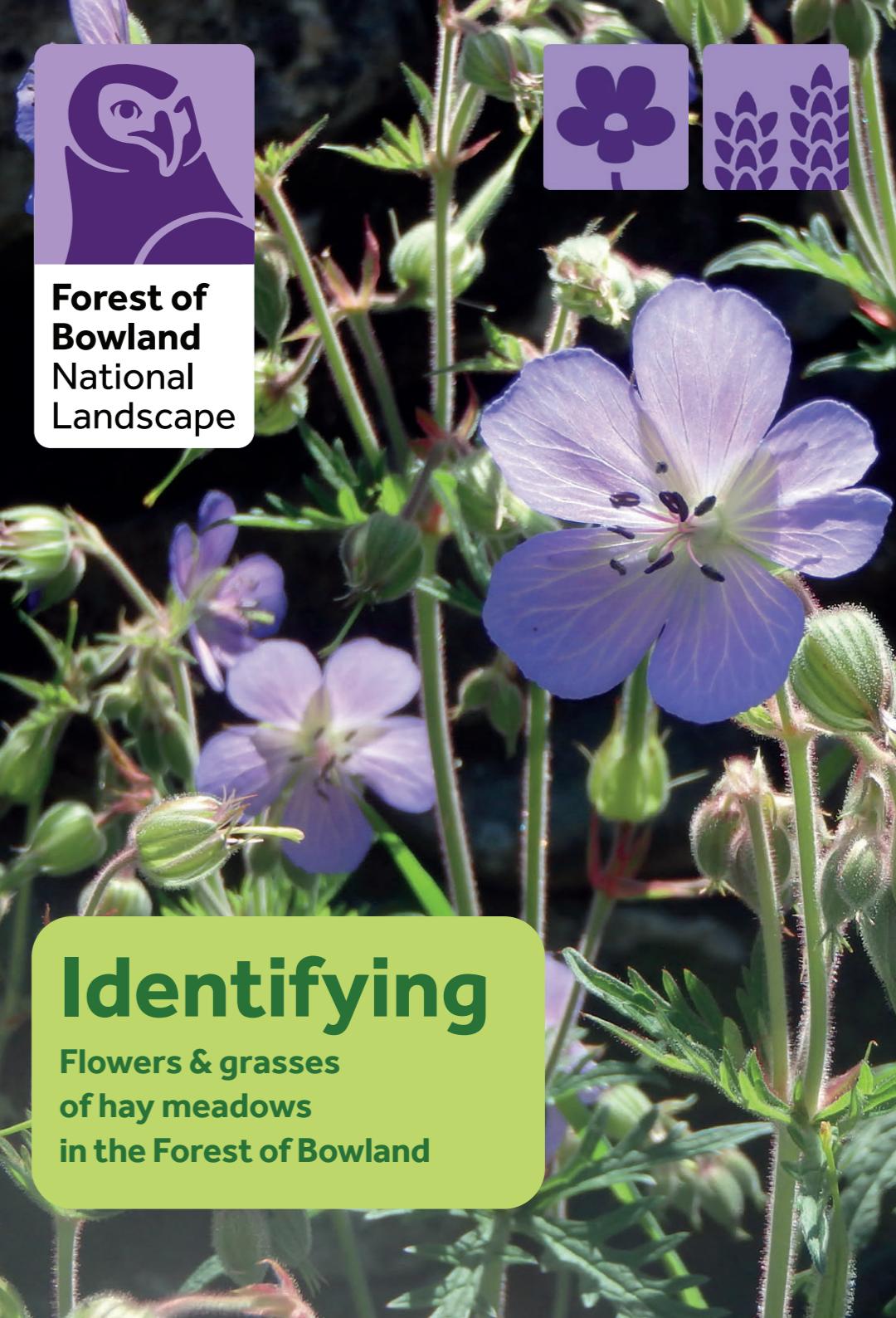


Map: Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright 2025.

Flower illustrations: Sarah Ingwersen © North Pennines National Landscape partnership & YDMT.

Meadow cranesbill illustration by Christine Andrews.

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**Forest of
Bowland
National
Landscape**



**Identifying
Flowers & grasses
of hay meadows
in the Forest of Bowland**

Common hay meadow plants

Meadow buttercup

Ranunculus acris

Flowering time:
May-July

Divided leaves.
Flower stalks not grooved.

Similar species:
Bulbous buttercup and
creeping buttercup both
have a stalked central lobe
to the leaf. Creeping
buttercup, which has
creeping runners, is not
normally found in traditionally
managed meadows.

