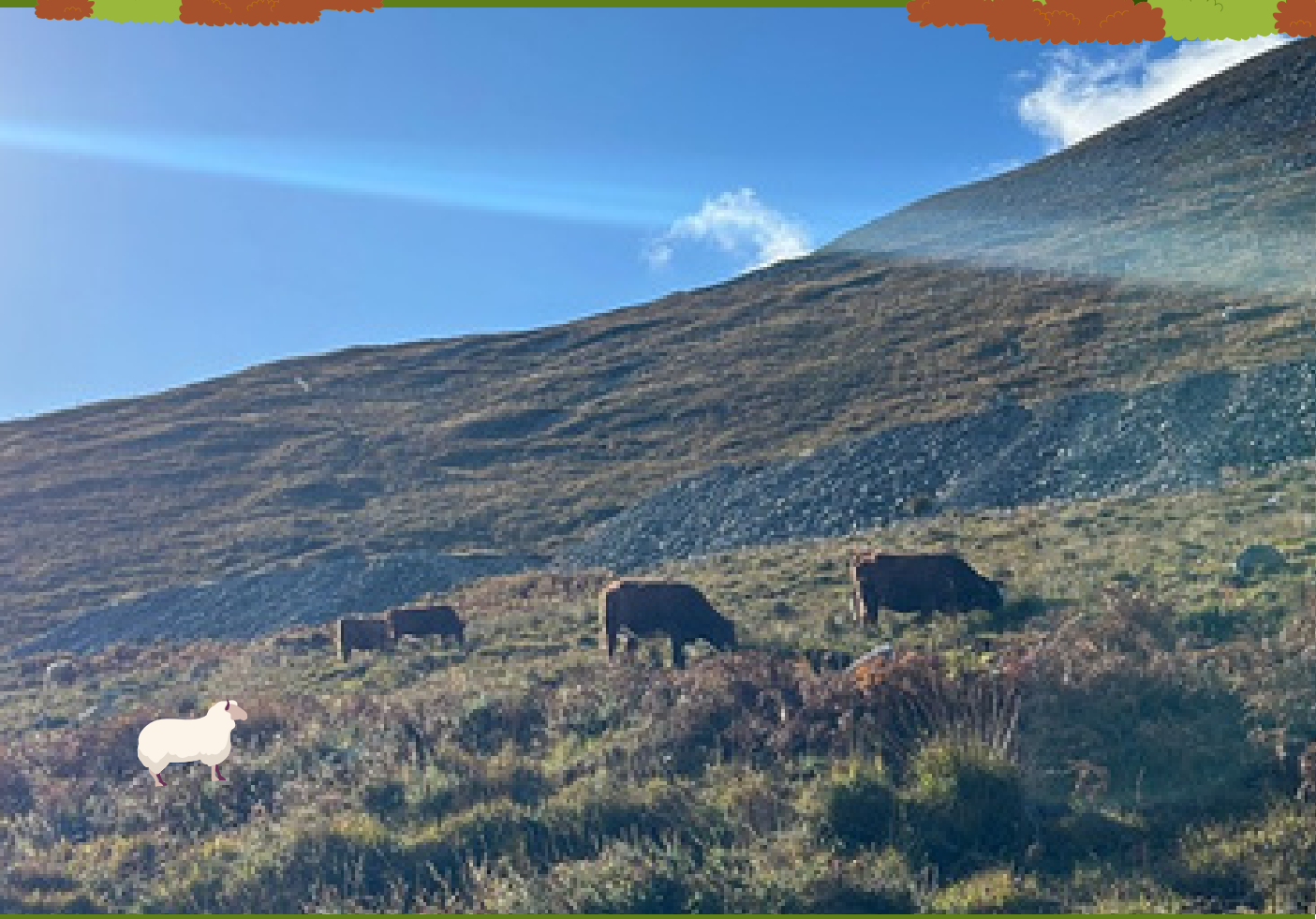
Blanket Bog
Mini Guide

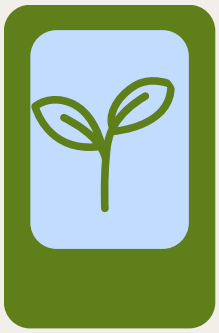


Ulster Farmers' Union

Ulster Wildlife

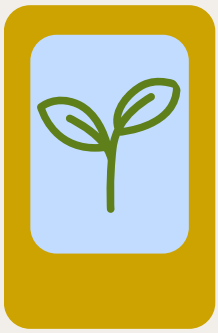
How to use!

