



Flowering plant of the year 2024*

The thrift

Armeria maritima (member of the family Plumbaginaceae)



Thrifts are 5 – 30 cm small herbs belonging to the leadwort family or the plumbago family. Growing on heavy metal soils they can absorb up to 0,7 % zinc und 0,15 % lead. They tolerate salty soils and sunny, warm and dry locations. Thrifts can be found on the beach and salt marshes of our coasts as well as in dry sandy grasslands and sparse pine forests.

In the event of overfertilization or lack of grazing of the sites, the only weakly competitive Thrifts are quickly outcompeted by higher and faster growing species. The subspecies *Armeria maritima* subsp. *elongata*, which can also be found in the nearby nature reserve “Griesheimer Düne”, is under special protection, i.e. on the Red List of endangered plants of Hesse, and the early warning list of the Red List of Germany.



The Thrifts' funnel-shaped, pale red single flowers stand in head-shaped inflorescences surrounded by bracts. The nectar offered at the base of the flower attracts dipterans, bees and moths, which pollinate the flowers. Thrift's fruits are single-seeded nuts enclosed in a permanent calyx forming a gliding structure allowing for wind dispersal; however, they may also be dispersed by animals.

With the selection of the *Armeria maritima* as the 45th Flowering plant of the Year, the Loki Schmidt Foundation is calling for the protection of native wild plants and the preservation of nutrient-poor grasslands and salt marshes rich in flowering plants.