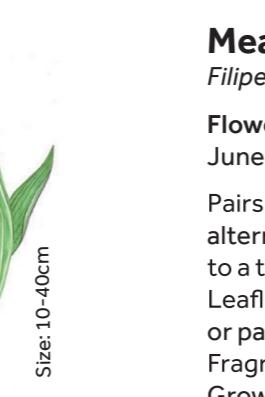


Ribwort plantain

Plantago lanceolata

Flowering time:
April-October

Long leaves with
conspicuous veins.
Furrowed stem.
Tough, brown flower head
with tiny white flowers.

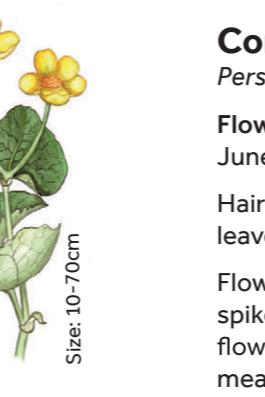


Meadowsweet

Filipendula ulmaria

Flowering time:
June-September

Pairs of tiny leaflets
alternate with larger ones,
to a three-part end-leaflet.
Leaflets white woolly
or pale green below.
Fragrant cream flowers.
Grows in wet meadows.

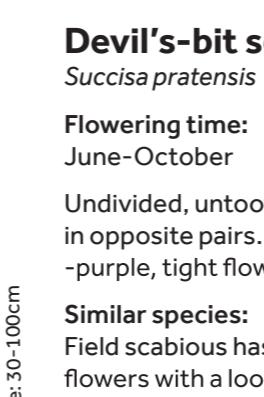


Marsh marigold

Caltha palustris

Flowering time:
March-July

Large heart or kidney
-shaped, shiny,
dark green leaves.
Bright yellow flowers.
Grows in wet meadows.

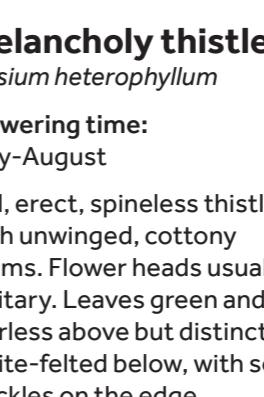


Common bistort

Persicaria bistorta

Flowering time:
June-August

Hairless plant with oval
leaves in opposite pairs. Dark blue
-purple, tight flower head.
Similar species:
Field scabious has lilac
flowers with a looser flower
head. The stem leaves are
divided nearly to the midrib.



Devil's-bit scabious

Succisa pratensis

Flowering time:
July-August

Tall, erect, spineless thistle
with unwinged, cottony
stems. Flower heads usually
solitary. Leaves green and
hairless above but distinctly
white-felted below, with soft
prickles on the edge.



Selfheal

Prunella vulgaris

Flowering time:
June-October

Downy with pairs of
pointed oval leaves.
Purple/blue flowers
form oblong flower head.



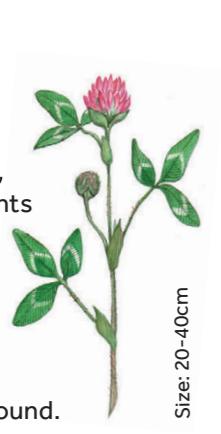
Red clover

Trifolium pratense

Flowering time:
May-September

Hairy. Leaflets in threes,
often with white crescents
on upper surface.
Deep pink flower head.

Similar species:
White clover lacks hairs,
has white flower heads
and creeps along the ground.



Pignut

Conopodium majus

Flowering time:
May-June

Delicate white-flowered
umbel. Stem hairless with
threadlike upper leaves and
finely divided lower leaves.

Similar species:
Cow parsley is not normally
found in traditionally-
managed meadows. It has
less divided lower leaves
(resembling parsley) and
grows to 100cm.

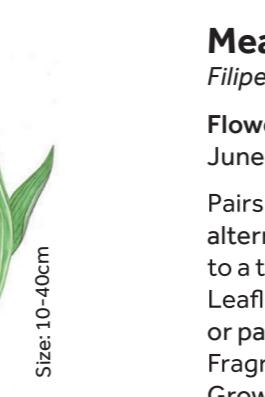


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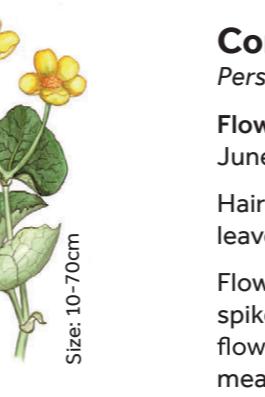


