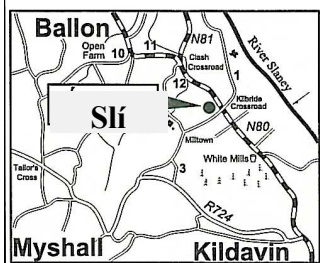


Hedgerows are such a familiar feature in the Irish landscape that we often take them very much for granted. Many of these are at least 200 years old, and some are much older. They consist of a dense planting of woody shrubs, often planted on top of a stone and earth bank. Annual trimming ensures that they remain thick and stock-proof.

Keeping well maintained hedges has many advantages for the farmer, including providing shelter for the stock and preventing soil erosion, but they are also hugely important to wildlife.

Often, the older the hedgerow, the more different woody shrub and tree species it contains: maybe up to 15 species. Under the shelter of these, a rich variety of plant life grows. These include perennial and annual flowers, grasses and ferns. Some of these prefer the sunny, warm, drier side and others the shady, cool, damp side. The hedge also provides shelter, protection and bountiful food for many of our native mammals, birds, amphibians, insects, spiders etc. Two thirds of our native birds nest in hedgerows. If these living environments were lost then much of our wildlife would also be lost, so it is vital that we appreciate and protect our hedgerows.



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Fál Sceach Hedgerow

Tá an méid sin taithí againn ar an bhfál sceach a fheiceáil i dtírdhreach na hÉireann, gur ar éigean a thugaimid faoi deara i gceart é. Bíonn cuid mhaith de na fáлта seo breis agus dhá chéad bliain d'aois, agus cuid acu níos sine ná san. Éard atá i gceist iontu ná plandú tiubh de thoir adhmaid, iad ag fás go minic ar chlaí páirce déanta de chlocha is de chré. Bearrtar na fáлта seo in aghaidh na bliana, rud a chinntíonn go mbíonn siad tiubh agus oiriúnach in áit lochta bheo-stoic. Bíonn buntáistí go leor ann don fheirmeoir nuair a thugtar aire do na claíocha: cuirtear fothain ar fáil don stoc, maolaítear ar an gcreimeadh ithreach, agus is áiseanna iontacha don fhiadhúlra chomh maith iad.

Dá aois é an fál is ea is mó saghas crann agus tor adhmaid éagsúil a bhíonn ag fás ann go minic: suas le cúig chinn déag de speicis, b'fhéidir. Faoi scáth na gcrann seo bíonn éagsúlacht shaibhir de bheatha phlandúil ag fás. Ina measc bíonn bláthanna bliantúla agus ilbhiantúla, féara agus raithneach. Is fearr le cuid de na plandaí seo taobh na gréine, atá tirim agus te, agus is fearr le cuid eile acu an taobh tais fionnuar, faoin scáth. Cuireann an fál sceach fothain, co-saint, agus bia fial ar fáil chomh maith do na mamaigh dhúchasacha, d'éin, d'amfaibiaigh, do dhamháin alla, d'fheithidí agus eile. Neadaíonn dhá thrian de na héin dhúchasacha san fhál sceach. Tá sé ríthábhachtach go mbeadh meas againn ar na fáлта, agus go ndéanfar caomhnú ar an timpeallacht bheo seo, toisc go gcaillfear go leor den fhiadhúlra má scriostar an fál sceach.

Slí na Sceach Balana

Stopuimhir: 1

Laidin: Malus sylvestris

Gaeilge: Fia-Úll

Béarla: Crab Apple



Is fia-úll é an crann beag anseo, atá ag athfhás. Bíonn bláthanna deasa bána/bándearga air san earrach, agus ansin, san fhómhar, fásann torthaí beaga searbhá buí air, agus bíonn tóir ar na torthaí seo chun subh a dhéanamh astu. Bíonn an fia-úll comónta go leor sa dúiche seo. Itheann saghsanna feithidí na duilleoga agus na torthaí. Ina measc tá boilb leamhain áirithe a thugann faoi na húlla sna húlloird tráchtála, agus breathnaítear orthu mar lotnaidí dá bharr.

