Arctic-alpines are a part of Britain’s most ancient plant communities. They were here when the glaciers retreated at the end of the last ice-age and represent the first pages of our island’s current interglacial natural history. Most are now only found in difficult to reach mountainous areas and suffered extensive losses due to over-zealous collectors in the Victorian era. Snowdonia is home to a number of these hardy plants and in spring many are in bloom.

This course provides an introduction to these plants and looks at the ecology of the communities in which they grow, as well as reasons for their survival in North Wales where several of the species present are at their southern limit in Europe. Flowering plants might be the stars of the show, but we’ll also take time to look at the more cryptic plants of the mountains; the ferns, club mosses and mosses. Along the way we’ll take time to enjoy any of the birds and other mountain wildlife we come across.

The course will consist of two days in the mountains of Snowdonia. It is suitable for dedicated botanists (a chance to see some very rare native plants) through to the absolute beginner who is interested in seeing and learning about some of the most spectacular and rare plant communities in Britain. During the walks, you will have plenty of time for photography and to take in the broader aspects of the history and natural history of the upland landscape.

Over the weekend we’ll visit the cwms and crags of two of Snowdonia’s most spectacular mountain areas – Cwm Idwal and the Gribin, and the Snowdon range itself. Highlights should include moss campion, several saxifrage species, mountain avens, and possibly even the Snowdon lily.

Due to the conditions and altitudes at which these plants are found, participants MUST be able to walk for up to 6 miles/10 kilometres a day over rough and, at times, steep ground.

Course objectives

- Introduce alpine/arctic plant communities, and consider where they thrive and why.
- Identify a range of arctic alpine plants, including rare species such as the Snowdon lily.
Provisional Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>4.00-5.15pm</td>
<td>Arrival and welcome to the Centre. 5.45 pm: Centre Introduction.</td>
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<td>Eve.</td>
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<td>After dinner there will be an illustrated talk introducing course participants to different plants which may be seen over the course of the weekend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>The day will be spent on Snowdon National Nature reserve, initially on its upper slopes and then at Clogwyn D’ur Arddu, We will be catching the train up to the Snowdon Summit, weather permitting, to save a little time and a few aches and then it’s all downhill from there!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>We will spend the day in, around and above Cwm Idwal National Nature Reserve, a site famous to botanists for many centuries, passing sites where amongst others mountain avens, quillwort and moss campion can be found. Depart at about 4.00 pm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the Tutor

The course leader is Matt Parratt, a qualified mountain leader who has been enjoying mountains and their flora and fauna around the world for the last 20 years. As well as having an active interest in the flora and fauna of upland areas of Great Britain, Matt is an Associate Tutor for the Field Studies Council, a keen hill walker and climber, and somehow manages to squeeze in a career as a research biologist.

Course times

Course participants are requested to arrive on the first day at our reception for registration from 4.00 - 5.15pm. An introductory talk to the Centre is at 5.45pm. Dinner is at 6pm, followed by an introduction to your course. Departure is at about 4.00 pm on the Sunday.

The non-resident fee includes all tuition, packed lunches and evening meals.

What to Bring

- Sun cream and sun hat (hopefully these will be essential!)
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers (can be borrowed from the Centre).
- Warm layers.
- Outdoor footwear (walking boots and wellies can be borrowed from the Centre).
- Day rucksack, warm hat and gloves (can be borrowed from the Centre).
- A torch, water bottle, thermos flask and lunch box.
- Midge repellent if susceptible.
- Binoculars and a camera.
**Partner Rate**

For those paying the sole occupancy course fee, we are offering their non-participating partners a special rate of £37 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast, to share a twin room. This offer is subject to availability.

**Extra night**

If you are interested in staying at the Centre for an additional night after the course, please contact the Centre for availability and costs, which start from £25 for B&B or £40 full board (we can confirm availability 4 weeks prior to the course).

**How to Book**

Complete the online form on the FSC website at: [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org) or email us at enquiries.rc@field-studies-council.org or telephone the Centre on 01690 710494

*Panoramic mountain views near Cwm Idwal*