

Top tips for Recording using BSBI Recording Cards

1. Download a customised card for the Vice-county you are in¹ from the [BSBI](#) site. Print it with the [coversheet](#) on the reverse if possible.
2. Use a [Weatherwriter](#) or clipboard and transparent plastic bag to keep the card dry.
3. Complete using a pencil – especially if wet – as biros only work on dry paper.
4. *Always* complete the coversheet before starting to record:
 - **Grid Reference:** See corner of OS maps for information on how to take a grid reference. We recommend recording in 1km x1km (monads) for which you need to enter a 4-figure grid reference. Alternatively record in a 2km x 2km square (tetrad). The grid reference of a tetrad is the GR of the 10km square it is in (e.g. NN98 plus a letter (A-Z) depending on the position of the Tetrad within the 10km square. There is a diagram on the coversheet to help you assign the tetrad letter.
 - **Vice County:** Enter the number (or use name if you don't know number).
 - **Date:** Today's - in full!
 - **Name of Locality:** Use the name from OS Map which best describes survey area
 - **Habitat:** Include details only if in a reasonably uniform site and not too complicated.
 - **Recorder(s):** Start with your own and then the local Vice-county Recorder if present and then a list of all others. If too many, just write *BSBI Field Meeting*.
 - **Route Map:** Sketch the route or photocopy an OS map with it marked and attach. Alternatively include a brief written description of the route taken.
4. Turnover and cross off (centrally) the name of those species you or your party records. Don't cross off the adjacent BRC number which is used for data entry.
5. If you cross off the wrong species, don't erase it, mark a cross at either end of the line.
6. **If in doubt about an identification, do not record.** Collect a specimen if it is sustainable and possible to do so. Better still take a close-up photograph. Note details of this possible record (marked by a question mark) and the specimen or photograph on the coversheet. Investigate later and show an expert to get confirmation. See the [BSBI Code of Conduct](#).
7. Only reasonably likely species are listed for a Vice-county on the customised record card. If you record an unlisted species, double check your identification and, if sure, make a 'front-of-card' record. Include a GPS grid reference, and any relevant notes about the population size, whether flowering, other notable associated species, etc.
8. Use your GPS to make sure you only record within the chosen monad or tetrad.
9. On your return make sure that everything is **clearly** legible, add any further records from any collected and confirmed specimens and send the card to the local Recorder².

¹To find out which VC you are in type your grid reference (from the map or a GPS) [here](#).

² Full contact details are in the BSBI Yearbook. Email addresses are available [here](#).

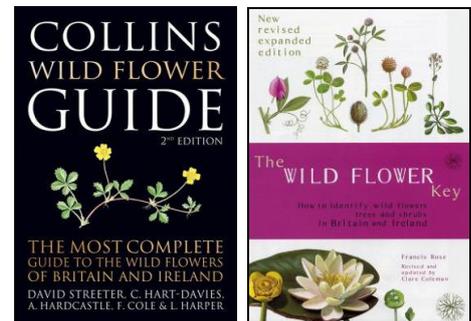
Top Tips to improve your Wildflower Id Skills

1. Buy a good identification book like *Collins Wild Flower Guide*, or *The Wild Flower Key* (WFK).

2. Get a 10x hand lens.
www.summerfieldbooks.com/



3. Take your ID book and hand lens with you *whenever* you are out and about.



4. Stop and use them, whenever you see a flower you can't identify, or to remind yourself of the names of plant species you recognise.

5. The combination of good illustrations and keys in these books is really powerful. But do try using the family keys which are the only way to be really sure, especially when there are a number of similar species. Practice with species you *can* identify.

6. Whether using the keys or the illustrations, you must check that the full description matches your specimen(s) - particularly the key characters (in bold in the WFK).

7. Check the likelihood of the species being found there and then - read the information on where it occurs and when it flowers. If necessary refer to more local information in floras, checklists and on the [BSBI maps](#) webpage.

8. If you can't identify a plant take a photo and send it to [iSpot](#) or the local [BSBI Recorder](#) for help with its identification.

9. Going on field meetings gives you a chance to check your understanding is correct and to ask questions! Several are organised especially for beginners and improvers every year. Check out the [Scottish BSBI field meeting program](#) and BSBI Local Groups' programmes. that of other groups that organise botanical field meetings in Scotland. Also check [Botanical Society of Scotland](#), your local [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) group's and [Plantlife Scotland](#)'s meetings programs.

10. Go on wildflower identification courses: another great way to learn and a lot of fun! Both the [Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh](#) and The [Field Studies Centre](#) at Kindrogan in Perthshire and Millport in Ayrshire run a variety of courses.

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland ([BSBI](#))

The BSBI identifies flowering plants and ferns and records where they occur. The information we gather is essential to conservation work, which would be impossible without a clear understanding of what is rare and what is not, and where rare plant populations occur. We welcome everyone who shares our passion for plants and their conservation!

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