The small tree here, being allowed to regrow, is the crab apple. It has attractive pink/white flowers in Spring, followed, in Autumn, by small, sour, yellowish fruits, which are so popular for collecting to make preserves. It is common in this locality. A number of insect species feed on the leaves and fruit, including the caterpillars of some moths, regarded as pests when they attack commercial apple orchards.

Stopuimhir: 2

Laidin: Sorbus aucuparia

Gaeilge: Caorthann

Béarla: Rowan, Mountain Ash



An crann beag seo, le coirt liath agus duilleoga cleiteacha le thart faoi chúig bhileog fhiacalacha dhéag orthu, is é seo an caorthann. Fásann triopaill de bhláthanna beaga bána air i dtús an tsamhraidh, agus leanann torthaí geala dearga air ansin san fhómhar. Is foinse thábhachtach bia do na héin iad na caora seo sa gheimhreadh, agus baineann an liatráisc ach go háirithe, an-taitneamh astu. Cuireadh an planda seo, toisc nach bhfásann sé go nádúrtha i gceantair na n-ísealchríoch. Mar sin féin, feictear sa dúiche seo go minic é, ag fás i bhfálta sceach in aice le sléibhte an Staighre Dhuibh.

The small tree here, with grey bark and pinnate leaves with about 15 toothed leaflets, is the Mountain Ash. It bears bunches of small, white flowers in early summer, followed by bright red fruits in Autumn, which are a valuable source of food for birds in Winter, especially enjoyed by Mistle Thrushes. The tree here is planted, as it doesn't usually inhabit lowland areas. However, it is very common locally, found growing in hedgerows up around the Blackstairs Mountains.

Stopuimhir: 3

Laidin: Sambucus nigra

Gaeilge: Trom

Béarla: Elder



Feictear an tor ard seo, a d'fhásfadh ina chrann beag, go minic san fhál sceach. Cruiníodh na bláthanna cumhra bánbhúí go traidisiúnta chun fíon an bhlátha throim a dhéanamh. Úsáideadh na triopaill de na caora beaga dubha a fásann ina dhiaidh sin leis na céadta bliain anuas chun fionta agus coirdéil a ullmhú, agus in ionad rísíní i gcisté agus i

Here is a neatly trimmed section of hedge containing hawthorn. Its dense and thorny nature makes it ideal for using to make a stock-proof hedge. If you look back across the field to between stops 9 and 10, you will see a hawthorn that is being allowed to regrow into a tree. This will allow it to

produce its masses of scented white flowers, followed by red berries known as haws. These are favourite food of winter visitors, Fieldfares and Redwings, and many of our resident birds feed on them too.

Running up the bank to scramble in the hedge is Lus garbh, Robin-run-the-hedge or Goose Grass (Galium aparine). Its stems and leaves are rough with hundreds of tiny hooked prickles. Also, in the grass, you may spot small yellow flowers with hooked seed heads. This is Machall coille, Wood Avens (Geum urbanum), and the small pink flowers with reddish stems and leaves are of Earball riogh, Herb Robert (Geranium robertianum)

Stopuimhir: 12

Laidin: Acer pseudoplatanus

Gaeilge: Crann Bán, Seiceamar

Béarla: Sycamore



Tá an seiceamar seo lomtha go maith, ach má ligtear leis, fásann an seiceamar go hard is go mear mar bhall d'fhine na mailpe, a bhfuil aithne go forleathan air de bharr na síolta "héileacaptar" a fásann air. Ní crann atá dúchasach don tír seo é, ach ón am a tugadh isteach anseo é den chéad uair na céadta bliain ó shin, tá sé bunaithe go maith ar fud na tíre agus feictear go rímhínic é sna fálta sceach. Faoin gcrann, i measc an fhéir, feicfidh tú bláthanna buí an fhearbáin (Ranunculus repens). Is breá leis an ithir thais faoin ngrian agus meallfaidh sé go leor feithidí chuig na bláthanna geala, agus beacha, féileacáin agus an bheach ghabhair ina measc.

Well trimmed in this instance, if let go, the sycamore is a fast growing, large tree of the maple family, well known for its "helicopter" seeds. This tree is not native to Ireland, but having been introduced hundreds of years ago, it has established itself everywhere and is now very common in hedgerows.

