

— BIODIVERSITY — on your Farm

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has set a challenge for farmers to record some of the amazing biodiversity found on your farm during the year. We have 40 species for you to record.

Are you up for the challenge?

Species: Red Dead-nettle

Scientific Name: *Lamium purpureum*

Irish name: Caochneantóg dhearg

Group

1 of the 24 plant species belonging to the Lamiaceae family.

Irish Wildflowers at

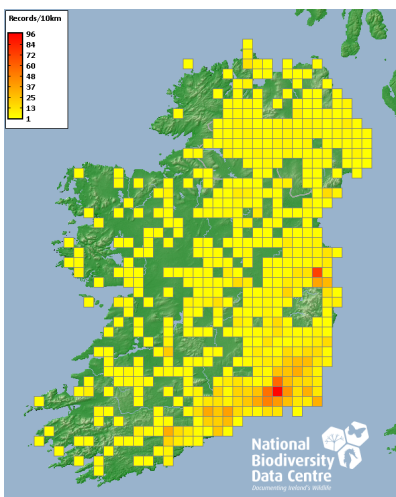
http://www.wildflowersofireland.net/plant_detail.php?id_flower=429&wildflower=Dead-nettle,%20Red

How common on farms

Biodiversity surveys were carried out across 40 farms within the National Biodiversity Data Centre's 'Protecting Farmland Pollinators' EIP project (<https://biodiversityireland.ie/projects/protecting-farmland-pollinators/>). The 40 farms were chosen to reflect farms of differing types and intensity levels. The Red Dead-nettle was recorded on seven of the 40 farms.

Distribution

Widespread and very common.



Source: The Red Dead-nettle records as viewed on Biodiversity Maps, 2022.



© Ruth Wilson

Identification Tips

- Pink-purple flowers with purple bracts.
- Aromatic leaves are hairy, heart-shaped and have toothed edges.
- Some leaves near the top of the plant have a purple tint.
- An erect plant with square stem, usually 5 to 20 cm in height.

Biodiversity Tip No. 3 Let wildflowers grow

Have patience and allow wildflowers to grow and set seed.

Maintain with an annual cut and lift, at the end of summer.



Conservation Status

Red Lists are an internationally recognised methodology for assessing conservation status. An Irish Vascular Plant Red List was published in 2016. It found that the Red Dead-nettle was not threatened with extinction from the island of Ireland. Based on the Red List it is 'Least Concern'.

Management Tips

For Red Dead-nettle:

Around the farm:

- Allow patches of Red Dead-nettle to flower and set seed, if possible.

Further Info

It is likely that this plant was introduced to Ireland with early agriculture and evidence for it has been found in Bronze Age deposits.

Flowers may be produced throughout the year, including during mild weather in winter. This allows bees to gather its nectar for food when few other nectar sources are available.

It is also a prominent source of pollen for bees in March/April, when bees need the pollen as protein to build up their nest.

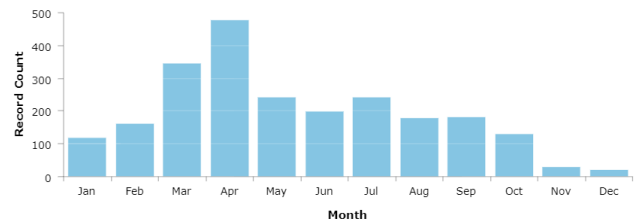
In some parts, it is known as the '**Bumblebee flower**' as bumblebees love it!

Though superficially similar in appearance to species of Nettles (true nettles), it is not related and does not sting, hence the name 'dead-nettle'.

When?

Red Dead-nettle has a long flowering season that can begin in January and last until November.

Records per month across all datasets



National Biodiversity Data Centre, Ireland, Red Dead-nettle, image, accessed 23 February 2023, <<https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Species/56009>>

Where on the farm?

Red dead-nettle can be found in fields, banks, disturbed ground, roadsides and non-farmed areas.

They self seed easily, so if you can leave a patch for pollinators in a non-farmed area, this will be very beneficial to pollinators.

They are not an especially vigorous plant and are not considered to be a problem 'weed'. They are not tolerant to trampling.

Value

- Valuable plant for pollinators, especially bumblebees.
- It has some traditional medicinal use. Dried leaves have been used as a poultice to stem hemorrhaging whilst fresh bruised leaves have been applied to external wounds and cuts. The leaves are also made into a tea to promote perspiration and discharge from the kidneys in treating chills.

Similar species

Can be mistaken for Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum*, which is less frequent in central and western Ireland.

Affected by a change in climate?

They may be affected by a change in flowering periods.

Need some help with identification?

Just drop us a line, we'll be happy to help:
pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie

Useful Links

Try our free online course on how to identify common bumblebees. It includes activities and quizzes to test your progress, and get feedback on answers: <https://learn.biodiversityireland.ie/courses/commonbumblebees>

There are also other free resources here:
<https://pollinators.ie/record-pollinators/id-guides/>

Record here

Your records will help us build a picture of farmland biodiversity in Ireland. If you're happy with your Early Bumblebee identification, you can submit your record:

- On our website at the National Biodiversity Data Centre: <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/biodiversity-on-your-farm>

or

- You could also download our free smartphone App for recording in the field

Android App:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nbdc.mobile.biodiversity>

iPhone App:

<https://apps.apple.com/ie/app/biodiversity-data-capture/id906361120>

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