

Cemeteries in Easter Ross

VC106

What are the characteristics of their flora
How do urban and rural cemeteries compare
Is their management sympathetic to floral diversity



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Saxifraga granulata (Meadow Saxifrage) at Tain Cemetery

Method

- 20 cemeteries in Easter Ross were visited on two occasions in Spring and summer 2020-2021 and all plants that were not introduced recorded.
- Black Isle cemeteries were not included, but most others in E Ross were visited.
- A standard route was followed round the sites
- There were 12 rural and 8 urban cemeteries

Fearn Abbey Cemetery



Results

- A total of 151 species was recorded (A similar survey in 2012 with a single visit had recorded 96 species)
- There were 103 species in urban sites and 133 in rural (there were 50% more rural cemeteries). 85 were in both urban and rural cemeteries
- There was a mean of 38.7 species per cemetery. 39.0 rural and 38.4 urban.
- There were 15 neophyte (alien) species (9.9%): 12 rural, 8 urban

Species

- Commonest species: *Taraxacum*, *Urtica dioica*, *Bellis perennis*, *Trifolium repens*, *Luzula campestris*
- Commonest Rural: *Taraxacum*, *Urtica dioica*, *Trifolium repens*.
- Commonest Urban: *Taraxacum*, *Bellis perennis*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*
- Red Data Book/Nationally Scarce: *Crassula tillaea*, *Viola tricolor*
- Of interest: *Saxifraga granulata* (two urban sites), *Luzula campestris* (16 sites) & *Montia fontana* (11 sites)

Comment

- These sites are very heavily managed with grass cutting and herbicide use. Few “untidy” corners.
- Little difference between urban and rural , probably reflecting this management. No urban neophyte preponderance, unlike other surveys.
- Some species seem to thrive, e.g. *Saxifraga granulata* (Meadow Saxifrage) in quantity in two cemeteries, perhaps benefitting from early flowering and bulbil production. *Luzula campestris* (Field Woodrush) is widespread perhaps helped by low growth form.
- Some less heavily managed corners would be welcome.
- These cemeteries were less species rich than cemeteries in Dundee, a larger place, where there were a few less heavily managed areas. Some English cemeteries have also reported longer lists.