Each species is on a different colourled page, these colours indicate the following:



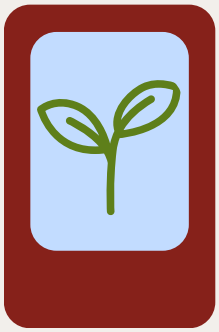
“Positive”

Found on healthy blanket bog



“In moderation”

present, however too much could be a negative indicator



“Negative”

Not natural in this habitat

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs | An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe | Department of Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers

Blanket Bog Plants

Blanket bogs provide social, economic, cultural and environmental value. Identifying key plant species helps us understand the general condition of the peatland. Some species are a better indicators than others, supporting the right species in the right condiditons can help keep our peatlands in good health.

Other Information:

Description of flower

When the plant produces flowers/appears.

Addditional Information

Peat Builder!

This species helps form peat.



Can be an indicator for good air quality.



Potentially an indicator for poorer air quality.



Hare’s Tail Cottongrass

Hare's Tail Cottongrass

Eriophorum vaginatum

Single seed head of white fluffy tufts.

Flowers June- July

Needle like leaves. Forms tussocks or clumps on drier parts of bog. Used in the past for candle wicks.



Common grass
Cottongrass

Commongrass Cottongrass

Eriophorum agustifolium

Seed head has 4-5 fluffy white tufts.

Flowers June - July

Leaves 5 mm wide with rusty coloured tips single tips single plants grow in wet part of bog.





Bog Asphodel

Bog Asphodel

Narthecium ossifragum

Yellow, star-like flowers, 6 petals on each.

Flowers late spring, early summer

Avoid in late spring; can cause fatal kidney problems and photosensitisation in lambs.



Sundew
(round-leaved)

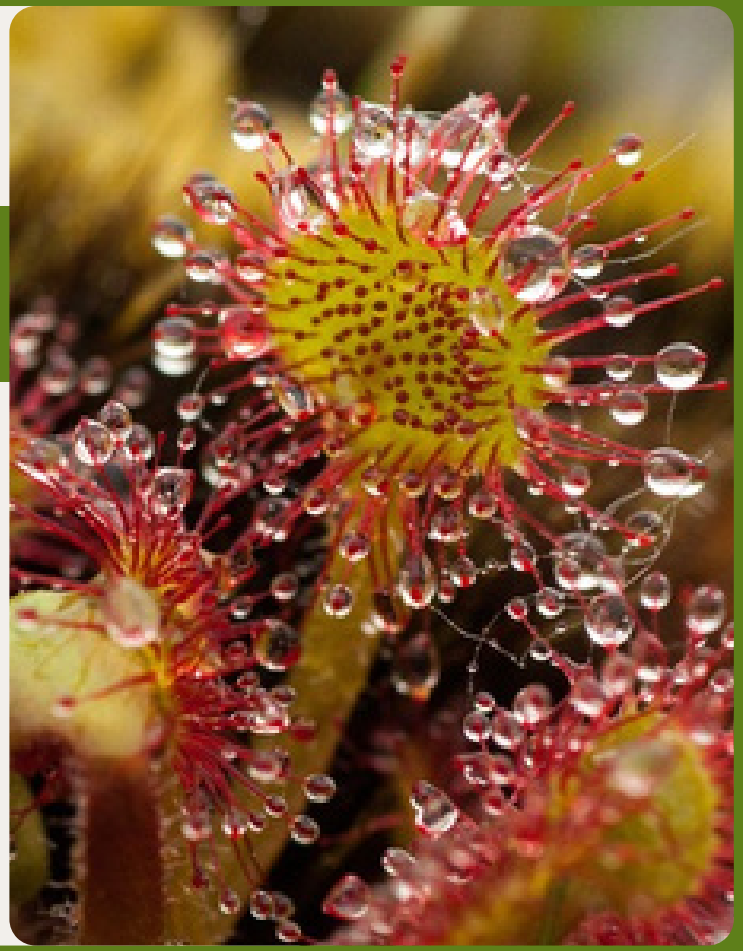
Sundew (Round-leaved)

Drosera rotundifolia

Small white rosette.

Flowers June- August

Spoon shaped leaves with sticky tentacles to trap insects. Extract used for respiratory conditions (anti-inflammatory properties).





Bilberry

Bilberry

Vaccinium myrtillus

Pale green pink globular shaped urns.

Flowers; April - June
Fruit; June - July

Produces edible blue berries which can may be used to make tasty jam.





Bell Heather

Bell Heather

Erica cinerea

Pink purple bell shaped flowers.

Flowers June to September

Evergreen undershrub leaves are narrow dark green and arranged in whorls of three on the stem.





