

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 6 December 2013.

Rare, Scarce and Notable Warwickshire Plants.

We are currently working on the text for the draft Rare Plant Register and having waded our way through several databases and atlases, we feel we are now ready to publish a series of scarcity lists. We hope these will be useful for professional ecologists and of interest to the amateur botanist. They have been put together with help from Jon Bowley and John Roberts.

To fit in with guidelines used by other counties, there are now three categories, rather than the two seen in Steven Falk's book *Warwickshire's Wildflowers*.

- Rare A plant found in less than three sites in the county since 1990
- Scarce A plant found in between four and ten sites in the county since 1990
- Notable An uncommon plant that is an indicator of a quality habitat.

You will have received either an electronic or paper copy of these lists with this Newsletter. They are dated December 2013 but will be updated regularly as hopefully, more rare plants are seen. An up-to-date version of the Checklist will follow shortly.

WARWICKSHIRE'S WINTER WILDFLOWER CHALLENGE

On last year's winter challenge a small group of intrepid botanists managed to find 20 species in flower in the centre of Leamington Spa.

This year we will be targeting Nuneaton. We cannot promise you the two exotic ferns that we saw last year, as the houses don't have the right sort of cellars, but we can manage seven different species of wall fern within half a mile, which isn't bad going and plenty more.

We will meet at 10 a.m. on

Sunday 29 December in the Upper Abbey Street Car Park, Nuneaton CV11 5DG.

Coming into Nuneaton from the south keep on the A444 and carrying straight on at the roundabout with the viaduct on the right, pass the park and church on your right and at the roundabout at the end of the dual-carriageway turn left on to the Roanne Ringway. Go straight on at the lights and turn left at the next roundabout (dandelion sculpture) and then first left again before the traffic lights. The car park is at the bottom of the road on the left near the traffic lights opposite a Hindu centre and a hairdresser's. Car parking is a £1 on Sundays.

We will walk less than two miles and there will be toilets available on the walk.

New Species for the County

Twenty new plants were added to the official county list in 2013, most were casuals or garden escapes. A full list of these and other interesting finds will be published in the Botanical Report 2013, available in May 2014.

Euphorbia characias ssp. *characias*

Yucca gloriosa

Carthamus tinctorius

Chenopodium giganteum

Cornus koenigii

Sedum hispanicum

Bidens connata

Orobanche hederaceae

Silene uniflora

Dianthus deltooides

Euphorbia amygdaloides ssp. *robbiae*

Gastroidium ventricosum

Gaillardia x grandiflora

Agastache foeniculum

Iris spuria

Symphytum x hidcotense

Psuedotsuga menziesii

Bupleurum rotundifolium

Allium ampeloprasum

Prunus serotina

(Sorry, but you will have to wait until later for the English names as there is insufficient room.)

Bellflowers are Spreading

In August John and Monika found a new site for *Campanula patula* (Spreading Bellflower) beside a footpath at the back of Daw Mill Colliery. As we did not have a camera with us we decided to return the following day to take some photographs. As we approached the site we were surprised by the presence of a police helicopter which hovered above us to see what we were up to, when this was joined by a van with a security guard and large Alsatian dog on the other side of the fence, we started to get a bit worried. Although we were aware that this rare plant is classified as Endangered in the Vascular Plant Red Data List we were surprised at such a high level of police protection! After a shouted conversation above the sound of the rotor blades we discovered that some signalling equipment had been stolen the night before. Do we really look like criminals? Both of Warwickshire's sites for this plant are beside railway embankments. If you regularly walk one can you please keep your eyes open for it.

At the BSBI Exhibition Meeting at the Natural History Museum in London in November we heard a talk by Brian Eversham, from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. He introduced us to an excellent set of free, downloadable

IDENTIFICATION KEYS

They were written for the Trust's survey teams and staff to use and are suitable for use in lowland central England. They cover:

Ferns in Woodland, Ferns on Walls, Horsetails, Willows and Osiers and Yellow Ligulate Composites (Dandelion lookalikes)

The Willows and Osiers key has been specially recommended by Leicester BSBI who have used it at a workshop.

Available at www.wildlifebcn.org/ecologygroups_resources

Other Botanical News

- The BSBI's **THREATENED PLANTS PROJECT** has closed. We managed to cover nearly all of the selected sites that we were given and also produced a few new sites for the chosen species. Thank you to everybody who helped with this project
- Please send in your 2013 **RECORDS** to johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk or by post to John and Monika Walton at 46 Hill Top, Baddesley Ensor, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 2BQ so that we can deal with them this winter. The grand total since 2010 is **41,449 records**. Please ring us on 01827 712455 with any queries.

BOTANICAL TALKS AT LOCAL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

Thu 23 Jan	Warwickshire Trees	Steven Falk	Warwick NHS
Fri 7 Feb	The Lapworth Museum & the Work of Professor Shotton	Jon Clatworthy	Coventry NHS
Fri 21 Mar	Mary Richards, Birmingham's First Botanical Diva	Peter Tyrer	Birmingham NHS
	Further details of times and venues can be found on the appropriate website.		
Wed Feb 12	The Flora of Birmingham and the Black Country	Ian Trueman	
Wed Mar 12	Lovelies of the Lizard	John Roberts	

These last two meetings are at Nether Whitacre Church Hall, Station Road, Whitacre Heath at 7.30 p.m. for the Nether Whitacre & District NHS.
Be prepared to pay a small visitor fee for each meeting.