



the National Trust  
for Scotland



## NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

8 February 2017

### **Conservationists highlight Celtic Rainforest**

Two conservation charities have joined forces to share the secrets of one of the UK's richest and most mysterious habitats – the Celtic Rainforest.

The National Trust for Scotland, the charity that conserves and promotes Scotland's heritage and Plantlife Scotland, the organisation that is speaking up for our wild flowers, plants and fungi, are holding an event at Balmacara in Wester Ross which will explore the flora that thrives in the damp, ancient forests of Scotland.

Events including guided walks and storytelling are planned for the launch of a new Plantlife Scotland leaflet exploring this important plant area on Tuesday 21 February.

Leaving from Balmacara Square, visitors will be able to explore the National Trust for Scotland's Coille Mhór, a woodland full of native species on Scotland's west coast.

National Trust for Scotland ranger at Balmacara estate, Gavin Skipper said:

"You do not have to travel to Brazil to experience a rainforest. There are amazing examples of the Celtic Rainforest on Scotland's West Coast. They are teeming with life and just as fascinating. We hope that this initiative highlights these beautiful habitats to more people and encourages them out to explore."

Polly Phillpot, Plantlife Scotland Outreach Officer, said:

"Plantlife is delighted to be working with the National Trust for Scotland in welcoming people to enjoy the mysterious and magical world of Scotland's unique Celtic Rainforests. We hope that the guided walks and leaflet we're launching will attract an increasing amount of people to discover the hidden gems of the Celtic Rainforests; small plants such as the Tree lungwort lichen or the delicate Prickly featherwort - a species of liverwort.

"Many of the lichens, mosses and liverworts that are found in these rainforests are very rare in Europe, and some are globally important. Plantlife seeks to shine a brighter light on these amazing small plants, including rare lichens such as the Norwegian Specklebelly, a UK priority species, which is found at Coille Mhór."

The programme for the day is:

**Walk through the Coille Mhór - meet at 9.30am**  
**Booking essential - 01599 566325**

Visitors will be transported from Balmacara Square to Loch Achaidh na h-Inich to join staff from the National Trust for Scotland and Plantlife Scotland on a walk back through the magnificent Coille Mhór. This woodland is home to a rich diversity of unique small plant species that cover branches, trees and boulders. It is these moss, liverwort and lichen species that make Scotland's Celtic Rainforest internationally important. Admire the views along the way and find out what makes the Coille Mhór such a special place. Find out about the associated folklore, the Stinky Sticta and the Tree lungwort.

This guided walk will last for about 3 hours and is approximately 2.5miles/4km on good surfaced paths and tracks with one moderate but rather long ascent. Bring walking boots, warm and waterproof clothing, a snack and a hot drink.

### **Storytelling session with Claire Hewitt - meet at 2pm in Balmacara Square**

Take a short walk through the southern end of the Coille Mhór. In this magical setting, Claire will share stories and tales of the Ghillie Dhu. This is an outdoor event, so please dress for the weather. A wet weather alternative will be based indoors at the NTS Education room in Balmacara Square.

### **Hidden Gems of the Celtic Rainforest - meet at 2pm in Balmacara Square**

Join the National Trust for Scotland ranger on an exciting trek off the beaten path as we explore the hidden beauty of the Coille Mhór. This guided walk will last around 2 hours and is approximately 2.5miles/4km passing through rough and undulating ground. Discover hidden gems in the Celtic Rainforest and hike through undisturbed woodland draped with lichen, liverwort and moss. Our walk involves crossing boggy terrain and climbing steep gradients so a high level of agility and fitness is required. Wellington boots and waterproof clothing is recommended.

- ENDS -

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### **Editor's Notes:**

**A selection of images are available for download at:**  
<https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/hBd7HH>

Plantlife Scotland is proud to be at the forefront of conserving Scotland's Celtic Rainforests, which form part of the West Coast of Scotland's Important Plant Area (IPA). IPAs are sites of exceptional botanical richness, supporting internationally significant wild plants and habitats. Just less than 10% of Scotland is covered by IPAs, testament to the nation's important natural heritage.

From as little as £3 per month you can help Plantlife to protect Britain's native flora. Members receive Plantlife magazine three times a year, information on growing your own wildflower meadow and a handy wildflower ID guide. For more information or to become a member please visit:  
[http://www.plantlife.org.uk/support\\_us/become\\_a\\_member](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/support_us/become_a_member).

@PlantlifeScot / Plantlife Scotland on Facebook.

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that conserves and promotes Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

You can join the National Trust for Scotland for as little as £7 per month for a family. To become a member, visit <http://www.nts.org.uk/Join/Benefits/>.

**You can make a difference and help protect everything in our care.** Donate online at <https://www.nts.org.uk/Donations/>

