

# The Harz mountain meadows

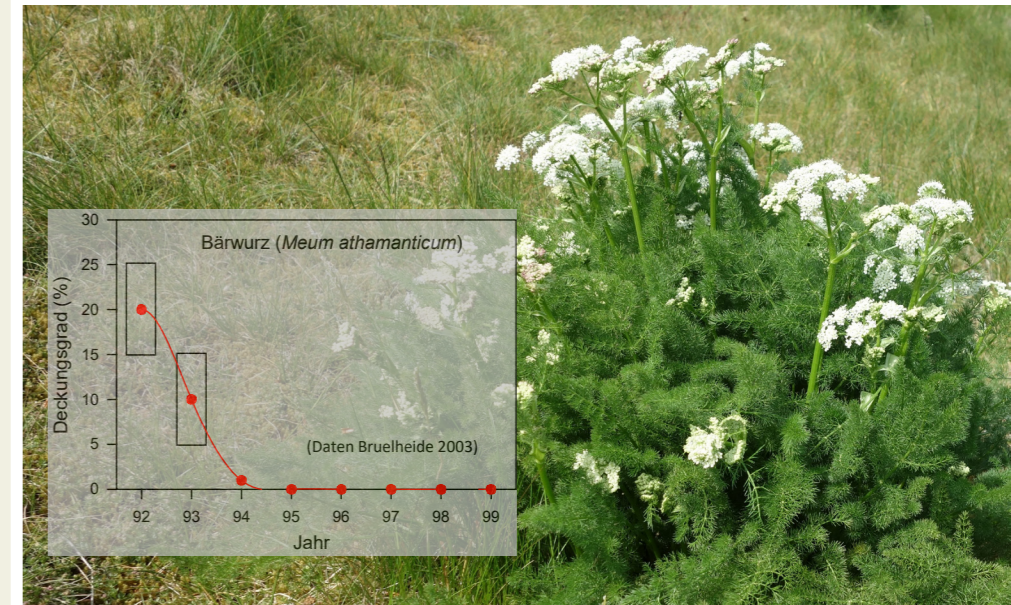


## Harz mountain meadows

Mountain meadows are not natural ecosystems, but have been created over centuries by extensive grassland management by humans. These meadows were not grazed, but mown, as the grass was needed as winter fodder for the cattle. Typical mountain meadows are found in Lower Saxony only in the Harz mountains. Similar meadows in Germany also occur in low mountain ranges further to the south and in the Alps.

### Photos:

- 1** In the Harz, mountain meadows occur above an elevation of about 400 m above sea level. Common bistort (*Persicaria bistorta*) and wood cranesbill (*Geranium sylvaticum*) are among the typical species of wetter soils. Photo: L. Köhler
- 2** Arnica (*Arnica montana*) prefers acid, nutrient-poor soils and rapidly disappears if the mountain meadows are regularly fertilised. Along with afforestation and construction, over-fertilisation is the main cause of the disappearance of many mountain meadows in recent decades. Most mountain meadows are no longer traditionally used and need special management plans to maintain them. Photo: G. Karste
- 3** In 1993, a 4 m<sup>2</sup> area of turf from a Harz mountain meadow was transferred from Braunlage (600 m.a.s.l.) to this spot, 430 m lower. It turned out that many mountain meadow species such as baldmoney (*Meum athamanticum*) were unable to survive in the warmer lowlands and disappeared soon after. Photo: L. Köhler



Experimental Botanical Garden

More information