Underneath, amongst the grass, you may see the yellow flowers of the Creeping Buttercup (Ranunculus repens). This likes damp soil in sun, and will attract many insects to its bright flowers, including bees, hoverflies and butterflies.

The two ash trees either side of this gateway are multi-stemmed, showing that they were trimmed down to hedge level many years ago, but have since been allowed to grow into fine trees. The flowers of ash are often overlooked as they are green, coming out before the leaves. These are followed by bunches of winged seeds, which spin and carry on the wind to disperse themselves. Bullfinches and other finches enjoy feeding on them in winter.

Under the shade of these trees, there are Foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*) growing, with their familiar spikes of purple pixie-hat flowers in early Summer. This plant contains the poison digitalis, which is used in medicine, in precisely prescribed doses, for the treatment of heart disease.

Stopuimhir: 10

Laidin: *Anthriscus sylvestris*

Gaeilge: Peirsil Bhó

Béarla: Cow Parsley



Taobh amuigh de na féara, an planda is mó suntais a fhásann ag bun na coda seo den fhál sceach ná an pheirsil bhó. I Mí na Bealtaine agus i Mí an Mheithimh bíonn an ceann tonnach de bhláthanna bána le sonrú ar fud an fháil agus ar thaobh an bhóthair chomh maith. Is ball d'fhine ollmhór Apiaceae é, agus áirítear an cairéad, soilire, finéal agus peirsil mar bhaill chomh maith.

Apart from grasses, the dominant plant growing along the base of this section of hedgerow is Cow Parsley. In May and June its billowing heads of white flowers can be seen everywhere in hedgerows and roadside verges. It is a member of a large family called the Apiaceae, which includes the carrot, celery, fennel and parsley.

Stopuimhir: 11

Laidin: *Crataegus monogyna*

Gaeilge: Sceach Gheal

Béarla: Hawthorn, Whitethorn



Tá cuid néata bhearrtha den fhál anseo ina bhfuil an sceach gheal. Baintear úsáid as an tréith atá ann bheith dlúth deilgneach mar ábhar an-oiriúnach le haghaidh claíocha do bheithigh. Má bhreathnaíonn tú siar trasna na páirce idir stopuimhir 3 agus stopuimhir 4 tabharfaidh tú sceach gheal faoi deara ar ligeadh dó fás ar aghaidh mar chrann. Beidh deis aige dá bharr, na múrtha de bhláthanna cumhra bána a fhás, agus ina dhiaidh sin na caora dearga a dtugtar sceachóirí orthu. Is é seo an bia is ansa leis na cuairteoirí geimhridh seo an sacán agus an deargán sneachta, agus itheann cuid mhaith de na héin dhúchasacha iad chomh maith. Ag fás aníos ón mbanc féir agus ag leanúint ar aghaidh isteach san fhál tá an garbhilus (*Galium aparine*). Bíonn na gais is na duilleoga ainmhín leis na céadta de dhealga beaga crúcacha. Chomh maith leis sin b'fhéidir go dtabharfaidh tú bláth beag buí faoi deara san fhéar le ceann síolta crúcach air. Seo é an macall coille (*Geum urbanum*), agus is é an bláth beag bándearg leis an ngas agus an duilleog dhearg ná an ruithéal rí (*Geranium robertianum*).

bpicilí. Tá sé cruthaithe go mbíonn buanna leighis ag na torthaí agus ag na bláthanna nuair a dhéantar insiltí astu, chun maolú ar bhroicíteas, ar an réama, agus ar aon ghalar riospráide eile.

The large shrub here, that can grow into a small tree, is a very familiar sight in hedgerows. Its creamy-white, heavily scented flowers have traditionally been collected to make elderflower wine. The bunches of small black berries, that follow, have been used for hundreds of years to make wines, cordials, and as a substitute for raisins in pickles and cakes. Both flowers and fruits have proven medicinal qualities, when taken as infusions, to relieve bronchitis and catarrh and other respiratory illnesses.

