

Churchyard spotter — plants and flowers

Flowers in churchyards.

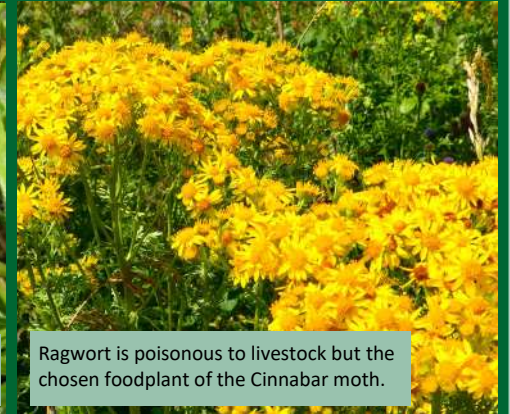
The age of a churchyard and how it has been managed will determine the range of plant species to be found. Some species continue to flower through most of the year, others are restricted to each season, often only flowering for a few weeks. The greater the plant diversity the more insects and other invertebrates, will thrive and, in turn, provide food for birds and other creatures.



Arum Lily or Lords and Ladies



Goose grass or Cleavers. The tiny hooks on the 'sticky-hooks ensure the seed are carried away.



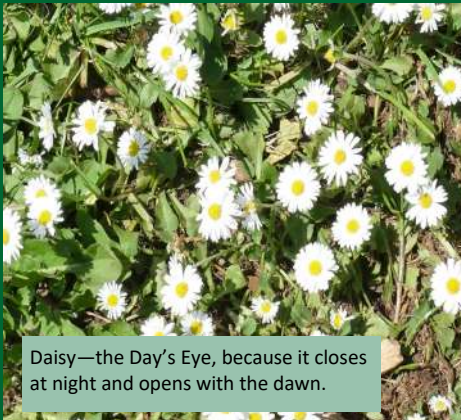
Ragwort is poisonous to livestock but the chosen foodplant of the Cinnabar moth.



Germander speedwell is the usual species in churchyards, but others are often present.



Large bindweed/Granny's nightcap/Fairy Trumpets.



Daisy—the Day's Eye, because it closes at night and opens with the dawn.



Dandelion named from the French *Dent de Lion* because of the jagged, tooth-like petals.



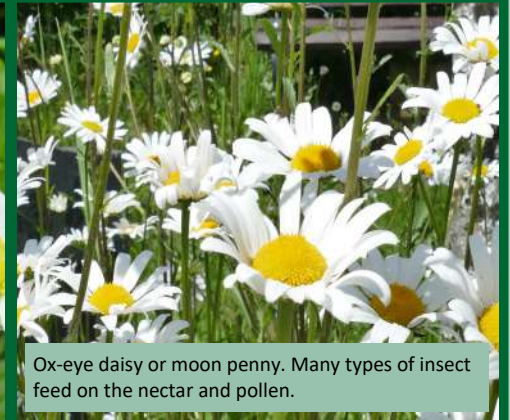
The commonest buttercup of churchyards is the low-growing Creeping buttercup.



The Barren strawberry has tiny dry inedible fruits. Note the 'coronet' of stamens and spaced petals.



Wild strawberry, which has small edible fruits has been eaten by humans since the 'stone age'.



Ox-eye daisy or moon penny. Many types of insect feed on the nectar and pollen.

Plants on walls.

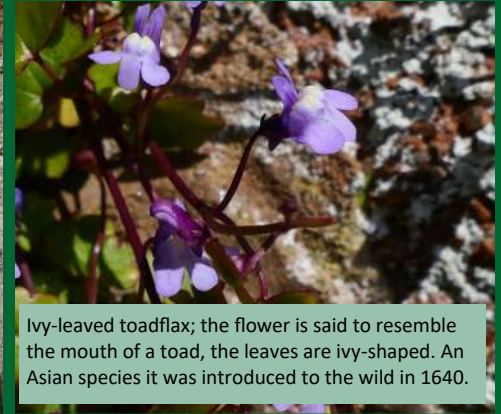
Churchyards are full of vertical rock surfaces; they may be walls and headstones to us, but for nature they provide something to cling to and grow. You will see normally green plants turning red—a response to hot, dry conditions, when the pigment xanthocyanin becomes dominant and acts as a sort of sunscreen to protect the plant. A wall can be like a desert and only the hardiest survive.



Shiny cranesbill, a geranium species. Note red leaves and stems, when in dry places.



Lamb's lettuce or Corn salad is eaten in salads.



Ivy-leaved toadflax; the flower is said to resemble the mouth of a toad, the leaves are ivy-shaped. An Asian species it was introduced to the wild in 1640.



Pennywort or navelwort gets its names from the leaf-shape.



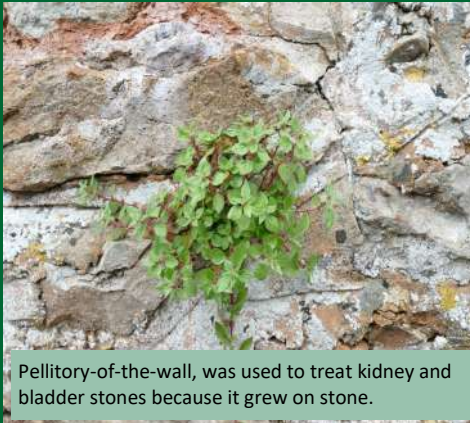
Maidenhair spleenwort—a common fern on walls



Disorders of the spleen were treated with Black spleenwort.



Hart's-tongue fern on a wall with wild strawberry and ivy.



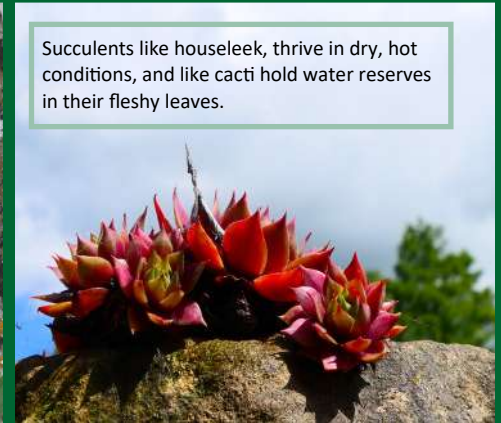
Pellitory-of-the-wall, was used to treat kidney and bladder stones because it grew on stone.



Ivy is one of the most useful plants for wildlife, providing food, shelter and nesting sites.



Lichens of all colours and shapes grow freely on any stone surface in the churchyard, others prefer twigs. They grow slowly and can be long-lived.



Succulents like houseleek, thrive in dry, hot conditions, and like cacti hold water reserves in their fleshy leaves.