



**THE DUBLIN NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB**  
**PROGRAMME of EVENTS**  
**January to March 2025**

**\*MEMBERSHIP FEES\***

**All membership fees for 2025 are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

**€35.00 for individuals; €40.00 for a family; and €5 for Students.**

**To arrange payment contact: Fridolin Kerr, 31 Cherrywood Park, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.  
 ([Membership.Secretary@dnfc.net](mailto:Membership.Secretary@dnfc.net))**

**You may pay via [www.dnfc.net](http://www.dnfc.net), by PayPal (including credit card).**

Day	Date	Month	Title	Leader	Location
Saturday	4th	Jan.	Conservation Sub-Committee Meeting	Melinda Lyons	National Botanic Gardens, Dublin
Saturday	18th	Jan.	Bird Watching	Jim Fitzharris	North Bull Island, Dublin
Thursday	23rd	Jan.	<i>'Semi-Natural Grasslands in Ireland'</i>	Maria Long	Online Presentation
Saturday	25th	Jan.	Salt Marsh & Other Coastal Flora	Alexis FitzGerald	Caves Marsh, Malahide
Saturday	1st	Feb.	Plant Identification Workshop	Various	National Botanic Gardens, Dublin
Saturday	8th	Feb.	Bird Watching	Pat Lenihan	Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow
Tuesday	18th	Feb.	<i>'The Wonderful World of Moths'</i>	Jim Fitzharris	Online Presentation
Saturday	22nd	Feb.	Conifer Walk	Charles Shier	National Botanic Gardens, Dublin
Saturday	1st	Mar.	Plant Identification Workshop	Various	National Botanic Gardens, Dublin
Saturday	8th	Mar.	Geology, Mosses and Lichens	Maria Cullen	Turlough Hill, Co. Wicklow
Tuesday	18th	Mar.	<i>'Carri-on Recording Beetles'</i>	Ashleigh Whiffin	Online Presentation
Saturday	22nd	Mar.	Museum Building & Geology Museum	Patrick Wyse Jackson	Trinity College Dublin
Saturday	29th	Mar.	Mosses & Liverworts	Jo Denyer & Melinda Lyons	Ravensdale Park, Co. Louth

**DNFC Plant Identification Workshops**The DNFC workshops are held in the National Botanic Gardens in the small room at the near end of the curvilinear range, on the first Saturday of the month – The ‘Praeger Centre’. The Field Club is very fortunate in having access to this facility through the active support and permission of the Director, Matthew Jebb and staff members. Some members meet for coffee beforehand in the tea rooms. Please bring your own lunch.

**Saturday 4th January 2025**

**National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin**

There will be no workshop on the first Saturday in January. Instead, a meeting of the **DNFC Conservation Sub-Committee** will be held – **Chair: Melinda Lyons**

**Saturday 18th January 2025**

**Bird Outing – North Bull Island  
Risk Level 1**

On the outing, we would hope to see a variety of ducks (Wigeon, Shoveler, Teal, Pintail) and waders (Redshank, Greenshank, Godwits, Curlew, etc.) as well as Brent Geese.

**Leader:** Jim Fitzharris

**Meet:** On the mainland side of the causeway leading to Bull Island.

**Bring:** Binoculars or viewing scopes, warm clothes and wear strong footwear; packed lunch optional.

**Thursday 23rd January 2025**

**Online Presentation - 7.30 PM**

**‘Semi-natural Grasslands in Ireland’ - Maria Long**

Maria is an ecologist with the National Parks and Wildlife Service who specialises in grassland habitats. Her presentation will cover some of the semi-natural grasslands that can be found in Ireland.

**Saturday 25th January 2025**

**Salt Marsh & Coastal Flora, Malahide  
Risk Level 1**

We will look at the various types of salt marsh, shingle bank, rock outcrop and other coastal and wetland vegetation to be found at this interesting site in a winter context. We will get to observe the overwintering species, see what is in flower in winter and also the remains of some interesting salt marsh annuals from the previous summer. We may also see some interesting winter wader bird species in the area.

