

# Ruderal plants colonise waysides and abandoned areas



Ruderal plants

Ruderal plant species (*rudus lat.* = rubble) colonise waste heaps, stony banks, disturbed areas at the edges of paths or other unused and abandoned areas. Different types of ruderal plant community establish depending on the size of the area, whereby the smallest habitats (e.g. in the cracks between paving stones) may contain only a few isolated ruderal plants. The area of ruderal plant habitat has decreased considerably in recent decades.

## Photos:

- 1 Abandoned areas are usually colonised very rapidly by ruderal plants. These areas are often considered to look "untidy", so that these important plant species are then removed.

Photo: L. Köhler

- 2 In addition to the use of herbicides and excessive removal of vegetation, the sealing of areas with tarmac is one of the most important causes of the decline in ruderal plant species. Avoiding both of these practices where possible would help to protect these species. Photo: L. Köhler

- 3 Alongside their floristic importance, ruderal plants are a vital source of food for insects. Many ruderal species like the marsh-mallow (*Althea officinalis*) have also been used for centuries as food or medicinal plants, and are therefore a valuable part of our cultural heritage. Photo: L. Köhler



Experimental Botanical Garden

More information