Stopuimhir: 4

Laidin: *Lonicera periclymenum*

Gaeilge: Féithleog, Féithleann

Béarla: Honeysuckle, Woodbine



Tá samplaí maithe den fhéithleog le sonrú sa cheantar seo a léiríonn conas mar a chuir sé é féin in oiriúint don timpeallacht san fhál sceach, trí fhás timpeall agus trí na plandaí adhmaid eile a chónaíonn san fhál. Leanann na bláthanna cumhra buí agus bán ar feadh an tsamhraidh, scaipeann siad dea-bholadh álainn gluaisteach, agus meallann siad beacha go leor agus feithidí eile a phailníonn na bláthanna. Fásann na triopaill de chaora dearga san fhómhar.

There are some good examples of the honeysuckle in this section, showing how it is well adapted to hedgerow life, scrambling around and twining around other woody neighbours in the hedge. Its attractive yellow and white flowers, with their delicious, drifting scent, are produced all summer long, attracting many bees and other pollinating insects. Bunches of glistening red berries follow in the Autumn.

Stopuimhir: 5

Laidin: *Rosa canina*

Gaeilge: Conrós

Béarla: Dog Rose



Tá cineálacha éagsúla den chonrós ann atá dúchasach don tír seo, agus is é an ceann seo an ceann is coitianta acu. Fásann na bláthanna bándearga nó bána i Mí an Mheithimh nó i Mí Iúil, agus na caora tarraingteacha a nglaoitear mogóirí róis orthu, leanann siad ar feadh i bhfad san fhómhar agus sa gheimhreadh, ag cur bia ar fáil do na héin nuair a bhíonn an drochaimsir ann.

Tá leibhéil arda den C vitamín iontu, agus baintear úsáid astu chun síoróip nó tae mhogóirí róis a dhéanamh.

There are several species of wild roses native to Ireland, but the dog rose, here, is the most common of them. Its pale pink or white flowers are produced in June and July, and its attractive red berries, known as hips, last a long time through Autumn and Winter, providing food for birds in harsh weather. Containing high levels of vitamin C, the berries are used for making rosehip syrup and tea.

Stopuimhir: 6

Laidin: Quercus petraea

Gaeilge: Dair Ghaelach

Béarla: Sessile Oak

Is í an dair ghaelach ceann den dá shórt darach atá dúchasach don tír seo. Is í an dair ghailda an saghas darach eile. Is sampla maith an crann seo den airde agus den chruth maorga a bhaineann leis an dair ghaelach, cé gur crann sách óg atá againn anseo, é níos lú ná dhá chéad bliain d'aois, is dócha. Maireann na crainn seo go minic ar feadh ceithre chéad bliain. An toradh aon-síolach a bhíonn ar an dair - tugtar dearcán air - is foinse thábhachtach bia é do mhamaigh éagsúla, agus do roinnt éan freisin, don scréachóg ach go háirithe. Tabhair faoi deara go bhfuil an t-eidhneán (*Hedera helix*) bunaithe go maith ar an gcrann seo. Cé nach ar mhaithe leis an gcrann féin a fhásann sé, is ceart é a fhágáil go minic, toisc go gcuireann na bláthanna agus na caora bia luachmhar ar fáil do chuid mhaith éan agus feithidí. Cuireann sé fothain gan chuntas ón sioc agus ón ghaoth fhuar ar fáil chomh maith do na héin bheaga agus d'ainmhithe eile.



The Sessile Oak is one of two species of Oak native to Ireland, the other being the Pedunculate Oak. Here, is a good example of majestic size and shape that the Sessile Oak can attain, although this is a relatively young tree: probably less than 200 years old.

They can live for at least 400 years. The oak's one-seeded fruits, known as acorns are a valuable source of food to several different mammals, and also a few birds, notably the Jay.

You will notice that Ivy (*Hedera helix*) is well established in this tree. Although it is not particularly good for the tree, in most cases, Ivy should be left as its flowers and fruits provide valuable food for many insects and birds. Also provides invaluable shelter for small birds and other animals from cold wind and frost.

