



Tomtängsbacken

Here and on the nearby information board you can find out more about the unique fields of Karum. The fields are farmed using the three-field system, as in the 19th century. You can read about what that means and the three different stages of the three-field system here and at two other fields.

ON OLD FOUNDATIONS

This field is called Tomtängsbacken. "Äng" tells us that the field was a meadow before it was ploughed up. "Tomt" (plot) tells us that there was probably a farmhouse here a long time ago. The farmhouse may have existed about 1,500 years ago, in the Iron Age, and at the time was one of several farmhouses in Karum. The farmhouses were spread across the landscape and were not close to each other like now.

Look at the stone walls and you will see that they are different in shape – straight as an arrow or slightly curved. The curved walls follow the shape of the landscape and perhaps date back to the Iron Age. The straight walls were added at the time of land partitioning in the 1830s.



Photo: The County Administrative Board in Kalmar County.

Delphiniums
Consolida regalis

Why do the fields bloom in Karum?

In Karum we want to show what the fields may have looked like in the 19th century. Now, as then, no pesticides are used to kill animals and plants that spoil the crops. Weeds are only combated mechanically, but that is not as effective. Therefore, there are a lot of weeds in the fields. The fields of Karum are now among the most important places in Sweden for preserving old types of field weeds. Some of them produce beautiful flowers.

The three-field system, as in the 19th century

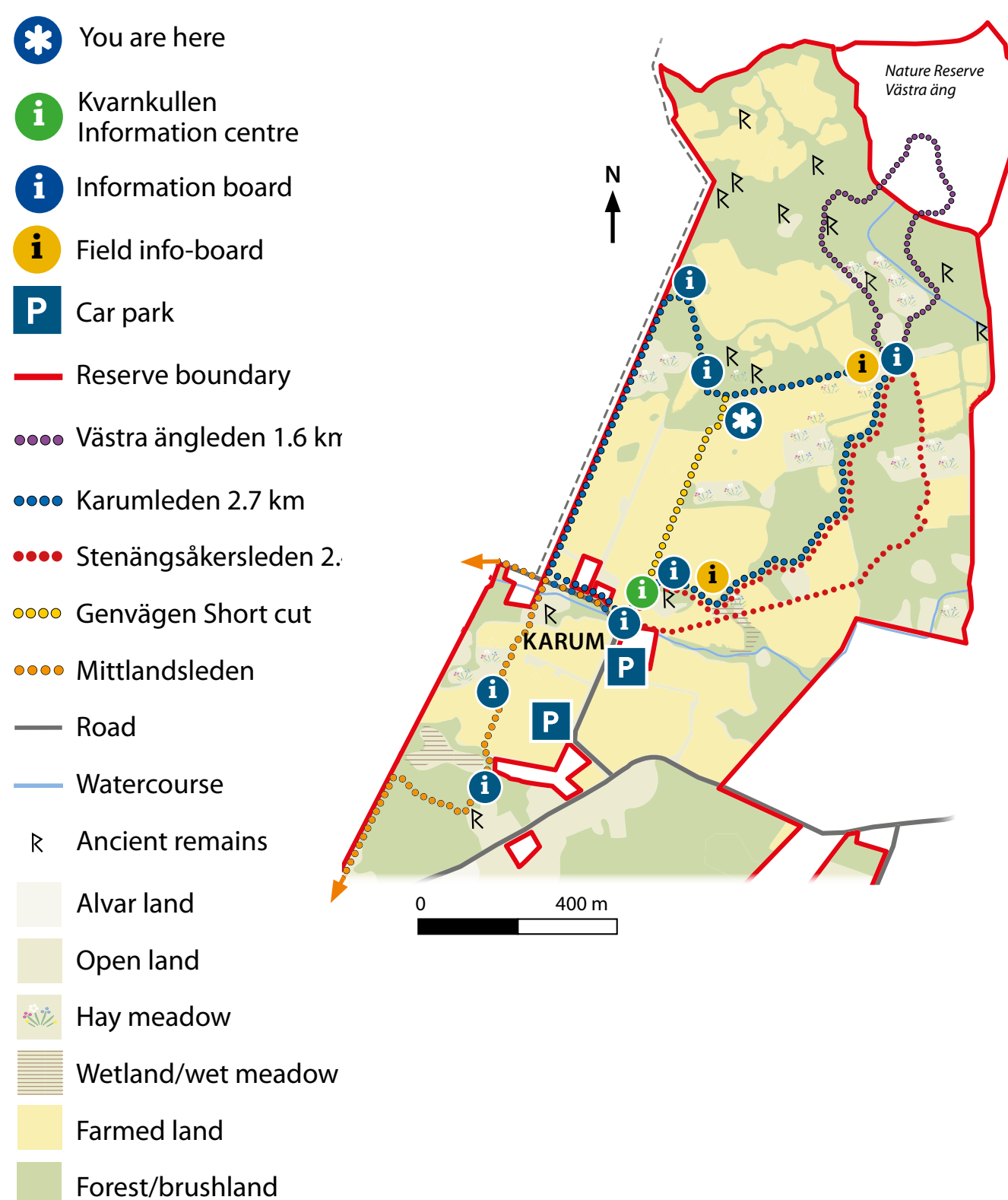
The fields in Karum are today farmed using the three-field system – that means that:

- A third of the fields are sown with rye.
- A third of the fields are sown with barley.
- A third of the fields are not sown at all – the soil is resting/lying fallow.

The field where rye grows one year is sown with barley the next year. For the third year, the field lies fallow. Then it starts again.

The three-field system had its big breakthrough on Öland in the 18th century. Before that, the farmers grew grain on every field every year, known as single-crop farming. Or, half the fields were fallow every year, which is known as the two-field system.

At the end of the 19th century, farmers took up crop rotation. That often means a series of five or six crops, but without the field lying fallow for a single year.



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