



Sewing Wildflowers

a Community Project for GROW WILD



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Lotus corniculatus (Birds foot trefoil)

Image credit: Flora Donald



Lotus corniculatus
(Bird's foot Trefoil)

**‘Sewing Wildflowers’ is a
Community Project for GROW WILD.
The UK’s biggest-ever wild flower
campaign, bringing people
together to transform local spaces
with native, pollinator-friendly
wild flowers and plants.**

Supported by the Big Lottery Fund and led by Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Grow Wild motivates communities, friends, neighbours and individuals to come together to transform local spaces by sowing, growing and enjoying UK native wild flowers.

Our GROW WILD community project is part of **Local Food for Local People Project CCF-4744**, funded by the Scottish Government’s Climate Challenge Fund.

Sewing Wildflowers is a creative community project that is transforming the appearance, character and biodiversity of East Camp Community Enterprise Park, Balivanich, Isle of Benbecula, Western Isles.

East Camp was formerly an M.O.D. site known as RAF Benbecula. This project will complete its transformation into an inviting community facility which reflects the natural, vibrant landscape of the Outer Hebrides through a creative project to replant communal areas of East Camp Community Enterprise Park with native flowering species.

The process of growing and planting was carried out in conjunction with help from the local secondary school – Sgoil Lionacleit's Crofting Course pupils, members of the Pony Club, based at East Camp Community Riding Stables and the Youth Café based at An Caladh Trust.



GROW WILD
FLOWERS TO THE PEOPLE

Please support
our community project

#GrowWild
Ready, Steady, Sow!

growwilduk.com



Kew



The project brought together local expertise to teach participants about the importance of the Western Isles' biodiversity in its broadest sense as well as to local fruit and vegetable production.



Onsite propagating facilities, were used to grow, care for and plant out over 2000 wildflower plants into the surrounding area.

The site accommodates local charities East Camp Trust, Tagsa Uibhist, An Caladh Trust, and East Camp Community Riding Stables, as well as a wide range of local businesses, and a total of 35 local growers who grow fruit and vegetables on the indoor and outdoor raised-bed allotments.



Project Leader for Local Food for Local People, **Laura Donkers**, said:

“Our aims in applying to GROW WILD were to increase the wildflowers growing around the allotment site to encourage more beneficial insects and pollinators, and to engage young people creatively in the importance of biodiversity to growing food.”

Young people (aged 12-25) became involved in growing plants from seeds of wildflower species native to the area, and also took part in growing them on before planting them out around the site.

A team of local biodiversity experts and arts and crafts people delivered Youth and Public Programmes of activities and events to develop and nurture an interest in the wider importance of biodiversity as well as to food growing.





Bill Neill, local biodiversity enthusiast and artist, delivered workshops for a variety of groups, such as the Pony Club, Crofters course pupils and allotment holders.

He is Chair of Outer Hebrides Biological Recording, and has a longstanding interest in Natural History, particularly Bumblebees, Solitary Bees and Wasps whilst remaining an active member of the British Trust for Ornithology. He is

also a well-known water colour artist and member of the Society of Wildlife Artists exhibiting annually at the Mall Galleries, London.



The particular focus of 'Sewing' was led by local craftswoman **Cheryl Nicholson** who runs local business 'Sew Fabulous'.

Her idea was to work with young people and other members of the community using a variety of methods including



embroidery, applique, and cross stitch to produce a wall hanging that represents the rich, vibrant flora of the Uists.

This activity attracted wide community participation from young and old, sailor and crofter, gardener and artist who helped to create a wall hanging that reflects the floral texture and biodiverse substance of our rural crofting environment.



US-based embroidery artist, **Jan Johnson**, Fubright Scholar at University of Dundee, was invited to produce a piece for the exhibition. She came to Uist on a special visit and responded to the Sea Pinks (*Armeria Maritima*) that were blooming along the salt marshes, using seaweed and a range of pink threads on organza.



Botanical knowledge was provided by local SNH area officer for Uist & Barra, **Flora Donald**, and botanical artist, **Jocelyn Anne Rabbitts**, Dip SBA.



Flora Donald, who studied plants at the University of Aberdeen and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh says: 'Uist has an interesting mix of habitats and species so it's always exciting to go recording with OHBRG [Outer Hebrides Biological Recording Group]. I

help with plant identification and am trying to learn more about invertebrates, fungi, lichens, bryophytes... there's so much to see!'

Pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* Photo credit:
Flora Donald



Jocelyn Anne Rabbitts led an introductory botanical art workshop during the summer Public Programme. Using examples of her own work she taught participants about the importance of learning to observe, and identify the different elements of the plant as well as how to depict it in a pleasing manner, before moving on to developing colour studies and making notes. Some of her works as well as the results of her workshops are in this exhibition.



She holds a Diploma in Botanical Illustration from the Society of Botanic Artists, and regularly attends masterclasses at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, which are led by some of the UK's leading artists. She is a member of the Scottish Society of Botanical Artists www.thessba.org

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all

 Winsor yellow

 Winsor yellow
+ small amount scarlet lake

 more scarlet lake but
added warm



flower starting to fold
wrapping around of petals.



Close study
folds need
more definition
in shade.

 stamen
inside hood of
upper petal.



 Indigo
Scarlet

Secondary School pupils on the Crofting Course at Sgoil Lionacleit were given an introduction to local biodiversity by **Bill Neill** who taught the pupils about how to



identify the different species of bees that are found in Uist.

He gave them some real bees to handle and they were guided in the

process of observing the differences between species of bee and then encouraged to record them. They produced some impressive drawings which are the presented in the exhibition.



The pupils then headed outside with butterfly nets to find some insects in the school grounds so that they could make some identifications of their own.





Christine Johnson from Curracag

[Outer Hebrides Natural History Society], and the **OHBR** [Outer Hebrides Biological Recording] introduces their work:

“Curracag is a small natural history society which encourages the study and enjoyment of the wildlife our islands have to offer.

The society provides a great opportunity to meet people with similar interests, sharing knowledge, experiences and an enjoyment of the natural history of the Outer Hebrides. We welcome both novices and experts and encourage everyone to take an active part in learning more about their natural environment and appreciating our natural heritage.

Our members have a wide range of interests and expertise to share with anyone with an interest in natural history, so why not come and join us”

**She also explains how you can help
OHBR:**

“We know very little about the distribution of the animals, plants and fungi which are found in the islands so all the records we receive, even of very common species, are important.”



You don't have to be a scientist to become a biological recorder, you can help us conserve our natural heritage and maintain the quality and biodiversity of our landscape, just by telling us about what you see when you are out for a walk, working on your croft or in your garden. If you don't know the name, just send a photograph and we'll do the rest.”



**You can learn more by visiting the
websites: www.curracaq.org.uk**

www.ohbr.org.uk



On behalf of the team at Local Food for Local People I would like to thank all participants, supporters and funders for helping to make our GROW WILD Community Project such a success.

Laura Donkers, Project Leader Local Food for Local People

I'm delighted to support this project combining growing, identifying and sewing flowers and hope you leave the exhibition inspired.

Flora Donald, SNH area officer for Uist & Barra

Be inspired, learn, explore and make a difference.

Christine Johnson, Chair of Curracag



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