

Biting Stonecrop

Sedum acre

Plants · In flower Jun–Jul



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A low, mat-forming succulent with tiny, fat, overlapping yellow-green leaves crowded along creeping stems, smothered in bright golden-yellow star-shaped flowers in early summer. Biting stonecrop grows on wall tops, gravel, dunes, shingle, old roofs and thin dry soils around Dumfries, in places nothing else will hold.

BEHAVIOUR

The fleshy leaves store water, and the plant uses a water-saving form of photosynthesis that takes in carbon dioxide at night — so it can live on bare stone in full sun. The 'biting' is literal: the leaves contain compounds that leave a sharp peppery burn on the tongue. Broken-off shoots root readily, so it spreads easily along a wall.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Stonecrops (Crassulaceae)
HEIGHT	2–10 cm, mat-forming
STATUS	Native; common on walls, gravel and dunes

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