


# Beginners' Wild Flower ID Crib Sheets for #WildflowerHour


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### #dinkymoira Violet ID Tips #wildflowerhour



**Sweet Violet (top) & Hairy Violet (bottom)**  
**Sepals** These two species are the only ones to have rounded, blunt-tipped sepals, all the rest have pointy sepals.  
**Sepal Appendages** SV: angled away from the flower stem (patent). HV: pressed toward the stem (appressed).  
**Petal colour** SV: Most common are rich violet or white. HV: Pale violet blue, rarely white.  
**Spur** SV: stout, unnotched, sometimes hooked upwards, same colour as petals, except the white variety which has a violet spur.  
**Habitat** SV: road verges, open woodland and churchyards. HV: prefers short vegetation on dry calcareous grassland.



**Common Dog Violet**  
**spur**  
**sepal appendage**  
**sepal**

**Early Dog (top) & Common Dog (bottom) Violet**  
**Sepals** These two species have pointy sepals.  
**Sepal Appendages** EDV: much smaller (<1.5mm) than those of CDV, which are large (>1.5 mm) and square cut and sometimes notched or scalloped.  
**Veining on lower petal** EDV: unbranched or scarcely branched. CDV: long and much branched.  
**Spur** EDV: slender, unnotched and generally a darker violet than the petals. CDV: stout, obviously notched on the end and generally paler than petals.  
**Habitat** EDV: mostly a woodland plant and rarely grows in the open. CDV: Our commonest violet with a wide range of habitats.  
 These two can be sometimes very tricky to tell apart, as infuriatingly there are plants that seem to share floral characteristics of both species!

One violet can look very much like another when you are starting out in botany, so how do you tell the different species apart? A good wildflower guide will give full species accounts, but there is a lot you can tell just from looking at the characteristics of the flowers. Here's a brief look at the four most common species.

The most helpful features of the flowers to look at are, the spur, the sepals and the sepal appendages (small flaps at stem end of sepals).

### #dinkymoira Buttercups #wildflowerhour



**Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)**  
 Creeping Buttercup has **spreading sepals** and a **grooved flower stalk**. The leaves are 3-lobed, which are themselves lobed. The bases of the lobes (sinuses) have distinctive pale marks. Found in a wide variety of grassy habitats, particularly damp grassland, and can be a troublesome garden weed!



**Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*)**  
 Meadow Buttercup has **spreading sepals** and a **smooth flower stalk**. The leaves are cut into narrow pointed lobes, which often resemble those of some Geranium species. Found in damp unimproved grassland, meadows, pastures and sometimes road verges. The tallest buttercup.



**Goldlocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus* spp.)**  
 Goldlocks Buttercup has **spreading sepals** and a **smooth flower stalk**. Sometimes, but not always, the flowers are deformed or have some petals missing. The round to kidney-shaped basal leaves are lobed and on long stalks; the stem leaves are deeply divided. Look for its deciduous woodland and hedgerbanks. Reproduction is by apomixis (seed produced without fertilisation), which has given rise to many apomorphic microspecies (apomorphies).

One of our best loved and easiest to recognise native wild flowers. How many of us as children held a Buttercup under our chin, the intensity of the reflected yellow glow being an indication of how much we loved butter?


There are quite a few different species of Buttercup, and the flowers all look very similar, so how do you tell them apart? Here are a few tips to help you recognise four of the most common species of Buttercup.

The key characters to look at are, the **sepals** - are they spreading or reflexed (sharply turned down); the **flower stalks** - are they smooth or grooved; and the **basal leaves**.

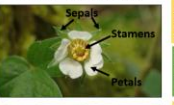


**Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*)**  
 Bulbous Buttercup has **reflexed (sharply turned down) sepals** and a **grooved flower stalk**. Basal leaves have three main leaflets, which are themselves lobed. The middle leaflet is long-stalked. Found in well drained unimproved grassland, road verges and churchyards.

### #dinkymoira #wildflowerhour Wild or Barren Strawberry?



**Wild Strawberry**



**Barren Strawberry**


**Sepals**  
**Stamens**  
**petals**

Strawberries are starting to flower, and the two you are likely to come across out in the wild are Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) and Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*). As its name suggests, Barren Strawberry produces small, dry, inedible fruits, whereas Wild Strawberry produces small, but yummy fruits. So apart from the differences in fruits, how do you tell them apart? A good wildflower guide will give detailed descriptions, but here are a few tips.

