

## SAND DUNE PLANTS AT BISHOPS QUARTER BEACH, COUNTY CLARE. IRELAND



**SEA HOLLY** - this upright 50cm high perennial is easily identified by its blue-green, prickly, holly-like leaves. The plant is tinged with blue all over, even before the blue flower heads appear. The tiny blue flowers are held in dense flower heads and bloom from June to August. The broad leaves are leathery, stiff and have white margins and veins. It is a native Irish plant and herbal drinks and candies made from the roots of this plant were regarded as having aphrodisiac properties in the 16 century.



**SEA SPURGE** - grows to a height of 50cm on coastal sands, dunes, shingle and beaches. The leaves which are grey-green, waxy, hairless and oval are fleshy and so able to withstand coastal conditions extremely well. A perennial it flowers from June to late October each year, the flowers are arranged in clusters usually of 3-6 have horned glands at their rims. , This is a native plant, the latex or milky white sap in the stems of this plant is poisonous.



**SEA RADISH** - Standing upright to 60cm high, it's a rough, hairy biennial usually found in sandy, coastal habitats. From May to July its yellow flowers (20mm) are held in terminal heads, the lower buds opening first and leaving behind them pods which have up to five hard beaded segments. The lower leaves are pinnate, the upper being narrow and entire. This is a native plant.



**SEA SPINACH / SEA BEET** - This is a fleshy, dark green perennial growing in large clumps in coastal habitats such as shingle and sandy beaches. It has large, shiny leathery leaves whose shapes vary from triangular to heart-shaped. These are able to withstand salt conditions and have reddish stems. The tiny, green or red-purple petal-less flowers appear in loose, slender spikes from June to September. It is a native plant and is related to common vegetables such as beetroot, spinach and sugar beet.

