

SPECIES OF THE WEEK



Daisy

Bellis perennis
Noínín

Many related plants also share the name "daisy", so to distinguish this species from other daisies it is sometimes qualified as common daisy, lawn daisy, dog daisy or English daisy. It is a very common plant, found on chalky and neutral grassland, waste ground, dunes, roadsides, river banks, lake margins and gardens. It thrives best in areas that become fairly wet for some of the year. The name is thought to be derived from 'day's eye' because the flowers open during the day and close at night.

It is an herbaceous perennial plant with short creeping rhizomes. The downy leaves are approximately 2–5 cm long and grow in a rosette flat to the ground. They are round or spoon shaped with toothed edges.

The flowerheads are composite, in the form of a pseudanthium, consisting of many sessile flowers approx. 2–3 cm in diameter, with from 15 to 30 white, female ray florets (sometimes tipped red) surrounding hermaphrodite yellow disc florets. Each inflorescence is borne on single leafless stems approx. 2–10 cm, occasionally up to 15 cm tall. The capitulum, or disc of florets, is surrounded by two rows of green bracts known as "phyllaries".

The main flowering season is early to mid summer, but in favourable conditions they have a very long flowering season and will even produce a few flowers in the middle of mild winters. This makes them very valuable to pollinating insects which might be active when few other plants are flowering.

The fruit is achene-like, and is called a cypsela (plural cypselae). Although there are two fused carpels, there is only one locule, and only one seed per fruit is formed.