

Meadow Crane's-bill

Description

Meadow crane's-bill is a strikingly handsome herbaceous perennial with deeply-cut, jaggedly-toothed leaves and large flowers of an intense blue. In Ireland it is very local as a wild native species, but is frequently grown in gardens and can escape into wild ground.



The plant is perennial with a stout rhizome and some local propagation may arise from division of old rhizomes, but the primary means of local spread is by seed which is readily produced and which is thrown from the parent plant by means of the geranium-type seed dispersal mechanism. Dispersal further afield relies on gathering of hay and its transport away from the site. Although this is important in traditional hay meadows, the plant no longer occupies such habitats in Ireland. The flowers produce their pollen before the female parts are mature — a method of avoiding self-pollination. Pollination is thought to be mainly by Hymenoptera.

Distribution

The species can be found along the north coast of County Antrim, such as at Ballintoy, White Park Bay and about Dunluce Castle. It occurs in road verges and rough grassland near the coast, including the dunes of White Park Bay. They flower between June to August.

Action

Northern Ireland Species Action Plan published in 2005.

One stronghold, White Park Bay, is an ASSI

Survey and monitoring work is carried out by EHS at White Park Bay ASSI

All the population lies within the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Implementation of the Northern Ireland habitat action plans for Lowland Meadow and Maritime Cliff and Slope.

Further Information

<http://www.habitas.org.uk/priority/species.asp?item=3147>

MLA Species Champion

