

Foxglove

Digitalis purpurea

Plants · In flower Jun–Aug · biennial



Photo by Jörg Hempel, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, via Wikimedia Commons

A tall, unmistakable biennial with a rosette of soft grey-green leaves in its first year and, in its second, a one-sided spire of large drooping tubular flowers in purple-pink, spotted inside with dark purple rings on a white ground. Foxgloves are abundant around Dumfries on woodland clearings, acid banks, felled plantation and disturbed ground.

BEHAVIOUR

The spotted throat and the ring of hairs inside guide bumblebees in and force them past the anthers. Flowers open from the bottom of the spike upwards over several weeks. The plant contains cardiac glycosides which are genuinely dangerous — every part is poisonous — and which were the basis of digoxin, still used in the treatment of heart conditions.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Plantains (Plantaginaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 2 m in flower
STATUS	Native; abundant — and poisonous in every part

Photo by Jörg Hempel, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, via Wikimedia Commons

Natureville