

About the Survey

This survey is designed to discover sites that are important for wildlife. This will enable the Don't Mow Let It Grow project to develop conservation management options for these roadside verges and council parks.

You can use either the Standard OR Advanced sections of the survey form. The standard survey only involves recording a relatively small number of species which are illustrated in the accompanying ID guide.

To do a standard survey:

- Please make sure you refer to a recognised plant identification guide: e.g. The Wild Flower Key: How to Identify Wild Plants, Trees and Shrubs in Britain and Ireland (Rose); Collins Flower Guide (Streeter et al.)
- Complete only section 1-3 & 5 of this form.
- For either survey if you wish to record other species such as insects or birds, please use the 'Additional Species' section 4, if you don't see anything or do not record them please note this.

To do an advanced survey:

- Complete sections 1-3 & 6 and section 4 as above.
- You may wish to use a wild flower identification book.

THE SURVEY

Before:

- Please contact the Don't Mow Let It Grow Project Coordinator (details below) to discuss choosing a site to survey and to request a map of your chosen site. When you are allocated a site the Project Coordinator will let you know how many 2x2m quadrats you will need to complete, for example if your site is a verge it will be approximately one every one kilometre. A new survey form must be completed for each quadrat, this will all be explained in the training. If you find a particularly interesting or rare species outside your designated quadrat please record but circle the entry and make a note in the "other" box on the sheet, this will be especially important for both rare species and invasive alien species. Alternatively, visit dontmowletitgrow.com/volunteer and follow the instructions.
- A high visibility vest must be worn whilst carrying out the survey. These can be supplied at no cost. Please contact the Project coordinator.
- You can confirm the start and end points of your survey with reference to the verge map using a satellite photograph where necessary.

During:

- Please be safe at all times. See the advice in the 'Health and Safety' section overleaf.
- Please park safely and considerately such as avoid parking on the grass verge or near a junction and do not block a gate or field entrance unless you have the landowner's permission.
- Please take photographs of your site if possible. It is worth showing things such as any damage, or views of the site to show good stands of wild flowers or dense scrub. Please contact the Project Coordinator to arrange how you can send these photographs to us, or upload on to the website dontmowletitgrow.com

Please be safe at all times and survey only if you are comfortable you can do so safely.

After:

- Please record your results on-line at dontmowletitgrow.com via your PC or smart phone. If you do not have a PC or smart phone please send your completed survey forms to the Project Coordinator at the address below.
- Your time spent on the survey helps us with our funding and it is important that we have a record of the time volunteers have dedicated to the project. Please therefore record, in the 'General Information' section, your time spent on all aspects of the survey.

Contact details for help and further information:

Rachel Bain

Biodiversity Officer, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 66 Portstewart Rd, Coleraine, BT52 1EY

SURVEY HEALTH AND SAFETY

By completing the survey form you are confirming that you have read and understood the health and safety guidelines listed below and have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure your personal safety and the safety of others.

HAZARD/RISK	SAFETY PRECAUTIONS
Lone Working and Working in Remote Areas	Take a mobile phone. If you plan to survey alone, let someone know where you are going and report back at the end of the survey.
Parking	When parking, park safely and courteously, do not obstruct the carriageway or any access points and avoid any sharp bends, crest of hills or junctions.
Survey Site Hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing Traffic • Bends in the road • Hidden dips in the road • Uneven ground • Crest of hill • Deep sheughs • Steep slopes and banks • Maintenance work 	Wear high visibility clothing at all times whilst on the site and only survey in daylight and good weather. (A high visibility vest is available on request from the Project coordinator who can post this to you.) Do not walk in the road to carry out the survey. Surveyors should always walk facing oncoming traffic. Do not walk within 1.1m of the edge of the verge whilst surveying. Please take extra care if you need to cross thin sections of verge to continue the survey. Be alert to other road users and their needs. Be especially careful on busy roads, especially A-roads. Wear footwear with good ankle support and a good outdoor grip. Take special care when working adjacent to deep water or steep slopes. Take special care if you see any maintenance activity and decide whether it is safe for you to continue the survey. Flying debris from moving machinery and noise can be particularly hazardous. Keep at least 15m from any vegetation strimming and wait for the operator to see you and stop before getting any nearer.
Animals and Bites/Stings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse riders • Dog walkers • Weil's disease (contaminated water) • Ticks (Lyme's disease) 	Be careful of animals and considerate to their needs. If working near water wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking. Bites/Stings – seek medical advice. Wear long trousers. Use insect repellent. Remove any ticks as soon as possible and report to your GP.
Fly Tipping	Do not move or touch waste and beware of any sharp objects such as broken bottles, wire or syringes.
Proximity to railway crossings	Do not enter onto railway property to carry out survey work.
Proximity to active airfield	Do not be distracted by noise.
Sun exposure – poor shade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun burn/heat stroke • Dehydration 	Take plenty of drinking water. Keep covered and wear a sun hat. Use sunblock.
Scratches/cuts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbed wire • Blackthorn/hawthorn/bramble Burns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant hogweed/wild parsnip/spurge Allergens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollens 	Carry a small first aid kit in the car. Take medications with you if suffering from any allergens. Avoid touching poisonous plants such as ragwort and giant hogweed Keep tetanus jabs up to date.

Please note:

Please avoid picking and trampling plants. It is an offence under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to pick wild plants listed in Schedule 8 and, without the owner's permission, to uproot any wild plant.

APPENDIX:

Guidance notes for recording DAFOR scores

In order to make the data more useful we would like you to record the relative abundance of each species you find in the square on the DAFOR scale: D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare. To do this, tick species off on your list as you find them in the normal way. When you have finished surveying the square, assign a DAFOR letter to each species.

The trick to doing this is to go through the list quickly and for each species write the first score that comes into your head. Try not to think about it too much.

If a species seems intermediate between two categories and you are unsure which to assign to it, choose the lower category, e.g. if you are unsure if something was occasional or frequent, choose occasional.

D for Dominant

In practice you will rarely, if ever use this. To score D, a species would have to be the most common plant by far, in well over three quarters of the square. It is possible that in a square that is entirely conifer plantation, that Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis* might score D; or in a square that is almost all occupied by highly improved grassland, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* might sometimes score D, but even these two scenarios are unlikely most of the time. If you are not sure if something should score D or A, give it A.

A for Abundant

Only use A if the plant was really very common in many parts of the square. For most species this would mean that there were thousands of individual plants present. In most squares, few species will score as highly as A and in quite a few squares there will be no species that score that highly. If you are not sure if something should score A or F, give it F.

F for Frequent

Use F if you found the plant in several places in the square and there was usually more than just a few individuals in each of these places. You could also use F if the plant was only present in one part of the square but was very common in that part, with many individuals and covered a substantial area (e.g. between one eighth and one quarter of the area of the whole square). If you are not sure if something should score F or O, give it O.

O for Occasional

Use O for species that occur in several places in the square, but whose populations are usually not very big. You would also use O for species that are very common in one bit of habitat within the square that occupied just a small area (e.g. less than one eighth of the area of the whole square). You will use O for many species in most squares. If you are not sure if something should score O or R, give it R.

R for Rare

Use R for any species that occur as a small number of individuals in the square. This small number of individuals may be located in one place in the square, or scattered over several different locations within the square. In many squares R is likely to be the score that most species get. If you are not sure if something should score O or R, give it R.

For those of you who are used to using the DAFOR scale, please stick to the basic 5 scores only and avoid entries like O/F (occasional to frequent) and particularly please avoid using the prefix 'L' as in LF (locally frequent).

DN for Didn't do it

Use DN for didn't have time to take survey