

Rosebay Willowherb

Chamerion angustifolium

Plants · In flower Jul–Sep



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A tall, striking perennial with long narrow willow-like leaves spiralling up an unbranched stem, topped by a tapering spire of magenta-pink four-petalled flowers that open from the bottom upwards. Rosebay willowherb is abundant around Dumfries on railway banks, clear-felled plantation, waste ground, verges and burnt ground.

BEHAVIOUR

It was a scarce plant in Britain two centuries ago and spread explosively with the railways and then with wartime bombing and forestry clearance — hence fireweed. Each plant can produce tens of thousands of tiny plumed seeds that travel long distances on the wind, and it also spreads by rhizome, so it colonises disturbed ground very fast and holds it.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Willowherbs (Onagraceae)
HEIGHT	80–200 cm
STATUS	Native; abundant on disturbed and burnt ground

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