

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES.



LAUNCH OF "WILD THINGS", CHANNEL FOUR, 21ST JANUARY 2013

The much awaited new TV series on British **plant distribution**, "Wild Things", will be launched on Channel Four on Monday, 21st January, and the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) is delighted that our plant distribution maps feature so strongly in the six-part series. Channel Four has acknowledged the BSBI Atlases, in which these maps were first published, as **"a remarkable record of plant distribution and one of the biggest natural history projects ever undertaken"** with a lasting and worldwide impact on all biological recording. **BSBI's pioneering work, to map and monitor what plants grow where, underpins** many of the stories to be featured and continues to shape 21st century nature conservation.

Trevor Dines, one of the three co-presenters on "Wild Things", **has been a keen and active BSBI member** for over 20 years and is joint editor of our 2002 plant atlas. On his home patch in Anglesey, he discovered a hybrid between two of our native horsetails that was new to science and named it *Equisetum x robertsii* after local school teacher, Dick Roberts, who was **one of Trevor's** botanical gurus. Dick was **BSBI's** county Recorder for Anglesey for over 30 years - BSBI has such a Recorder in every county in Britain and Ireland, supporting local members and collating records of the plants identified and recorded locally.

"Wild Things" will show how Britain's landscape has changed dramatically over the last 50 years. From Snowdonia to the Yorkshire Dales, from Merseyside to inner London, Trevor and his co-presenters will introduce viewers to plants with interesting histories and distributions, using the latest BSBI data to reveal what grows where today, how plant distributions are changing and, above all, how much fun it is mapping these changes. Much of the work for the first, **ground-breaking 'Atlas of the British Flora'**, published in 1962, and the 2002 follow-up, was done by BSBI volunteers, supported by our network of county recorders. BSBI **helps amateur botanists get involved as "Citizen Scientists"**, and also counts the **country's most eminent botanists among its members** - this mix of professional and amateur botanists is thought to be the secret of our success.

Dr Kevin Walker, Head of Research and Development at BSBI's Plant Unit, refers to the BSBI Atlases as **"landmark publications that have influenced the biological recording of living organisms worldwide"** and BSBI President Ian Bonner said that they **"provide the basis for our understanding of plant distribution in Britain and are a testament to what can be achieved by voluntary effort"**.

More information on **what plants grow where, and BSBI's work to map these distribution patterns**, is available via our website bsbi.org.uk, where anyone can view and download up-to-date maps using the **'Maps scheme' pages**.

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