

An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 486 (which corresponds to Litir 790). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Is there a plant you really like because it has a special fragrance? A long time ago, when I was living in Tasmania, I liked [smelling] the lemon-scented boronia. It had a smell like a lemon. Every time I return to Tasmania, I go looking for that plant. It brings back memories of beautiful days in the mountains.

But what about Scottish flowers? Have you chosen one yet? The rose and lavender don't count, or anything else that only grows in the garden. Only native plants.

Here are the three I most enjoyed during the summer this year. In the first instance, there was the roid or bog myrtle. That's a bush that grows on [the] moorland. It has quite a sharp smell. It opens your nostrils. The old people would put the leaves in mattresses. That was to keep the fleas out of the bed. Some people reckon it repels midges.

My second plant is water mint. It looks nice. It has dark green leaves, and small purple flowers near the end of the stems. What a lovely smell you get when you

A bheil lus ann as toigh leat gu mòr leis gu bheil fàileadh sònraichte air? O chionn fhada, nuair a bha mi a' fuireach ann an Tasmania, chòrd an lemon-scented boronia rium. Bha fàileadh mar liomaid air. Gach turas a bhios mi a' tilleadh a Thasmania, bidh mi a' coimhead airson an luis sin. Tha e a' toirt làithean brèagha anns na beanntan gu mo chuimhne.

Dè mu dheidhinn flùraichean Albannach? An do thagh sibh fhèin fear fhathast? Chan eil an ròs no lus na tùise a' cunntadh, no rud sam bith eile a dh'fhàsas a-mhàin anns an leas. Dìreach lusan dùthchasach.

Seo agaibh na trì a bu mhotha a chòrd rium as t-samhradh am-bliadhna. Anns a' chiad dol a-mach, bha an roid no bog myrtle. Sin preas a dh'fhàsas air a' mhòintich. Tha fàileadh car geur air. Bidh e a' fosgladh do chuinneanan. Bhiodh na seann daoine a' cur nan duilleag ann am bobhstairean. Bha sin airson deargannan a chumail far na leapa. Tha cuid dhen bheachd gun cuir e fuath air meanbh-chuileagan.

'S e an dàrna lus agam – meannt an uisge. Tha e a' coimhead brèagha. Tha duilleagan dorch-uaine air, agus flùraichean beaga purpaidh faisg air mullach nan gasan. Abair am fàileadh a

pound the leaves. And a tasty tea is made by boiling the leaves in water. It's just as good as [the] mint tea you get in the shops.

That's two plants with a smell on the leaves. But the one I like best is a plant with nice smelling flowers. It's hard to describe the small. It has the sweetness of the rose. But there is something of the cleanliness of the pine forest as well. It would make a good soap.

The flowers are small but plentiful, cream-coloured, and they appear between July and August. It grows in damp meadows and wet fields. It's common in some crofting townships. What is it? Crios Chù Chulainn or meadowsweet. A plant with a special heritage for the Gaels and an amazing fragrance.

gheibh thu nuair a phronnas tu na duilleagan. Agus nithear tì bhlasta le bhith a' goil nan duilleag ann an uisge. Tha e a cheart cho math ri tì-mheannt a gheibh thu anns na bùthan.

Sin agaibh dà lus le fàileadh air na duilleagan. Ach 's e am fear as fheàrr leam lus le fàileadh cùbhraidh air na dìtheanan. Tha e doirbh tuairisgeul a dhèanamh dhen fhàileadh. Tha mìlseachd an ròis ann. Ach tha rudeigin de ghlainnead na giùthsaidh ann cuideachd. Dhèanadh e deagh shiabann.

Tha na flùraichean beag ach pailt, le dath an uachdair orra, agus bidh iad ann eadar an t-Iuchar agus an Lùnastal. Tha e a' fàs ann an lèanan agus pàircean fliucha. Tha e cumanta ann an cuid de bhailtean croitearachd. Dè tha ann? Crios Chù Chulainn no meadowsweet. Lus le dualchas sònraichte do na Gàidheil agus fàileadh air leth.