

Level		Days		Shared occupancy cost		
FM	O	16 – 19 Aug	Fri-Mon	£405	£330	£230
Centre		Date	Sole occupancy cost		Non-Residential cost	

## Identifying Coastal Plants



The location of many of John Constable's paintings, Flatford Mill runs over 120 Natural History and Arts courses in a unique and tranquil learning environment.

### Course Overview

Coastal Habitats can be utterly bleak at any time of year but when the sun shines over the Suffolk coast in high summer the atmosphere and extensive horizons can be stunning. The 'soft' geology along the east coast here supports a range of low, flat, coastal habitats – mudflats, sand and shingle beaches, salt marshes, reedbeds, sand dunes, soft low cliffs and coastal grazing marshes . . . and very little urbanisation. Five muddy estuaries cut deep into the heart of the adjacent Sandlings, bringing the tidal blues and greys into close proximity with the purple and gold of the heaths. The lonely cry of seabirds is an essential ingredient to the sense of wildness of these isolated habitats.

### Course Description

In the time available we cannot do justice to the complete range of habitats. We shall focus especially on the plants that grow on the shingle beaches and in the salt marshes of the estuaries. These plants are subjected to enormously stressful conditions. Only those that are highly specialised can cope with regular submergence in saline water in the enriched mudflats, or with the drought conditions of the free-draining, infertile shingly 'soils'. For them, exposure to the life-giving, yet unrelenting, summer sunshine simply exacerbates the problem. These

severe limitations mean that most of Suffolk's coastal plants are to be found all round Britain, though each region, of course, will have in addition its own local specialities.

This late season has been chosen because some of the 'difficult' salt marsh plants, in particular, are easiest to identify when they are in fruit. The course is designed to help you identify the characteristic species. We shall spend time considering the key identification features of the major families and the species that we shall find. This will require close examination of the flowers which provide the major big clues to the identity of any plant, but other features are also very useful to determine precise identification. Beginners should acquire a basic knowledge of how to identify a good range of our native coastal plants and the confidence to pursue the subject further.

The daily excursions will involve some 'difficult' walking over loose shingle and glutinous (but safe) mud. We will need to negotiate pools and drainage dykes that are often concealed by the vegetation. But the pace will seldom be strenuous.

This is one of a series of courses run jointly with Manchester Metropolitan University. There is assessment of the course through, for example, identification tests, producing survey reports or field journals, working through keys and other various pieces of work. Credits from these assessments contribute towards the University Certificate in Biological Recording and Species Identification. To gain University Credits you must register in advance. To do this, please contact Emma Hopkisson by telephone at 01743 355137, via e-mail at [E.Hopkisson@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:E.Hopkisson@mmu.ac.uk) or write to her at:

Division of Biology and Conservation Ecology  
Manchester Metropolitan University (Shrewsbury Office)  
The Gateway  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire  
SY1 1NB

Bookings for the MMU course are to be made via Manchester Metropolitan University at the above address.

The course is also suitable for non-credit students and bookings should be made direct to

Flatford (see below). The course is suitable for CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and a Certificate of Attendance can be provided on request.

**Although this is not an accredited course, it is suitable for CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and a Certificate of Attendance can be provided on request.**

### *What the Fee Includes*

Residential course fee includes:

- Full board, sole occupancy accommodation including cooked breakfast, picnic lunch, homemade cakes and an evening meal. Vegetarian and other dietary option available.
- Up to 9 hours teaching time a day, plus relaxing breaks for meals and refreshments.
- Tea and coffee making facilities available throughout the day.
- Use of resources including library, workrooms, studios and the Centre grounds.
- Transport during the course.
- Insurance to cover cancellation, personal belongings, personal accident, legal liability and medical emergency.

If you choose to be a non-resident on a residential course, the fee will include all the above except accommodation and breakfast.

### *About the Tutor*

Ros Bennett is a botanist and ecologist. She was formerly a full time tutor at Flatford Mill and then organiser and leader of courses for FSC Overseas. She has written books on flowers and has taught courses on wild flowers to all age groups.

## What to Bring

As the course involves field visits you will need a Thermos, lunchbox, waterproof clothing and stout shoes or boots.

Also, please bring the following with you if you can:

- A x10 magnification hand lens (available on the course, £8.75)
- Two pairs of fine pointed forceps and/or two mounted needles
- *New Flora of the British Isles* by Stace (CUP)
- A picture guide such as *The Wild Flower Key* by Rose and O'Reilly (Warne)

If you don't have these items, they may be borrowed from the Centre.

## Special Offer

Bring a friend!

If you are attending a course at Flatford Mill at the sole occupancy price, we are offering a special rate for a friend or partner not enrolled on the course to also stay at £50 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.

## Start and finish times

Afternoon tea on Friday is available from 1600, but the first formal activity is dinner at **1830** (with the bar open from 1815!).

Residents: Please aim to arrive between **1530 and 1800** to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

Non-residents: You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by **1800** as we need to show you the communal areas as well.

The course ends at 1600 on Monday.

## How to book

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: [www.field-studies-council.org](http://www.field-studies-council.org).