They are both common, native species which are found in broadly similar habitats, such as woods, scrub, and hedgerbanks. Barren Strawberry tends to come into flower slightly earlier than Wild Strawberry.


Looking at the flowers first, those of Barren Strawberry typically have quite large gaps in the petals, meaning the sepals are usually quite visible, whereas with Wild Strawberry the petals more or less conceal the sepals.

**#dinkymoira's top tip:**  
 I always think the stamens of barren Strawberry look a bit like a crown of lamb!

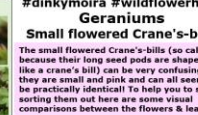


Now looking at the leaves, Barren Strawberry has quite dull, dark bluish-green leaflets with 4-7 teeth per side, whereas those of Wild Strawberry are a brighter, shinier, yellowish-green with 8-13 teeth per side. A good way to tell the leaves apart is that in Barren Strawberry the terminal tooth of a leaflet is usually rather smaller and shorter than the adjacent teeth.

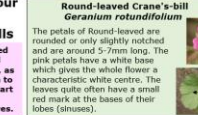
### #dinkymoira #wildflowerhour Geraniums




**Small-flowered Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium pusillum*  
 As its name suggests, this is the species with the smallest flowers! The blue-lilac petals are around 2.5-4mm long with a shallow notch. The petals are narrower than those of Dove's-foot, with an obvious gap between them. The flowers are often slightly untidy and a bit dishevelled looking!



**Dove's-foot Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium molle*  
 Dove's-foot flowers are larger than Hedgerow and smaller than Herb-Robert, with notched petals around 4-6mm long. They are a quite bright red-pink in colour, although pale forms do occur.  
**#dinkymoira tip:** In the spring some plants and flowers do seem to be larger than later in season and so could be confused with Hedgerow.



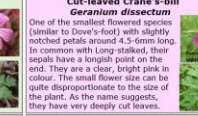
**Herb-Robert**  
*Geranium robertianum*  
 Herb-Robert is one of the most familiar and easy to recognise of the small flowered Geraniums. The petals are rounded, without a notch and are 8-14mm long. They have subtle white striped markings. The leaves have very hairy stems, and are cut into three to five leaflets, which are themselves deeply cut.



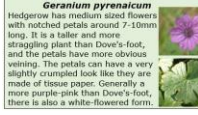
**Round-leaved Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium rotundifolium*  
 The petals of Round-leaved are rounded or only slightly notched and are around 5-7mm long. The pink petals have a white base which gives the whole flower a characteristic white centre. The leaves quite often have a small red mark at the bases of their lobes (sinuses).



**Cut-leaved Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium dissectum*  
 One of the smallest flowered species (similar to Dove's-foot) with slightly notched petals around 4.5-6mm long. Its common with Long-stalked, their sepals have a long point on the end. They are a clear, bright pink in colour. The small flower size can be quite disproportionate to the size of the plants. As the name suggests, they have very deeply cut leaves.



**Shining Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium lucidum*  
 The flowers of Shining Crane's-bill look a little bit like mini-me versions of Herb-Robert, with petals 8-10mm long. The most distinctive and recognisable characteristic is the beautiful, shiny, glossy leaves on hairless stems. Another useful feature is the hairless, keeled, 5-angled calyx. In common with Herb-Robert, the leaves and stems often turn bright red.



**Long-stalked Crane's-bill**  
*Geranium columbinum*  
 The petals of Long-stalked are around 7-10mm long, so around the same size as Hedgerow. They are either rounded or slightly notched. The flowers are bell-shaped and, as the name suggests, are held on long thin stalks. As with Cut-leaved the sepals have long pointed tips on the ends. The deeply divided leaves are covered in flattened white hairs.

The #DinkyMoira ID crib sheets are a series designed for beginner botanists and were produced for #WildflowerHour. Four of these are illustrated above.

Where to find the #DinkyMoira ID guides:

Twitter - search #DinkyMoira in @wildflower\_hour

Dropbox

Files section of the #WildflowerHour FB group

"Plant ID: getting started" page of BSBI Website

