

# Plants on the move: surveying urban greenspaces in Fife

During June 2023, St Andrews Botanic Garden staff surveyed 19 greenspaces in urban parts of north-east Fife – including Glenrothes, Cupar, Ceres, Tayport and St Andrews.

## Method

In each urban greenspace, the different types of grassland habitat were identified, and a 2m x 2m quadrat was recorded in each one. 38 quadrats were recorded in total. The habitat description followed the fine categories of the NPMS (NPMS Guidance notes, 2015). A walkover of the whole site was also carried out to identify any Invasive Non-Native species (INNS).

## Results

A total of 164 species were recorded. The diversity of the sites ranged from 6 species on closely mown sward in a cemetery, to 26 in damp neutral grassland in a park in Glenrothes. Two sites had 27 species recorded from one quadrat, both with some form of disturbance – in one case a recently fallen tree, and in the other, wildflowers had been added into the existing sward.

Native species were recorded more frequently than neo- or archaeophytes (Fig 1), and were more abundant.



Vegetation at East Sands, St Andrews

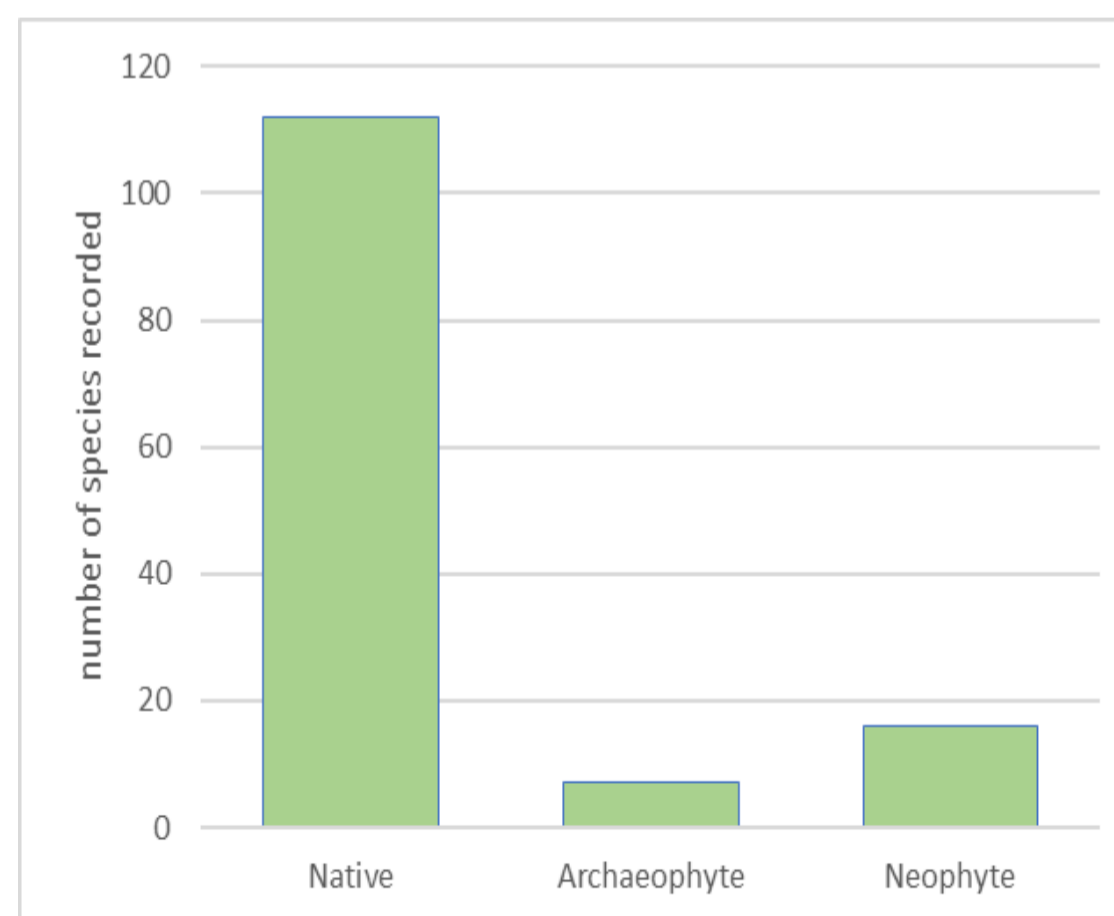


Fig 1 – Total number of species recorded from 38 2mx2m grassland plots in 19 urban greenspaces in Fife. Each species is represented once, although it may have been recorded in numerous plots.



Different mowing regimes at the recreation ground in Leslie

This small study demonstrated the botanical value of some urban greenspaces in Fife. Management (particularly mowing height and frequency) varied and had a large impact on the number and type of species found.

INNS were observed in seven of the greenspaces, including:

- *Reynoutria japonica* (Japanese Knotweed),
- *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed),
- *Rhododendron ponticum*,
- *Cotoneaster* sp.,
- *Leycesteria formosa* (Himalayan honeysuckle).

## Top 10 recorded species

*Holcus lanatus*  
*Festuca rubra*  
*Ranunculus repens*  
*Poa trivialis*  
*Trifolium repens*  
*Plantago lanceolata*  
*Lolium perenne*  
*Galium aparine*  
*Stellaria graminea*  
*Poa pratensis*

St Andrews Botanic Garden is currently establishing long-term monitoring projects at a number of sites. We would love to work with you!

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact  
[info@standrewsbotanic.org](mailto:info@standrewsbotanic.org)

We are extremely grateful to NatureScot for funding this project, and to our partners for allowing access to the sites.