

Stop 9 Latin Name : *Lonicera periclymenum*
 Irish Names : Féithleóg, Taith-fhéithleann
 English Names : Honeysuckle, Woodbine



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.

Stop 10 Latin Name: *Sambucus nigra*
 Irish Name: Trom
 English Name: Elder



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.

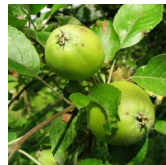
Stop 11 Latin Name : *Sorbus aucuparia*
 Irish Name : Caorthann
 English Names : Rowan, Mountain Ash



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.

Stop 12 Latin Name : *Malus sylvestris*
 Irish Name : Ubhall fhiadhái
 English Name : Crab Apple



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.



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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.

Stop 1. Latin Name : Acer pseudoplatanus
Irish Names : Crann bán, Seiceamóir
English Name: Sycamore



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.

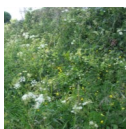
Stop 2. Latin Name : Crataegus monogyna
Irish Name : Sceach geal
English Names : Hawthorn, Whitethorn



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 ríogh*, Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)

Stop 3. Latin Name : Anthriscus sylvestris
Irish Name : Peirsie Bhó
English Name: Cow Parsley



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 .

Stop 4 Latin Name : Fraxinus excelsior
Irish Name : Fuinnseóg
English Name : Ash

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.



Stop 5 Latin Name : Rubus species
Irish Name : Dreas
English Name: Blackberry



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 briars 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*)

Stop 6 Latin Name : Ulex europaeus
Irish Name : Aiteann
English Names : Gorse, Furze



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.

Stop 7 Latin Name : Quercus petraea
Irish Name : Dair Ghaelach
English Name : Sessile Oak

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.



Stop 8 Latin Name : Rosa canina
Irish Name : Fir-dhris
English Name : Dog Rose

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.

