

Current sites within the UK

For more information on this species visit our website

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Deptford Pink
(*Dianthus armeria*)

Deptford Pink (*Dianthus armeria*)

DESCRIPTION: This plant has beautiful bright pink flowers, often in clusters on top of a greyish-coloured stem, resembling a small garden Sweet William.

LIFECYCLE: Biennial, flowering July to September.

HABITAT: It grows on tracks, waysides, railway cuttings, or hedgebanks, and sometimes in dry pastures, but always prefers disturbed ground and open well-lit conditions.

DISTRIBUTION: Occurs throughout Europe. In the UK it is found in scattered sites, predominantly in southern England.

UK STATUS: Classified as Endangered and is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

UK RARITY: It has declined dramatically in the last 60 years, and it now occupies only 7% of its total historic range, occurring at 31 sites in England and 4 in Wales.

REASONS FOR DECLINE: Habitat destruction including agricultural improvement, afforestation, and urban development. More recently abandonment of traditional extensive grazing and the subsequent development of coarse grassland scrub.

PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW: Protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This makes it an offence to pick, uproot or destroy any plants. Also listed as a Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

HOW TO SURVEY?

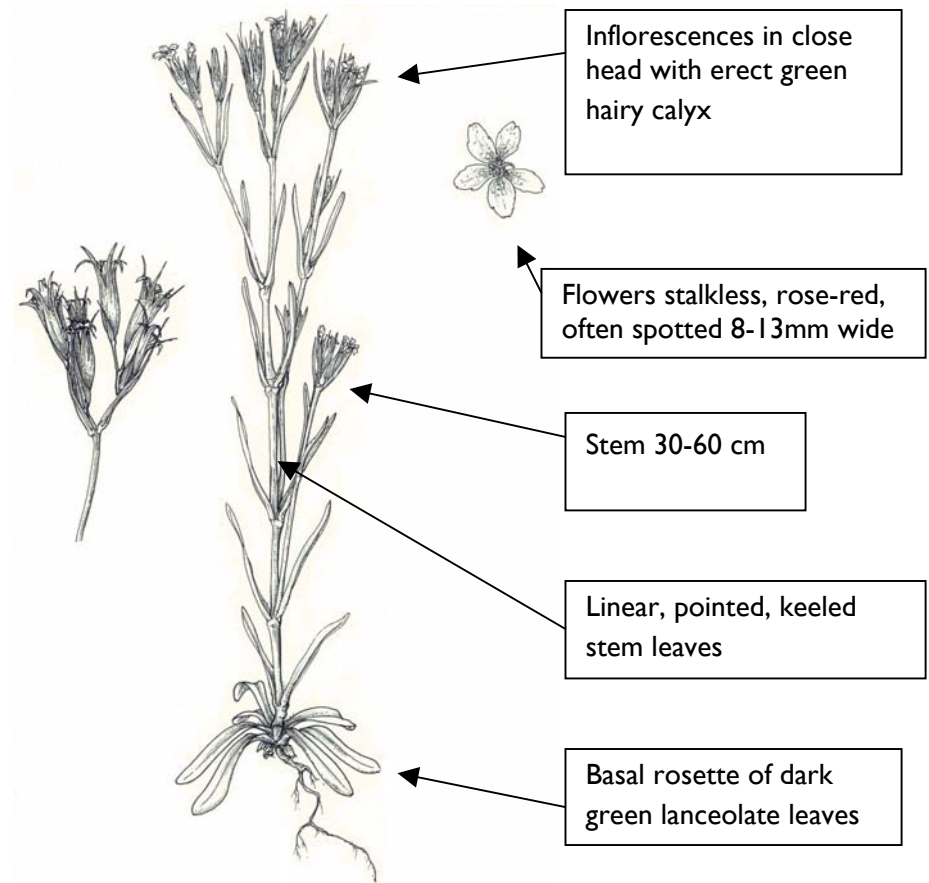
Individual flowering plants are relatively easy to distinguish and count (although some plants branch near the base). Assessment of the non-flowering rosettes should be made as these indicate the potential of the site for regeneration and the future health of the population

TIME OF YEAR: Flowers July to August. Basal rosettes overwinter and dead flower stalks may persist for several months, so potentially visible throughout the year.

WHAT TO RECORD? If fewer than 500 count exact number of plants, split into flowering and numbers of vegetative rosettes. Also note area occupied and surrounding habitat conditions (presence of encroaching scrub, bare soil etc).

HOW TO MANAGE HABITAT?

Open soil conditions should be maintained through regular cutting and removal of vegetation, with the site being checked for seedlings before disturbance. Occasional creation of bare ground – e.g. by chain harrow – will be necessary in the absence of other mechanisms. Ideally management should be carried out on a rotational basis to allow different levels of establishment. Overhanging vegetation that shades the site should be removed. Although grazing can be a useful tool sheep can have a negative impact and the grazing should be removed during periods of flowering.



WHEN TO CARRY OUT WORK? Vegetation cutting between mid-September and mid-April. Ground cultivation (or other means of disturbance) before March when germination normally begins.

HOW TO RESTORE TO SITES? Reduce shade and remove competing vegetation. Then lightly rotovate or turf strip small patches where plants were previously recorded. This should trigger germination whilst minimising soil erosion. Seeds can remain dormant for at least 10 years.