

ADDITIONS TO THE FLORA OF WARWICKSHIRE 2018 AND 2019

by John and Monika Walton

Recording for the BSBI Atlas 2020 Project has at last finished. There will be no more rushing about the county searching for common species in some of the county's botanically least interesting areas just to improve our coverage. 40,144 records have been added to the database during the last two years and many thousands more have been sent to us after the well publicised deadline which may or may not be considered for the Atlas 2020 project. John and Val Roberts contributed a staggering 17,520 records to this total and finally stopped in 2019 after they had surveyed exactly 100 tetrads.

The Warwickshire Flora Group will continue surveying in 2020, drawing up baseline surveys for the many Wildlife Trust reserves that have been somewhat ignored in the rush for overall county coverage. There will also be joint meetings with the Friends of Brandon Wood, Earlswood Wildlife Partnership, the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI, and a weekend break looking at coastal and saltmarsh plants in Essex, is planned for July.

Thirty field meetings took place during 2018/9, including an out of county trip to Batsford Arboretum. There was a Rose Identification Workshop at the Warwick Herbarium and two others on Rushes at Brandon Marsh and Conifers at Brueton Park.

Only 23 new species were added to the county list during 2018-9, most being either casuals, garden escapes or planted introductions. The names of the plants below have been taken from the New Flora of the British Isles, Fourth Edition by Clive Stace that was published in 2019.

THE YEAR OF THE ROSE

On Saturday 4th August, four Flora Group members went on a Rose Identification Day with the BSBI Rose referee Roger Maskew at Castlemorton Common in Worcestershire. A week earlier members were at the Warwick Herbarium working their way through named specimens, learning the important characteristics to look for and trying out Roger's new Rose Key which was published in BSBI News recently.

A weather-resistant group including John Clift, Steve Wright and Anna Dudley braved very wet weather at Ufton Fields NR on the 26 August to go on a Rose Hunt. To do this, the one thing you need to remember is not to collect the flowers. You need a length of mature stem with prickles, a section with full-sized leaves and a large spray with developed hips. This can be a prickly business and labelling and keeping material separate is not easy in the pouring rain.

Before this meeting, Roger had received a parcel of Warwickshire Roses that he was unable to name and we were all very disappointed. Apparently the ordinary Warwickshire hedgerow rose is notoriously promiscuous and displays a complex mixture of characteristics that can baffle even the best expert. To get better quality species, Roger Maskew suggested that we visit limestone sites, and at Ufton, Bishop's Hill and Stockton we did much better.

At Ufton we managed *Rosa rubiginosa* (Sweet Briar), *R. squarrosa*, *R. stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) (2nd county record since 1990), *R. x dumalis*, *R. rubiginosa* (f.) *x canina* (*R. nitidula*) (2nd county record, only previous record from Solihull in 1871). Bishop's Hill produced *R. squarrosa* and *R. canina x squarrosa* and Stockton cutting *R. stylosa* (3rd county record since 1990).

Warwickshire Roses have been well recorded in the past and it was good to produce some modern records in spite of the extra work it entailed and it is something to concentrate on in the autumn when many ordinary plants are past their best.

A COUPLE OF NATIVES.

The only new native species was *Euphorbia stricta* (**Upright Spurge**). This was seen on the Flora Group meeting to Ettington. It is an annual, looking like more branched *E. peplus* (**Petty Spurge**) but with red stems and a seed capsule covered in long cylindrical warts.

You may know the common shrub *Brachyglottis x jubar* (**Shrub Ragwort**) often used in amenity planting. In December whilst walking near the George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton, after examining hundreds of bushes over the last few years, we finally found an old spike of *Orobanche minor* (**Common Broomrape**) growing next to the pavement amongst the lower twigs of the ragwort. Whether this parasitic plant is actively choosing this new host or whether the broomrape has been introduced with the original planting, is not known.

NEW RECORDS

The most exciting find of 2018 was David Long's *Gamochaeta purpurea* (**American Cudweed**). This American casual was seen growing in a pavement crack outside Kwikfit in Rugby Town Centre. It was only the eighth record for Great Britain and as none of the local botanists had seen it before, it took about three weeks of e mailing photos before we found anybody who could identify it.

The Derbyshire Vice-county Recorder, Alan Willmot, was out sightseeing in Coventry in September, when he came across a small *Cyrtomium sp.* (**Holly Fern**) growing at the base of a wall in St. Mary's Guildhall. His photo, plus a frond that we collected a few days later, were sent to BSBI fern referee Fred Rumsey, but he was unable to determine it to species as the plant was only about 10 cms across and had not developed any spores.

