

Summer Spotter Close Sartfield



Orchids

Throughout June, the meadows of Close Sartfield have a wonderful display of orchids. Most of what you will see are heath spotted or common spotted-orchids. They come in a variety of colours from almost white through to a pale pink. Look out for spots on the leaves which is where they get their name.



Curlews

The Curlew is our largest wading bird at 40 – 50 cm, and is easily recognised by its very long downward curved bill and long legs. It has brown streaked upper parts and when flying its white rump is visible. It has a bubbling song and a distinctive cur-lee call. They feed on worms and their breeding season is between April and July.



Tormentil

A common plant in many of the meadows, tormentil has many medicinal properties. In the past the roots were boiled with milk and the mixture then fed to children to calm upset tummies—to **still** the **torment** of the stomach became tormentil (torment still).



Mint

There are many kinds of mint but the one you will see here is water mint. As its name suggests it likes the wet conditions found beneath the areas of curragh and damp, lower lying parts of the meadows. It is an excellent food plant for many insects but not recommended for mint sauce!



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Meadow Brown Butterfly

A common butterfly around the reserve, the larvae feed on various grasses. The Meadow Brown is the most abundant butterfly species in the British Isles and can be found in a range of habitats. Adults fly low over the vegetation even in dull weather when most other butterflies are inactive.



Speckled wood butterfly

A fairly recent arrival to the Island, the speckled wood is now one of the commonest butterflies. Look out for these especially in the curragh parts of the site as they like the partial shade. They often perch in sunny spots, spiralling into the air to chase each other. They feed on honeydew in the treetops, rarely feeding on flowers.



Grasshoppers

If you are very quiet you can hear a gentle, constant buzz in the air of all the different insects enjoying the meadows. Every so often this will be interspersed with the distinctive “song” of the grasshoppers. This is the males rubbing one part of their body against another. Look closely in amongst the grass and you may be lucky to see them.



Red Soldier Beetles

Soldier or sailor beetles are so named for the bright colours of some species, reminiscent of some military uniforms. These bright red beetles are sometimes called the bloodsucker but they are harmless. They can often be seen on the flowers of angelica and other umbellifers.

