

Marram Grass



Marram Grass has tiny pores on the underside of its leaves to allow carbon dioxide to enter the plant.



Sand dunes are important as they provide a habitat for wildlife and also a defence against the sea.

They are a very unstable habitat as the sand constantly shifts in the wind. The wind also dries the sand, which causes the water to evaporate, leaving a lot of salt behind. Unlike sandy shores, which are covered by water at high tide, sand dunes are not regularly covered by water.

For plants to survive in sand dunes they must adapt to these conditions. They must avoid drying out by taking in as much water as possible and reducing the amount of water lost. Plants must also be able to reproduce in this environment in order to survive.

Marram grass is the main plant that stabilises the sand so that other plants will be able to grow. It has a strong underground root system that creeps through the sand, forming a strong attachment. When it dies it also provides nutrients that enable other plants to grow. In order to survive in this environment, Marram grass has thick waxy leaves that curl to prevent water loss. Sea Holly and Sea Rocket are some of the other plants that can be seen growing in sand dunes.



Photos: Robbie Murphy

Marram grass stabilises the sand so that other plants can grow.

FACT FILE

Marram Grass

Ammophila arenaria – Muiríneach

Characteristic: strong creeping roots.

Flower colour: Greyish-green.

Height: 60-120 cm.

Leaves: Grey-green and curled.

Long, slender, flexible and waxy.

Flowering season: June to August.

Habitat: Sand dunes.