**Leader:** Alexis FitzGerald

**Meet:** Public Access car park just east of Malahide Yacht Club, Yellow Walls, Malahide, Co. Dublin – GPS: 53.45579, -6.16737

**Bring:** Identification books and hand lens, lunch. Wellies/boots advisable as salt marsh habitats are often very wet at this time of year.

## **Saturday 1st February 2025**

### **Plant Identification Workshop Praeger Centre, National Botanic Gardens**

#### **Morning Session.**

##### **Alien Grasses - David Nash**

A number of invasive alien grasses have appeared in Ireland and are expanding their geographical range. These include ornamental species escaping from gardens and others are associated with arable farming and urban wasteland. There is a very useful BSBI 1996 publication – ‘*Alien Grasses of the British Isles*’ by T. B. Ryves and others.

##### **Aphanes - Margaret Norton**

The two species of Parsley-piert (*Aphanes arvensis* and *A. australis*) have strong habitat and community allegiance but are sometimes difficult to identify. The distinguishing features will be examined. Hand lens required.

##### **Hedges - Declan Doogue**

The trees, shrubs and woody climbers that form the hedgerow matrix over most of our lowland landscape owe their origins to a number of distinct historical and ecological processes which have resulted in the varied patterns of hedgerow species composition in different parts of Ireland.

##### **Book Introduction – ‘*The River Brosna: An Environmental History*’ - Declan Doogue**

Geologist and Historical Geographer John Feehan has written a book that will serve as a model for anyone attempting to interpret the Irish landscape and its habitats. The publication has been supported by Offaly and Westmeath County Councils.

#### **Afternoon Session**

##### **Rubus - Alexis FitzGerald**

We will examine *Rubus* material collected and preserved by DNFC members and identified by the late David Allen. Initially we will consider species of Subsection *Rubus* (the ‘**Suberecti**’) and those from Subsection **Sylvatici**. Participants should bring copies of ‘*Brambles of the British Isles*’ by E.S. Edees and A. Newton. This work is also available as a CD. There is also a very useful book – ‘*An Introduction to Brambles*’ by the late Alec Bull.

## **Saturday 8th February 2025**

### **Bird Outing - Kilcoole Risk Level 1**

The outing will consist of a walk along the seashore leaving from Kilcoole railway station and taking in the “Murrough”. Migration is a feature this time of year which can throw up its own surprises. Regularly seen are waders, ducks, geese, swans, and seabirds.

**Leader:** Pat Lenihan

**Meet:** Kilcoole railway station

**Bring:** Warm waterproof clothes, sturdy footwear, identification books, binoculars and lunch.

**Tuesday 18th February 2025**

**Online Presentation 7.30 PM**

***'The Wonderful World of Moths – A Trip to the Dark Side'* - Jim Fitzharris**

Normally considered the dowdier relatives of butterflies, moths frequently get a bad press from members of the public. This presentation will try to redress that bias by showing that all moths are interesting and many are also colourful. The level of interest in moths has increased significantly in recent years and many more naturalists have now taken up moth-trapping. This has greatly expanded our knowledge about Irish moths and their distributions.

**Saturday 22nd February 2025**

**Conifer Walk at National Botanic Gardens  
Risk Level 1**

Broadleaved trees can be a bit challenging at this time of the year, so we will take a looped walk around the conifer arboretum at the National Botanic Gardens and have a look at some of the main types of coniferous plants present.

**Leader:** Charles Shier

**Meet:** at the main café in the National Botanic Gardens, before commencing the walk

**Bring:** Tree books and hand lens, walking boots and raingear if the weather forecast suggests rain.

**Saturday 1st March 2025**

**Plant Identification Workshop  
Praeger Centre, National Botanic Gardens**

**Morning Session.**

**An Arboricultural Excursion to Ireland in 1897 - Charles Shier**

The Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society visited Ireland in August 1897, and an account of the excursion was written up for the Society's records. Members of the Society visited some of the great estates in Dublin and in the surrounding counties; and also some near Killarney, Co. Kerry. The report also contains details on the height, girth and crown spread for notable specimen trees on the estates – which may be the first printed record of tree sizes in Ireland.