Cross-leaved Heather

Cross-leaved Heather

Erica Tetralix

Cluster of pink, bell-shaped flowers at tip of stem.

Flowers June to September

Narrow leaves arranged in fours like a cross shape, found in wet areas. Was used as a natural dye in Harris Tweed.





Ling Heather

Ling Heather

Calluna vulgaris

Pink flowers grow loosely up the stem.

Flowers July - October

Bush with tiny green scales for leaves that are evergreen. Grows in drier areas.





Reindeer Lichen

Reindeer Lichen

Cladonia Partentosa

No petals. Green/gray “branches”.

Seen all year

Leaves form tiny bush, gets soft when wet and crisp when dry. Good air quality indicator.





Red Bogmoss

Red Bogmoss

Sphagum capillifolium

Wine red / brownish green colour.

Seen all year.

Each resemble a small cauliflower, found on slightly drier areas, forming firm hummocks.





Feathery Bogmoss

Feathery Bogmoss

Sphagum cuspidatum

Green/yellow, long narrow flacid “leaves”

Seen all year

Floats in hollows and bog pools, called “drowned kitten moss” as it looks like wet fur.





Cow-Horn Bogmoss

Cow-Horn Bogmoss

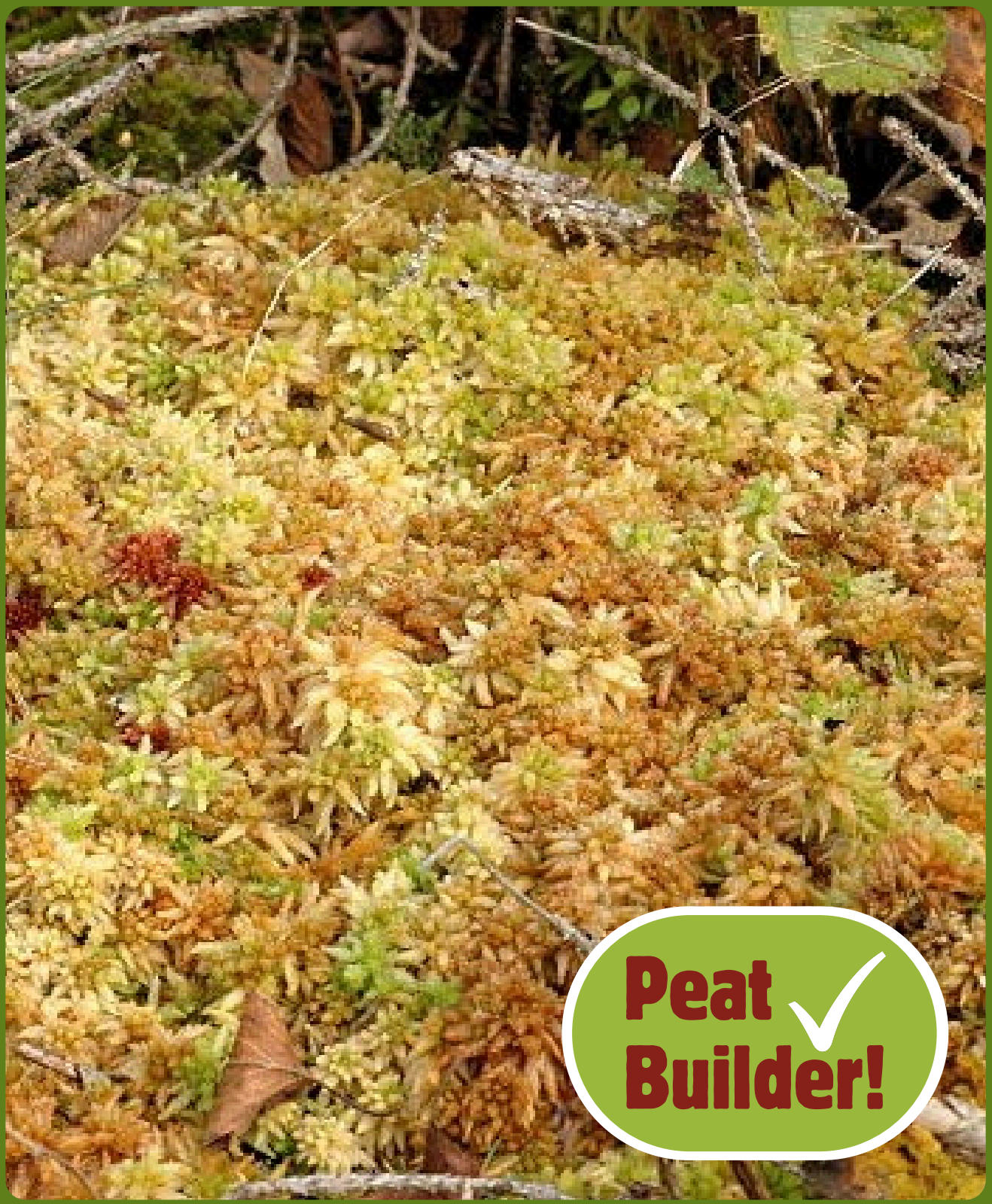
Sphagnum auriculatum

"Cow Horn" curved branches can be green, yellow-brown or dull coppery red

Seen all year

One of the most common sphagnum species. Found in boggy pools and ditches.





Papillose Bogmoss

Papillose Bogmoss

Sphagnum papillosum

