

County Floras and their availability

The attached spreadsheet is an attempt to list all the Floras that have been published for Britain and Ireland that cover either a vice-county or a substantial part of it.

It has been enormously difficult to draw the line. Thus the Floras of Liverpool are included because most cover a decent area of both South Lancashire and of Cheshire, yet most of those of Manchester are not, as they cover only a smaller area around Manchester. We have tended to bend the rules to include local Floras for the underworked areas (such as Aberdeen and some islands) but have omitted most of the myriad local Floras, such as those of Croydon, Christchurch, Huddersfield and scores if not hundreds of others. We are certain that anomalies remain!

Similarly, we had intended to restrict the list to published books, but, again, for some counties, or areas within those counties, the main or a considerable source of data is in a Journal. Indeed a few of the Floras listed have supplements that were published only in a local journal, and perhaps we might have listed more of these. Full details of all local works up to the late 1950s are contained in Simpson (1960) which is available as a download on the BSBI website at <http://archive.bsbi.org.uk/SimpsonsIndex.pdf>. A much more succinct list is that of Druce (1933), but perhaps the most useful is that contained in Blake (1981). That last is a model of clarity and comprehensiveness.

There are undoubtedly omissions in this spreadsheet, particularly pre 1800, but there the florals, or rather lists, are so rudimentary that they are barely worth itemising. For those interested Martyn (1763) and Pulteney (1790) both contain useful details of these, as of course does Simpson (above). But by and large it was only with H.C. Watson's works from the 1830s and culminating in his *Topographical botany* (1873), that anything approaching comprehensiveness for any county was approached. For Ireland the early coverage was even more rudimentary, until Praeger (1901). Of course the works above, supplemented or replaced by Druce (1932, and especially, 1933), Stace et al. (2003) (for Britain) and Scannell & Synott (1972) (for Ireland) provide quasi-checklists for each country, as, in a different way, does Ellis (1983) for Wales. Mitchell (2000) amplifies the Irish list.

The attached spreadsheet contains three columns which give details of potential access to these Floras – whether they are available new, or as a download from the web, or as a print-on-demand or the like. Just a word about downloads from the web – some of those available five or six years ago have disappeared, or are now only on pay-to-access sites. Conversely some new downloads have appeared. Of course it is possible to buy many of the Floras second-hand from booksellers, and prices here should be more modest than they were a few years ago.

We have also included, as a separate worksheet, a list of available County Rare Plant Registers. These tend to be more ephemeral, and many are work-in-progress and regularly updated. For the most recent position it might be best to look on the BSBI website, and if it is not downloadable or otherwise available to contact the VCR - or the country officer.

We hope the spreadsheet is self-explanatory, and would welcome comment on any entries, omissions or errors, as well as any difficulties in finding downloads.

We have used and acknowledge the earlier papers on County Floras and their availability, especially the most recent, that of David McCosh (1988), which also lists all his predecessors. The help of Chris Preston in making available his work and commenting on this list is gratefully acknowledged. Please comment, in the first instance, to Dpearman4@gmail.com

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