Stopuimhir: 7

Laidin: Ulex europaeus

Gaeilge: Aiteann

Béarla: Gorse, Furze



Bíonn an-chuid dealg ar an mball seo d'fhine na pise, agus tá dath iontach air san earrach nuair a chlúdaíonn na bláthanna geala buí é, agus bíonn boladh láidir chnó cócó uathu. Ní bhíonn sé ar fáil sa cheantar seo ach go hannamh san fhál sreach. Tarlaíonn sé seo toisc gur fearr leis an ithir chlochach nó an ithir aigéadach agus faightear é go flúirseach dá bharr ar an Staighre Dubh, agus ar fud Chontae Loch Garman agus i gCill Mhantáin. Breathnaigh go géar ar an mbuach os comhair an aittinn agus tabharfaidh tú planda reatha faoi deara a choinníonn isteach leis an talamh, agus bláthanna corcairghorm air. Athair lusa (*Glechoma hederacea*) is ainm don phlanda seo. Níl aon ghaol idir an planda seo agus an t-eidhneán, cé go dtugtar ground ivy air.

This very thorny member of the pea family, is very colourful when covered with its bright yellow flowers in Spring, which are strongly scented of coconuts. In this area it is

only sparsely present in hedgerows. This is because it prefers acid or stony soils, and so is much more common in the Blackstairs Mountains, and throughout Counties Wexford and Wicklow.

Look on the bank in front of the gorse and you will see a ground hugging, creeping plant with violet-blue flowers. This is Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*). Despite its name, it isn't related to Ivy at all.



Stopuimhir: 8

Laidin: Rubus species

Gaeilge: Sméar Dhubh, Dreas

Béarla: Blackberry

Níl gá ar bith leis an bplanda seo a chur in aithne. Is minic a bhíonn daoine anuas ar an sméar dhubh toisc na dealga agus de bharr an fháis ionrach a thagann faoi, ach is breá le daoine san fhómhar é nuair a bhíonn toradh flúirseach ar fáil uaidh, toradh a úsáidtear in iliomad oibríochtaí cócaireachta. Is foinse thábhachtach bia an sméar dhubh do na sluaite d'fheithidí, d'ainmhithe agus do mhamaigh. Bíonn na mothair de dhrioseacha mar áiteanna foirfe slán chomh maith, do na héin bheaga agus do na mamaigh, le dul i bhfolach ó chreachadóir ar bith. Faoi na drioseacha i Mí na Bealtaine, feicfidh tú dhá bhláth comónta don fhál sreach: bláthanna bána réaltógacha na tursarrainge, (*Stellaria holostea*) agus an cloigín gorm (*Endymion non-scriptus*).

Here is a plant that needs no introduction. Often hated for its invasive and thorny nature, it is then loved in the Autumn for its abundance of fruit used for so many culinary purposes. Blackberries are also valuable food for a host of insects, birds and mammals. Thickets of briers also make the perfect, safe hiding places for small birds and mammals to hide from predators. Underneath, in May, you will see two other very common hedgerow flowers: the starry white flowers of Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and the Bluebell (*Endymion non-scriptus*)

Stopuimhir: 9

Laidin: Fraxinus excelsior

Gaeilge: Fuinseog

Béarla: Ash

Is crainn il-ghasacha iad an dá chrann ar gach aon taobh den gheata seo, rud a léiríonn gur gearradh anuas ar aon airde leis an bhfál na blianta fada ó shin iad, ach gur ligeadh dóibh fás aníos mar chrainn bhreátha ó shin i leith. Tugtar neamhaird go minic ar bhláthanna na fuinseoige toisc gur bláthanna glasa iad a fhásann roimh na duilleoga. Ina ndiaidh a fhásann na triopaill de shíolta sciathánacha, a chasann is a eitlíonn chun iad féin a scaipeadh ar an ngaoth. Baineann an corcrán coille agus na glasáin eile taitneamh as iad a ithe sa gheimhreadh. Faoi scáth na gcrann seo bíonn an lus mór ag fás, (*Digitalis purpurea*), bíonn na spící so-aitheanta de bhláthanna corcra caipín leipreacháin le sonrú orthu go luath sa samhradh. Bíonn an nimh digiteálas sa phlanda seo. Baintear úsáid as mar leigheas, nuair a thugtar dáileog chruinn ordaithe don othar chun galar an chroí a chóireáil.