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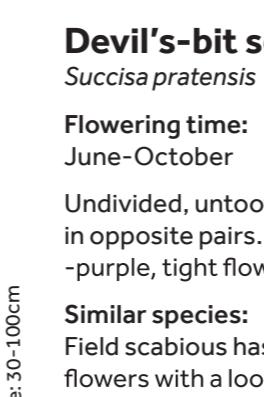


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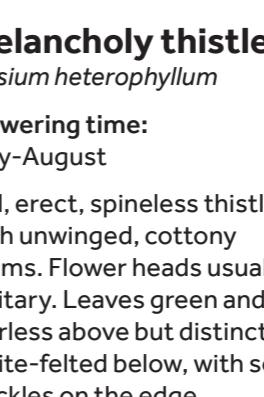


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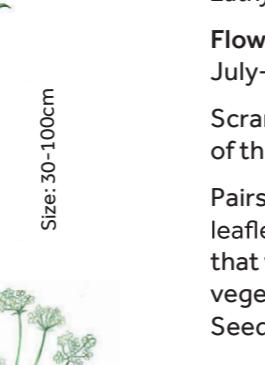
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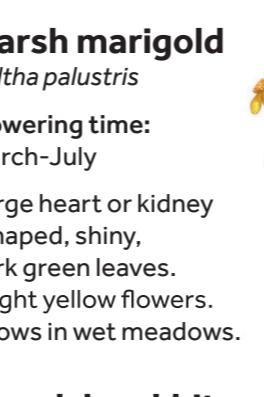


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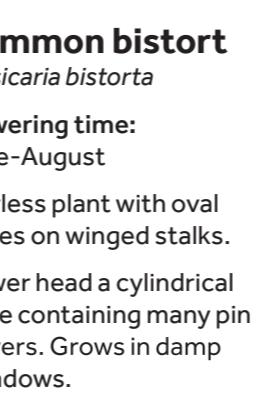


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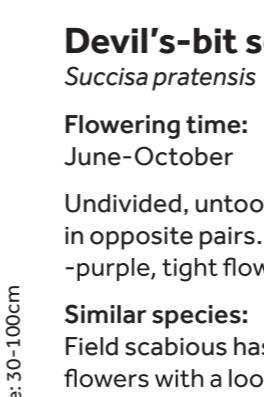


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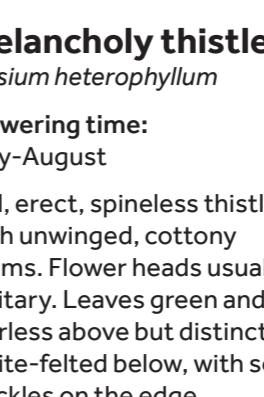


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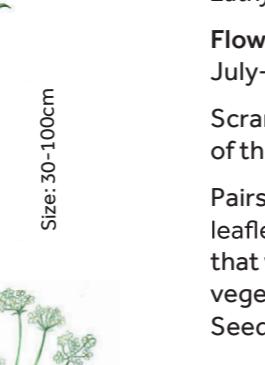
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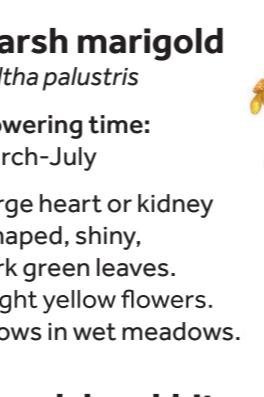


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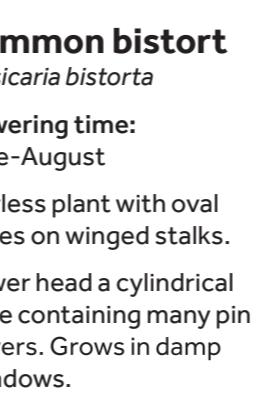


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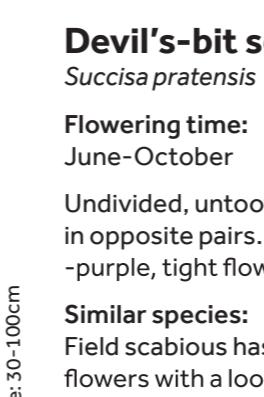


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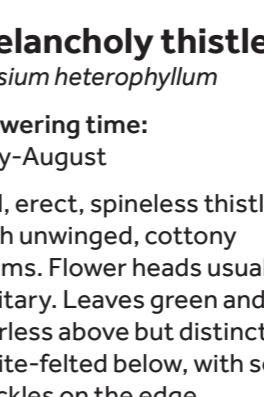


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