

Tractor cutting will be complete by the end March 2026.

For further information please contact DEFA on:

07624 365131 or 01624 651577 or ecopolicy@gov.im

WARNING



MOWING

Will all the European Gorse be removed?

Stands of European gorse on the southern boundary of the reserve will be retained. European gorse provides good nesting habitat for red listed linnet, as well as nesting habitat for other common and widespread birds like blackbird, song thrush, long-tailed tit and wren.

European Gorse Facts

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) show European Gorse to be an introduction to the Isle of Man in their New Atlas. European Gorse was planted for hedging, fodder for animals and fire wood. The seed has considerable longevity, persisting in large quantity (up to 20,000 per m². in the top 6 cm of soil), for as long as 30 years (Clements *et al.* 2001).

Over the next couple of months path cutting and mulching of European gorse regrowth will take place across the Ayres National Nature Reserve.

For safety reasons visitors and their animals are requested to keep well away from the tractor and mulcher and please walk on alternative routes.

Why do we manage the European Gorse?

In the past European gorse has been allowed to spread across the heath and dune grassland. Many of the important ground nesting bird species require wide open spaces so that they can see predators approaching their eggs and young from a distance. The Ayres NNR is an increasingly important place for rare and declining species such as nesting curlew and skylark. Additionally, the NNR is of great significance for rare and threatened invertebrates. European gorse creates shade and fixes nitrogen in to the soil changing the plant species found and creating an unsuitable environment for many of the rare invertebrates to live in.

By cutting the regrowth in spring we are reducing the ability of the plant to flower and seed. Regular cutting will reduce the vigour of the plant and maintain the wide open areas required by many of the special species found on the NNR. Management will also protect the special habitats found on the NNR.

