

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**POWYS**

**RHOS GARTH-FAWR**

**Date of Notification:** 1998

**National Grid Reference:** SO 113438

**O.S. Maps:** 1:50,000 Sheet number: 148  
1:10,000 Sheet number: SO 14 SW

**Site Area:** 8.5 ha

**Description:**

Rhos Garth-fawr is of special interest for its extensive areas of fen-meadow, rush pasture and swamp vegetation. The fen-meadow is characterised by the presence of meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*. This type of vegetation has a restricted distribution along the Atlantic seaboard of Europe. It has become increasingly scarce and localised in England and Wales as a result of drainage and agricultural changes.

The characteristic vegetation has developed in a natural depression containing peaty soil and clay which overlies Old Red Sandstone rocks of the Downton series. The site lies on a shoulder of land at an altitude of 230m, between Twyn y Garth Hill and the Bach Howey Gorge to the east of Erwood. It comprises a single large field with a number of old internal ditches which drain towards an outlet in the northern corner. The area has been traditionally managed as rough pasture.

The core of the site supports fen-meadow vegetation that is dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*. Characteristic associates include tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, meadow thistle, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*, marsh valerian *Valeriana dioica*, flea sedge *Carex pulicaris*, quaking grass *Briza media*, sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, tawny sedge *Carex hostiana* and whorled caraway *Carum verticillatum*, an uncommon plant in mid Wales.

There are also extensive areas that are dominated by sharp-flowered rush with a range of other wetland plants including common marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, marsh violet *Viola palustris*, common sedge *Carex nigra*, ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*.

In the drier parts of the site purple moor-grass is dominant and is accompanied by tormentil, heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and grasses such as Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*. Wet hollows along ditch lines support swamp vegetation that is dominated by bladder-sedge *Carex vesicaria* with a range of characteristic associates including meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, common sedge, velvet bent *Agrostis canina*, common marsh-bedstraw, water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and marsh cinquefoil. The wet pasture grades into dry acidic grassland along the western edge of the site and additional interest is provided by

patches of woodland containing some very large pedunculate oaks *Quercus robur*.

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