



Carnoustie Golf Links: Sea Pea protection

INTRODUCTION: Golf has been played at Carnoustie Links for over four centuries. Now the Open Championship venue has 3 courses the Championship, the Burnside and the Buddon Links. Carnoustie is a site of ecological significance and Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee (CGLMC) realise the importance of maintaining our environment, not only for now but also for the future.

THE ISSUE

Sea pea is one of the most attractive of Scotland's coastal plants and also one of the rarest. Over the past 60 years sea pea has declined from over half of its known localities in the north and west of Britain and there are now only two localities where sea pea has been recorded: Angus and Aberdeenshire. Sea pea was first recorded in Angus in 1875 and it still grows at Carnoustie although its long term survival will depend on continued availability of suitable habitat. It disappeared from the only other known Angus locality, the dunes at Elliot Links SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) by Arbroath Artisan Golf Club, as recently as the mid 90's.

Sea pea colonise sand dunes and coastal shingle but its success is short lived once the dunes stabilise and a continuous sward develops. The remaining Carnoustie population of Sea pea is susceptible to trampling and vulnerable to the effects of developments which disrupt the natural processes of dune formation and restrict the opportunity to spread.



Sea pea (*Lathyrus japonicas*, subspecies *acutifolius*)

AT A GLANCE...

>> Sea Pea, a rare coastal plant that is in decline can be found at Carnoustie Links.

>>To increase the populations, sea pea seeds were propagated and reintroduced at the links and at Broughty Ferry by staff from the University of Dundee, the botanic gardens and Scottish Golf Environment Group.

>>Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee (CGLMC) continue to monitor the sea pea colonies on the links.



THE SOLUTION

In 2007, sea pea plants were transplanted from Carnoustie to Broughty Ferry in an attempt to re-introduce the species to other suitable locations. In 2008, sea pea seed was extracted from plants present on the coastline of the Carnoustie Golf Course. This work was led by Alisdair Hood (University of Dundee, Botanic Gardens Curator) with Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee (CGLMC) and Scottish Golf Environment Group (SGEG) staff.

The Botanic garden staff, with their extensive knowledge and experience of sea pea re-introduction, propagated the seeds under controlled conditions and the new plants were planted out at Carnoustie the following year. The planting was carried out by Botanic Garden, CGLMC and SGEG staff.

OUTCOMES

The sea pea population at Carnoustie is currently being monitored. Unfortunately, quite a lot of the beach has been eroded and there were not many plants remaining. However, on a positive note, on the Headland which has sea defences there were a few new plants. This does not mean that the seed collection and propagation was unsuccessful – only that storm damage at high tides made it difficult last year for any plants to establish on the eroding dune system. Therefore, any future planting sites need to be selected with this in mind.

Graeme Duncan, CGLMC General Manager, said “CGLMC are delighted to assist with this very worthwhile project. We are committed that, as well as maintaining the golf courses, we also try to enhance the natural environment, and we look forward to these plants maturing and adding colour to the coastline of the links.”



Planting out the propagated sea pea plants

FIND OUT MORE

The Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee website details other environmental projects underway on the links:

<https://www.carnoustiegolflinks.co.uk/about-us/environment/>

If your club would like to promote its business success story or require support in this area, please contact your Club Development Officer or Environment Manager Carolyn Hedley c.hedley@scottishgolf.org

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