**Bryophytes of Slieve Gullion - Ciaran Flynn**

This upland area of north-east Ireland has received scant attention from bryologists in recent times. Ciaran will exhibit a selection of distinctive and ecologically significant bryophytes collected during his current study of the area.

### **Early-flowering Urban Weeds - Various contributors**

Mild winters, preceded by extended autumns, have resulted in many species of garden weed germinating earlier than usual. Some of these will be in flower by March. Participants are asked to bring fresh material sourced from gardens, urban situations and arable land, for display and discussion.

### **Rare Plants - Pat Lenihan**

Peter Marren has written two books entitled '*Rare Plants*' in 1999 and updated in 2024. Pat's presentation will consider, from an Irish perspective, some of the topics and observations raised in these publications. A discussion on the subject will follow.

### **Afternoon Session**

**Critical Flora:** *Taraxacum, Rubus* (Exhibits) - **Various contributors.**

### **Saturday 8th March 2025**

**Geology, Mosses & Lichens  
Co. Wicklow - Risk Level 2**

We will look at the Geology and Cryptogams of the Lough Nahanagan/Turlough Hill area. Turlough Hill is a pumped hydro station and the water level in L. Nahanagan therefore fluctuates on a daily basis. The solid geology is mainly Leinster Granite with a Quaternary Corrie and we will examine the relationship between the cryptogamic botany and the rock.

**Leader:** Maria Cullen

**Meet:** at the car park on the R756 at Turlough Hill –  
GPS coordinates: 53.04172, -6.39625

**Bring:** Stout footwear, warm clothing, lunch and a warm drink

**Directions:** From Dublin take the R755 through Roundwood to Laragh. From Laragh take the R756 for Blessington and the Wicklow Gap. The car park is at the top of the Gap.

### **Tuesday 18th March 2025**

**Online Presentation - 7.30 PM**

**'Carri-on Recording Beetles' - Ashleigh Whiffin**

Ashleigh is the Curator of Entomology at the National Museum of Scotland, responsible for the care, curation and development of the insect collection, containing approximately 2.5 million specimens. Her research is focused on the Silphidae (Carrion Beetles) which are active in breaking down and recycling vertebrate remains. She is a co-author of '*The Histeridae, Sphaeritidae and Silphidae of Britain and Ireland*' published by the Field Studies Council.

**Saturday 22nd March 2025**

**Museum Building & Geology Museum  
Trinity College Dublin - Risk Level 2**

The outing will examine the beautiful Museum Building at Trinity College, in which a wide range of stone types was used in its construction, and then the group will visit the Geological Museum located a 15 minute walk away where some geological treasures can be viewed.

**Leader:** Patrick Wyse Jackson

**Meet:** at the entrance to the Museum Building which is situated in the middle of the Trinity College campus.

**Saturday 29th March 2025**

**Mosses & Liverworts, Ravensdale  
Park, Co. Louth - Risk Level 2**

We'll explore a humid, shaded stream gorge in Ravensdale Forest with an abundance of bryophytes on stream banks and boulders, including specialists such as the leafy liverwort *Jubula hutchinsiae* - a hyperoceanic species more typical of south-western coastal counties in Ireland. This is a joint outing with the British Bryological Society Irish Group.

**Leaders:** Jo Denyer & Melinda Lyons

**Meet:** at Marble Bridge car park; OSI Discovery Series sheet 36, grid reference J 081 158; labelled 'Ravensdale Forest Recreation Area' on Google Maps.

**Bring:** Lunch, hand lens, footwear suitable for wet, muddy ground

**Directions:** Take the M1 north and exit at Junction 20. At the T-junction, turn right for Carrickcarnan. Cross over the motorway and at the roundabout turn right, signposted for Ravensdale. After 150 m, turn left onto the L7092. The car park is on the left after 1.7 km.