



Media release: for immediate release

Scottish MSPs called upon to support Plant Atlas 2020 findings

A motion currently before members of the Scottish Parliament calls for support for the findings of Plant Atlas 2020¹, the ground-breaking report on the state of Britain and Ireland's wild plants. Those findings include news of alarming declines in Scotland's native plants caused by factors such as climate change, habitat loss, agricultural intensification, overgrazing, pollution, and the impacts of invasive non-native species.

Thousands of volunteers from the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland² (BSBI) spent twenty years collecting plant records for Plant Atlas 2020, which highlights the problems faced by our flora but also proposes a series of actions to help reverse the declines.

At the Scottish Parliament on 14th December, Mark Ruskell MSP (Mid Scotland and Fife, Scottish Green Party) hosted an event for BSBI staff to meet MSPs, talk them through the Plant Atlas 2020 findings and discuss how Plant Atlas 2020 could play an important role in supporting the delivery of Scotland's ambition to become Nature Positive by 2030. The motion, and the names of MSPs who have already agreed to support it, can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website³.

BSBI Scotland Officer Matt Harding⁴ said "Plant Atlas 2020 is the most powerful statement ever produced on the state of our wild and naturalised plants and can provide a crucial evidence base to help inform and evaluate environmental policy. We are calling on MSPs to recognise this extraordinary achievement in biodiversity mapping, and the remarkable work of the volunteers who made it possible, by supporting this motion and placing plant conservation at the heart of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy."

The Botanical Society wishes to thank Mark Ruskell MSP for his support and calls on fellow MSPs to support the motion.

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Editors' notes

1. BSBI's Plant Atlas 2020 website, launched in March 2023, features interactive distribution maps, text and graphics displaying the phenology, altitudinal range, and time-series trends for 3,495 plant species recorded across Britain and Ireland since the 1950s. The Plant Atlas 2020 website <https://plantatlas2020.org/> is the best way to find out if a species is declining or increasing – and why.

2. The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) is the leading charitable organisation promoting the enjoyment, study and conservation of wild plants in Britain and Ireland. We aim to build a diverse community of skilled and enthused botanists; provide data and science to help address biodiversity loss and climate change; and disseminate information to drive a passion for plants. We provide opportunities for involvement through a range of participation projects, surveys, events, training opportunities and the production of books and other resources. Our Distribution Database holds over 50 million plant records, making it one of the world's largest biological recording databases. www.bsbi.org
3. View Mark Ruskell MSP's motion here: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11610>
4. For more information, please contact BSBI Scotland Officer Matt Harding matt.harding@bsbi.org
5. Images to support this release can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/y1uxoxvjxu3d58byexstw/h?rlkey=7smeyarxpjj7kg929x0nvfm71&dl=0>