

Cow Parsley

Anthriscus sylvestris

Plants · In flower Apr-Jun



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A tall biennial or perennial with ferny, finely divided leaves and broad flat umbels of small white flowers, on hollow grooved stems that are green and unspotted. Cow parsley is abundant along verges, hedge banks, lanes and woodland edge across the Dumfries area, and its flowering is one of the defining sights of a British May.

BEHAVIOUR

It flowers earlier than the other big white umbellifers, which helps separate it: hogweed follows in June, hemlock and hemlock water-dropwort later still. The distinction matters, because hemlock — with purple-blotched stems — is deadly. Cow parsley's open flowers are accessible to a wide range of small flies, beetles and solitary bees early in the season.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Carrots (Apiaceae)
HEIGHT	60–170 cm
STATUS	Native; abundant on verges and hedge banks

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