

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 17 November 2019.

NO MORE SQUARE-BASHING

The closing day for records for the BSBI Atlas 2020 is the 31st December. We have recently been busy checking a batch of some 43,000 Warwickshire records that have now been sent to the BSBI Database. This brings the total since 2011, when we started to work as County Recorders, to 170,250 records. This may appear to be rather low, but until 2018 we only recorded new tetrad records (a huge amount of work), rather than sending in full species lists. We would like to thank absolutely everybody who has sent in records during the last nine years and again say a special thank you to John and Val Roberts who this year not only continued to record until the 1st November, but completed their 100th survey of the year.

IF YOU STILL HAVE ANY RECORDS LURKING ANYWHERE, PLEASE SEND THEM IN NOW!

WHAT NEXT?

We have decided to continue with our regular surveys in 2020, but this year instead of tetrad bashing, there will be a focus on Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserves and on monitoring Rare Plant Register species. Camille Newton has suggested a trip to Mockley Wood and Keith Warmington from Butterfly Conservation has provided a new contact for Bentley Wood in Atherstone, where the rare grass *Drymochloa sylvatica* (Wood Fescue) and *Equisetum sylvaticum* {Wood Horsetail} used to grow. We have invites to visit allotments in Kenilworth and Rugby and Mike Slater has promised us access to Southam and Stockton Quarries.

We also plan to organise a short two night break to visit the Essex Marshes in July or August.

We will start the year with a repeat of last year's Conifer Workshop at Brueton Park, but this time with tree enthusiast and author/photographer Steven Falk.

We have already arranged a joint BSBI/Warwickshire Flora Group visit to Clowes Wood on Sunday 5th July. If you have any further suggestions for 2020 please e mail us or ring us on 01827 712455.

BSBI NEW YEAR PLANT HUNT 2020

This will be held in Warwick on Saturday 4th January 2020.

Meet at the Cape Road Car Park at 10 a.m., a car park for council employees during the week, but free at weekends. The postcode for the nearby Cape Road Surgery is CV39 4JP. We will meet at the south end of the car park where the path through Priory Park begins and then walk a route that includes St. Mary's Church, the Castle Walls and some of the town. Six years ago, the Flora Group surveyed some of the town after a visit to see the crocuses on the Racecourse, but we have not held a BSBI New Year Plant Hunt there before.

IMPORTANT

Having lost some very important e mails recently, including a flight confirmation, we have decided to open a gmail account. Please use our new e mail address jomowalton@gmail.com to contact us in future.

NEW AND INTERESTING RECORDS

Fourteen new species were added to the county list since the last Newsletter and as usual many of them were from horticultural origin.



Nonea lutea

Photo John Roberts

John Roberts started the year off well with a record of the Mediterranean *Nonea lutea* (Yellow Nonea) in a lawn at Stratford Business Park in May. David Long then sent us a specimen of an onion from a ditch in Long Lawford that was identified as *Allium subhirsutum* (Hairy Garlic) a common species in Greece and Turkey. New additions with a more obvious horticultural origin were *Erythranthe x burnetii* (Coppery Monkeyflower) that had spread from a hanging basket to a pavement crack at Berkswell, some seedlings of *Clerodendrum bungei* (Clerodendrum) seen on the Flora Group meeting at Little Compton Church, and a patch of *Clematis tangutica* (Orange Peel Clematis) seen at the new Brandon Reach Nature Reserve in September.

The only new native species was *Euphorbia stricta* (Upright Spurge) that was seen on the Flora Group meeting to Ettington. It is an annual, looking like *E. peplus*, but with red stems and a seed capsule covered in long cylindrical warts. Sandwich eaters have now made the humble Tomato a frequent plant of town parks, but Anna Dudley managed to find a *Cucumis melo* (Melon) growing in a pavement crack in Westbury Road, Coventry. The handsome *Eucomis autumnalis* (Autumn Pineapple Lily) was seen at Tollbar End Allotments in August and a single plant of the elegant *Verbascum chaixii* (Nettle-leaved Mullein) was spotted at Weddington Disused Railway Line, Nuneaton.

John and Monika attended the BSBI Cotoneaster meeting at Cherry Hinton Chalk Pits in Cambridge in September where they saw seventeen different species of Cotoneasters! This encouraged them to revisit the Kingsbury Link Industrial Estate to try to sort out the seedlings there. A parcel of material was sent to the referee and the reply (with seven out of eight correctly identified by JW!) includes a prostrate small-leaved species with the lovely name of *Cotoneaster hjelmqvistii* (Hjelmqvist's Cotoneaster). This was new to the county list. This can easily be mistaken for *C. horizontalis* which is much more frequent.

Other species added during the summer include *Euphorbia coralliooides* (Coral Spurge) from Atherstone, JW and MW, *Helianthus petiolaris* (Lesser Sunflower), Nailcote Hall, John and Val Roberts, *Echinops bannaticus* (Blue Globe-thistle), Long Lawford Lane, David Long and *Vinca difformis* (Intermediate Periwinkle), Bilton, David Long.

BATTLE OF THE BOTANISTS

If you have nothing to do on Thursday 5 December, there are two natural history talks that night that may interest you. **John Roberts** will be giving a talk on Lesbos to the Warwick Natural History Society, whilst at exactly the same moment **Brian Laney** will be speaking to Rugby Natural History Society about his recent botanical finds. **Paul Hodges** will also be giving a talk to RNHS about The Burren on Thursday 12 March.

Full details can be found on the society's websites and there is a small charge for visitors (£2) at RNHS.