

Blue-eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium Bermudiana L.*

Description

Blue-eyed grass is a small, tufted perennial that is widespread in North America and has its European presence principally in Ireland. It has been taken as being native since 1845.

It has narrow, grass-like leaves that form a miniature fan and can develop into a tuft in well-established plants. The small, star-like, blue flowers with their yellow centres open only in sunlight. Flowers are produced from June to August and lasts a day or two.



It grows up to a maximum of 40cm tall, although is often only half this height. Under favourable conditions it flowers in the same year it germinates. The species is self-compatible and must regularly self-pollinate since it generally seeds very freely. The plant often possesses a short thickened, horizontal underground stem which provides food storage over the winter period, and this also allows the individual plant to increase in size and form a tight clump.

Distribution

Blue-eyed grass is very local in Northern Ireland, being almost exclusively confined to wet pastures, shallow sloping lake shores, and along grassy roadside verges in a few areas in the Lough Erne and western plateau regions of Fermanagh. The small pale-blue flowers only open on bright, sunny, midsummer days.

Action

Northern Ireland Species Action Plan published in 2005.

Three Fermanagh ASSIs include blue-eyed grass as an interest feature

Survey and monitoring work is carried out at Lough Melvin ASSI, Garvros ASSI and Upper Lough Erne ASSI

Implementation of the Northern Ireland Habitat Action Plan for Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures.

Further Information

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/priority/species.asp?item=2263>

MLA Species Champion

