

Ramsgate's Sea Garden

Created by local artist Ruth Cutler with help from local volunteers, and working in partnership with support from Thanet District Council and Southern Water. Includes wooden bench and panel by wood artist Will Glanfield, with text by the Thanet Coast Project. The Sea Garden was launched in May 2008, but needs volunteers to help Ruth keep it in a condition for wildlife and people to use!

RAMSGATE'S SEA GARDEN

The Sea Garden is inspired by our coastal environment and the wild plants that survive the harsh, salt-laden winds along our chalk coastline.



Background history
This part of Ramsgate used to be the outdoor Marina Swimming Pool, and the sea garden area was a former boating lake.



Bathing Pool and sands, Ramsgate

It is not the first time that Ramsgate has inspired new gardens. The James Pulham family, creators of gardens at Buckingham Palace and Sandringham, built an artificial rock garden and waterfall at Madona Walk, Ramsgate in 1894, and another with access down to the beach at the Winstocke Gardens in 1936.



East Cliff, Ramsgate, Chine and Sands

The chalk cliffs
The chalk cliffs, sea-caves and shores provide a rare habitat for plants and wildlife. Twelve percent of Europe's coastal chalk is in Thanet, which is also the longest continuous stretch in the country. The chalk was formed over 60 million years ago from remains of microscopic life that once lived in a warm shallow sea, and has since been pushed above sea level. Many fossils and flints can also be found within the chalk face. The wearing away of the cliff by the weather and sea is a process that continuously shapes our coastline.

Plants beside the seaside
Coastal-growing plants are completely exposed to the elements. Salt can cause leaf burn and defoliation and builds up in the soil, whilst the wind can cause physical damage to a plant's limbs and stunt its growth. The chalky soil does not hold water well. So our successful plants are those which have adapted and modified themselves to drought conditions and the harsh environment.



Hoary Stock

Some plants, such as **Sea Beet** and **Sea Purslane** in the Sea Garden, have adapted to these dry weather conditions by developing thick waxy leaves. Others have small, narrowly-divided or curled leaves to reduce water loss, like the aromatic **Fennel**, with its distinctive aniseed fragrance.

The silvery appearance of plants with hairy leaves is often a good indication that the plant may be suitable for coastal conditions. These include **Wormwood** and **Silver Ragwort**. Their leaves keep in moisture and lessen the impact of salt damage.



Red Valerian and Fennel

Some plants have extensive roots that reach deep into the soil for water, such as the tall **Tree Mallow** with its woody stems and attractive mauve flowers, which is ideal in seaside conditions.

The Ramsgate chalk cliffs support many naturalised **wallflowers** with



Tamarisk



Rock Sea Lavender



Willowflower

their vivid orange flowers and **Red Valerian**. You can also see rare native plants growing in these harsh conditions – such as **Hoary Stock** with its mauve flowers; **Rock Sea Lavender** and its tiny violet flower sprays; or **Rock Samphire** at Dumpton Gap.



Wormwood

Other garden plants from around the world, such as the **Tamarisk** and the **Yucca** can also thrive in coastal locations.

The mixed topsoil of the Sea Garden will easily become covered by a few pioneer plants like **Bristly Ox-Tongue** if not regularly weeded.

The Sea Garden will become a haven for wildlife – the plants that have adapted to grow here will in turn attract the insects, butterflies and birds which enjoy a coastal environment.



Sea Beet



Tree Mallow



The Sea Garden
The Sea Garden was designed by Ramsgate artist Ruth Cutler and created with help from local volunteers, Thanet Coast Project, and it is in partnership with Thanet District Council and Southern Water. Will Glanfield designed the wooden bench and panel, with text provided by the Thanet Coast Project.



Water demand
Rainfall in Britain is usually plentiful, although Thanet is known for its own slightly drier microclimate! However, the demand for water continues to rise as our standard of living improves and we use 70% more than 30 years ago, with over 50% used for watering the garden in the summer.

Save water
It is important to find ways of conserving this valuable and finite resource. Saving water in your garden can help lessen the risk of drought orders and restrictions. The use of water butts and watering during the cooler evening time (to reduce evaporation) really does help. But there's an easier way of reducing water use in the garden and that's by planting the most appropriate drought-tolerant plants!

Fennel



Use drought-tolerant plants
There's a range of plants that can survive drier conditions and live in our coastal environment without regular watering. These include many of the coastal and chalk-loving plants from the beautiful purple-pink flowers of the Mallows, the scented charm and elegance of Fennel to the prickly blue-green tone of Sea Holly.



Thanet's coast is a valuable open space for leisure and recreation, but is also one of the best sites in Europe for wintering birds and marine life of the chalk caves, reefs and sandy bays. It is part of the designated North East Kent European Marine Site.

www.thanetcoast.org.uk





Site: Former Marina Pool site, Ramsgate's Eastcliff. (Take the Marina Road down from the top of the cliff - behind the Granville Cinema situated on Victoria Road - and at the bottom go straight ahead to the end of the car park directly in front of you.)