

Beachcomber's Guide

Solway Flowers

**Identify seaside flowers
found on the Solway coast**



This guide will help you identify 16 seaside flowering plants found on beaches along the Solway Coast. The more you look the more you will find so if a flower you discover does not match those in this guide then search the internet or a seashore nature book to help with identification.

This flower guide has been produced as part of the Making the Most of the Coast project managed by Solway Firth Partnership.

Solway Firth



Partnership

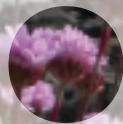
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How to use this guide

Where the land meets the sea is always a demanding place for plants to survive because they have to cope with a combination of wind, salt water and lack of soil. The dynamic nature of the coast with shifting sands or shingle makes life on the beach even more precarious.

Many flowering plants have adapted to flourish on different types of seashore and to aid identification the flowers are grouped by shore type: saltmarsh (merse), sand dunes, shingle banks and rocky coast. Compare your find with the pictures in this guide; although the shape and colour may vary, the pictures show distinctive features which will help you identify what you have found.



Common Glasswort

(Marsh Samphire)
Salicornia europaea

Looks: Branched like a miniature tree, its leaves are fleshy scales which change from green to a golden red in late summer

Found: A pioneer species on mud flats, it often forms large colonies which help establish saltmarsh

Did you know?
Once called Poor Man's Asparagus, it now appears on menus in trendy restaurants



A large field of purple Common Sea Lavender flowers in a coastal setting. The flowers are in full bloom, creating a dense carpet of purple. In the background, a body of water and distant hills are visible under a clear sky. A bumblebee is seen in the lower-left foreground, interacting with the flowers.

Common Sea Lavender

Limonium vulgare

Looks: An erect shrubby plant with leathery leaves and everlasting purple flowers

Found: On middle and upper saltmarsh

Did you know?

Although it lacks the distinct scent of lavender it is still irresistible to bees and butterflies

Common Scurvygrass

Cochlearia officinalis

Looks: The glossy, kidney-shaped leaves are often hidden by a mat of small white flowers

Found: On saltmarsh and rocky shores

Did you know?

Rich in vitamin C, it was eaten by sailors to stay healthy during long sea voyages





Sea Aster

Aster tripolium

Looks: A tall plant with purple, daisy-like flowers

Found: On upper saltmarsh and rocky shores

Did you know?

One of the last flowers to bloom, the Sea Aster is sometimes called Summer's Farewell

Thrift (Sea Pinks)

Armeria maritima

Looks: Thin leaves with a rounded head of pretty pink flowers on a long stalk

Found: On saltmarsh or as a compact cushion on rocky shores

Did you know?

Featured on the reverse side of the old threepence coin – perhaps a play on the phrase to be thrifty



Sea Bindweed

Calystegia soldanella

Looks: Thick, waxy
leaves with pink and white
trumpet-shaped flowers

Found: Sprawling over
sand dunes



Did you know?
The trumpet-shaped
flowers close before
nightfall and reopen
in the morning

Sea-holly

Eryngium maritimum

Looks: Spiny, blue-grey leaves with round blue flower head

Found: On sand dunes and shingle banks

Did you know?

The plant's large sweet roots were once popular as a candied delicacy





Sea Campion

Silene uniflora

Looks: Sprawling bluish leaves and delicate white flowers with a veined bladder

Found: On shingle banks and rocky shores

Did you know?

Superstition says picking the flowers tempts death – it would certainly be risky to pick them from cliff tops!

Sea Radish

Raphanus raphanistrum
subsp. maritimus

Looks: A tall, ungainly plant with coarse hairy leaves, small yellow flowers and beaded seed pods

Found: On the strandline of sandy and shingle beaches

Did you know?

The edible leaves have a spicy flavour somewhere between cabbage, wasabi and radish



Frosted Orache

Atriplex laciniata

Looks: Sprawling plant with whitish-grey diamond-shaped leaves

Found: On the strandline of sandy and shingle beaches

Did you know?
The “sugar coating” on the leaves helps to minimise evaporation



Sea Rocket

Cakile maritima

Looks: Straggly thick leaves with delicate lilac or white flowers

Found: On the strandline of sandy beaches

Did you know?

A long, deep taproot helps this plant grow even in the ever-moving sand dunes



Yellow Horned- poppy

Glaucium flavum

Looks: Bluish-green leaves
with striking yellow flowers

Found: On sandy and
shingle beaches

Did you know?

The horned seed pods, the
longest of all British plants,
split to spill the seeds



Sea Sandwort

Honckenya peploides

Looks: A mat of fleshy leaves with small, greenish-white flowers

Found: On sand and shingle beaches

Did you know?

The deep root system allows the plant to disappear underground over winter and then reappear in the spring



Sea Mayweed

Tripleurospermum maritimum

Looks: Large daisy flowers and sprawling divided, fleshy leaves

Found: Grows on sand dunes, shingle banks and rocky shores

Did you know?

When crushed, the leaves release a faint, sweet smell of camomile



Sea-kale

Crambe maritima

Looks: Large, purple-grey, cabbage-like leaves with small white flowers

Found: On the high tide line of shingle beaches

Did you know?

The plant's fleshy root contains more starch than potatoes

Silverweed

Potentilla anserina

Looks: A yellow flower with 5 petals; the divided leaves often have a downy grey colour

Found: Creeping over sand dunes, shingle and rocky shores

Did you know?

It had many traditional medicinal uses and the leaves were even used as insoles for tired walkers

Enjoy your search for seashore flowers

You will find many more seashore plants on the Solway Coast than are featured in this guide, some so scarce that they are protected. It is always a good idea to take a photograph which you can refer to for later identification.

Remember a wild flower always looks better in the ground than in your hand.



