

## Plants in Vice-county 104: A Review of January-June 2023

Forty-seven new hectad records were made in VC104 in the first half of 2023 including eight new vice-county records for the year. By far the most exciting of these was the discovery of a strong colony of *Sedum villosum* (Hairy Stonecrop) on Eigg.

Other additions to VC104 so far:

<i>Abies nordmanniana</i>	Caucasian Fir	Planted
<i>Cardamine raphanifolia</i>	Greater Cuckooflower	Well naturalised in woodland
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i>	Japanese Quince	Derelict walled garden relic
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	Oceanspray	Derelict walled garden relic
<i>Ilex x altaclerensis</i>	Highclere holly	Self-seeded
<i>Iris setosa</i> *	Bristle-pointed Iris	Naturalised in marsh
<i>Muscari armeniacum</i>	Garden Grape-hyacinth	Naturalised on roadside

\*First record in the wild for the British Isles

Seven *Hieracium* (Hawkweed) specimens have been collected so far for expert determination.

As a final flourish to the [Darwin Tree of Life project](#), in January, 2023, members of Skye Botany Group found *Polypodium x mantoniae* in Broadford – making this the fifth known site in VC104.

Since then, members have gathered on four occasions, once for a foray to the Bheinn a' Leac area in the south of Raasay, where rarities including *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly-fern), *Thalictrum alpinum* (Alpine Meadow-rue) and *Saxifraga aizoides* (Yellow Saxifrage) were encountered. *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated Wintergreen) was also found growing unobtrusively among damp, shady rocks.

Later, a small group visited a garden and estate in North Skye in search of SHARPP (Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project) records. Further SHARPP records were the target of a visit in early June to the Isles of Sanday and Canna. Despite enjoyable days spent making many good records, the SHARPP plants on both occasions remained elusive.

Another cause for SBG to meet, was to survey a newly-acquired croft in Fiscavaig in the west of Skye, that had received no management since 2009. As could be expected, there was an abundance of thugs, including *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken) and *Impatiens glandulifera* (Himalayan Balsam), but here and there some welcome plants including *Trollius europaeus* (Globeflower) and *Phegopteris connectilis* (Beech Fern) were thriving.

SJB gave a talk on the Flora of Raasay and, with JW's help, ran a stand about the island's biodiversity at the Raasay Together festival. The talk was repeated at the Highland Biological Recording Group's spring meeting.

Plant Atlas 2020 has been drawn to the attention of HBRG and the Skye and Lochalsh Environmental Forum, in the latter case by an article in their newsletter.

Stephen J Bungard  
Joanna Walmisley  
July 2023