Yellow brown - orange brown, never red.

Seen all year

Upper branches are short and blunt-tipped. Forms mats and low hummocks. Naturally antiseptic & used as a would dressing in WW1.





Purple Moor-Grass

Purple Moor-Grass

Molinia caerulea

Purple-tinged, or dark purple spikelet plumes.

Flowers July - September

Forms in tufts, prominent after intense fire, can out compete other species.





Deergrass

Deergrass

Trichophorum cespitosum

Yellow/brown bushy tufts.

Flowers June -July.

Grows in tussocks in drier parts of the bog. Can dominate in areas of regular burning or intense trampling.





Devils Matchsticks

Devils Matchsticks

Cladonia floerkeana

No petals but rather a red blob.

Seen all year

Looks like a matchstick! Can be an indicator of historical burning or exposed peat.





Sitka Spruce

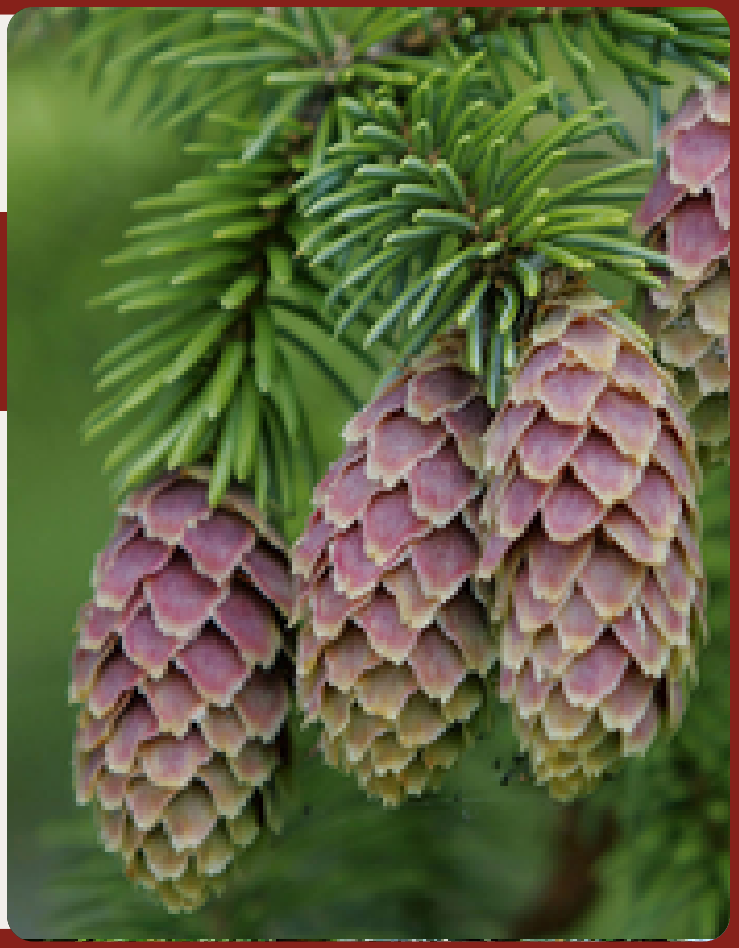
Sitka Spruce

Picea sitchensis

Red/yellow cones

May

Harsh prickly blue/grey needles, non-native. Trees dry out peatland areas, inhibiting growth of peat builders.





Rhododendron

Rhododendron

Rhododendron ponticum

Clusters of bell shaped purple/pink flowers, 5 petals on each.

Flowers May - July

Invasive, non-native evergreen.





Heath Star Moss

Heath Star Moss

Campylopus introflexus

Olive green to black, hair pointed leaves.

Seen all year

Erect shoots, 1-5cm high, hairpoints characteristically bend backwards when dry.