John Roberts started 2019 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.

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) included a prostrate small-leaved species with the lovely name of *Cotoneaster hjelmqvistii* (Hjelmqvist's Cotoneaster). This was new to the county list. Although frequent nationally, it can easily be mistaken for the common *C. horizontalis* but it lacks the herring-bone branching pattern.

THE FULL LIST OF NEW RECORDS FOR 2018 AND 2019

Tristagma uniflorum, **Star-flower**, Chetwynd Drive, Whitestone, Nuneaton, SP38548914, 5 April 2018, John S. Walton, Monika V. Walton, seedling in pavement crack.

Camelina sativa, **Gold-of-pleasure**, Kineton, SP339516, 24 May 2018, Di Napier, determined Tim Rich.

Eccremocarpus scaber, **Chilean Gloryflower**, Leamington Hastings Churchyard, SP4467, 17 June 2018, Warwickshire Flora Group.

Berberis aggregata, **Clustered Barberry**, on roadside verge north of the Anchor Pub, South of Mancetter. SP334947, 18 June 2018, determined by Mark Duffell.
Probably planted many years ago.

Rosa rubiginosa (f) x canina (R. x nitidula), Ufton Fields Nature Reserve, SP3792661665, 26 August 2018, determined by Roger Maskew. First record since 1871.

Gamochaeta purpurea, **American Cudweed**, in a pavement crack outside Kwikfit, Rugby Town Centre, SP50037503, 30 August 2018, David Long, determined E. Clement.

Vinca difformis, **Intermediate Periwinkle**, Bilton, dismantled railway line, SP47607465, 27 April 2019, David Long.

Nonea lutea, **Yellow Nonea**, in lawn of Business Park, Stratford-upon-Avon, where hay had previously been stored, SP22185317, 6 May 2019, John R. Roberts, Val Roberts, determined by M. Berry.

Allium subhirsutum, **Hairy Garlic**, Long Lawford, beside the A428, a few plants in a ditch, SP46687570, 26 May 2019, David Long, determined John S. Walton and Monika V. Walton.

Euphorbia corallioides, **Coral Spurge**, Atherstone, beside A5, SP29879828, 14 June 2019, John S. Walton, Monika V. Walton, determined by Tim Walker.

- Erythranthe x burnetii*, **Coppery Monkeyflower**, Church Lane, Berkswell, one plant in pavement crack, SP24497910, 30 June 2019, Warwickshire Flora Group, determined John S. Walton, Monika V. Walton.
- Eucomis autumnalis*, **Autumn Pineapple Lily**, Tollbar End Allotments, Coventry, SP363758, 2 August 2019, John S. Walton, Monika V. Walton, John R. Roberts, Val Roberts.
- Verbascum chaixii*, **Nettle-leaved Mullein**, Weddington Railway Cutting, Nuneaton, one plant in hedgerow, SP361942, 10 August 2019, John S. Walton and Monika V. Walton, determined by Fred Rumsey.
- Echinops bannaticus*, **Blue globe-thistle**, Long Lawford, Lawford Heath Lane, SP46887519, 24 August 2019, David Long.
- Clerodendrum bungei*, **Clerodendrum**, Little Compton Churchyard, two seedlings in church path well away from wall shrub, SP26163028, 11 August 2019, Warwickshire Flora Group.
- Cucumis melo*, **Melon**, Westbury Road, Coventry, in pavement crack, SP30958003, 28 August 2019, Anna Dudley, determined John S. Walton and Monika V. Walton.
- Clematis tangutica*, **Orange-peel Clematis**, Brandon Reach Nature Reserve, two plants on edge of meadow near the railway line, SP38697626, 1 September 2019, John S. Walton and Monika V. Walton.
- Cotoneaster hjelmqvistii*, **Hjelmqvist's Cotoneaster**, Kingsbury Industrial Estate, SP231981, prostrate on pavement, 22 September 2019, John S. Walton and Monika V. Walton, determined Jeanette Fryer.
- Euphorbia stricta*, **Upright Spurge**, Rookery Lane, Ettington, SP26554832, three plants, 25 September 2019, Warwickshire Flora Group, determined Tim Walker.
- Helianthus petiolaris*, **Lesser Sunflower**, Nailcote Hall, SP2476, 15 October 2019, John R. Roberts, Val Roberts

If you would like to find out more about the **Warwickshire Flora Group** and would like to help with plant surveying please contact us at jomowalton@gmail.com or phone us on 01827 712455. You can also visit our website at www.bsbi.org.uk/warwickshire.html