

Recording in Herefordshire

Some significant plant records in 2015 - Peter Garner

Neottia cordata (Lesser Twayblade)

This is, without doubt, the outstanding discovery of the year, made by Mark and Clare Kitchen. We estimated that there were approximately 200 of these diminutive and rather inconspicuous orchids growing among and under the heather on the Black Mountains, just on the Herefordshire side of the county boundary. Such a well established colony was probably present in the days when the county was very well recorded by many eminent Victorian botanists. The thought that it has probably been flowering in the same spot undiscovered during the last 200 years of plant recording in the county, puts into perspective the excitement generated by Mark and Clare's discovery. To the best of my knowledge it is the first orchid, "new to Herefordshire" for over 100 years!



Counting *Neottia cordata* on the Black Mountains



Neottia cordata

Lathyrus aphaca (Yellow Vetchling)

In July I found several plants of this unusual looking member of the pea family growing on a bank beside a green lane leading in to Brierley Wood, south of Leominster. *Lathyrus aphaca* is considered native in southern England, but casual elsewhere. It was recorded twice in Herefordshire in the 1980's, but prior to that, not since 1871.

Amsinckia micrantha (Fiddleneck)

This introduced North American member of the Borage family is now naturalised and spreading in East England, but when it turned up in May in an industrial area of Hereford it was only the second time it has been recorded in Herefordshire. It was found by Jean Wynne-Jones near the new building where the Herefordshire Biological Record Centre is now located. Its presence can probably be explained by the use of earth-moving machinery during the building and landscaping of this new building.

Dryopteris aemula (Hay-scented Buckler-fern)

Mark Jannink and Martin Rickard re-found a small colony of this very rare fern. There is just one plant at a site in the north of the county, but apart from that it has not been found in Herefordshire for over 100 years. This fern was recorded from Warmhill Wood just south of Ross-on-Wye in 1900 and has not been seen there since, until Mark and Martin revisited the site in July last year.

Orobanche hederæ (Ivy Broomrape)

The only Herefordshire site for this parasite was in the far south of the county; however, this year I found 6 plants towards the top of the steep embankment on the north side of Hereford city.