

# Protecting our native plants

In the National Botanic Garden, our horticulturists study plants from the whole of Wales – a country which is full of living treasures.

Carmarthenshire has a rich diversity of plants but in several other areas of Wales there are extremely rare specimens which the Garden is keen to protect. Horticulturist **Carly Green** has been working on two such conservation projects, one in Powys and another on the Great Orme, Llandudno.

High up on the Great Orme near Llandudno there is a species of cotoneaster which can only be found in that habitat – *Cotoneaster cambricus*. It used to be abundant on the limestone cliffs but was sought after by Victorian souvenir hunters and collected almost to extinction. There are now just 6 plants left in the wild, growing on the Orme, and the aim is to increase that. The Garden team has been working with Treborrh Botanic Garden, part of the University of Bangor, and with Chester Zoo to reinstate it more widely. So Carly's work in taking cuttings and collecting seed earlier this year was critical.



When you're next at the Garden, don't miss a unique display of wildflowers from four Welsh National Nature Reserves. A five-minute walk from our Stable Block will take you to plants from the Great Orme's **Maes y Facrell** NNR as well as three other sites: **Cwm Idwal** in Snowdonia, **Kenfig** near Port Talbot on the south coast of Wales and the rhos pastures on **Waun Las**, the NNR here at the Garden.

Another conservation project the Garden is involved with is in Breidden Hill near Welshpool where, in Criggion Quarry, a number of rare plants have been identified as a focus for the project. Breidden Hill is a SSSI, a site designated primarily because of the presence of rare flora and unusual habitat. The quarry owners, Hanson UK, are working with conservationists to encourage the populations of rare plant species by removing trees from the crags on which they are found, and encouraging the spread of habitat onto the sides of the quarry. New seedlings of the plants shown below are now being carefully nurtured by the horticultural team in the Garden.

## BREIDDEN HILL: 3 RARE SPECIES



**Spiked Speedwell**  
*Veronica spicata*  
This elegant flower is popular in manicured gardens, but its wild relative can be found growing in some very harsh conditions. Beautiful but tough, spiked speedwell thrives best on exposed lowland scree, able to survive heavy grazing and prolonged drought.



**Sticky catchfly**  
*Silene viscaria*  
This colourful wildflower grows in only two locations in Wales. It has been found to release disease resistance in surrounding plants, making it a useful species for us when we replant the Criggion habitat.



**Rock cinquefoil**  
*Potentilla rupestris*  
There are only 10 sites where *Potentilla rupestris* grows wild in the whole of the British Isles. The Criggion population almost became extinct in the 1980s due to quarrying, but conservation work has strengthened the plant's stronghold on Breidden Hill.