

Plant recording in v.c.96 - the state of play (at 08/08/2024)

Introduction

Easternness (v.c.96), also known as East Inverness-shire, is the largest vice-county in Great Britain and Ireland, being that part of the old county of Inverness-shire north-east of the watershed between the eastern and western sides of Scotland. It covers all or parts of 73 hectads (10 x 10km squares), 1364 tetrads (2 x 2km squares) and 5176 monads (1 x 1km squares). It extends from sea level, beside the Beaully and Moray Firths, to 1296m altitude on the summit of Braeriach.

Mary McCallum Webster's Flora of Moray, Nairn & East Inverness, published in 1978 by Aberdeen University Press remains an exceptionally valuable account of the flora of v.c.96 (and of v.c.95, Moray). It remains the primary source of information on the earliest records for the vice-county. Since the publication of that Flora, 312 additional taxa were recorded over the period 1978 - 2023, with an additional 17 taxa added so far in 2024 (Table 1 below). There are records for 1838 plant taxa in v.c.96, of which 1133 are native to the vice-county.

For links to additional information and maps, see the BSBI webpage for v.c.96 at <https://bsbi.org/easterness>

v.c.96 plant records

All v.c.96 plant records are held in the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) - <https://database.bsbi.org/>. As of 08/08/2024 the DDb holds 308,759 records for the vice-county, of which 64% are from the post-1999 period. 80% of tetrads in the vice-county have one or more records, and as do 57% of monads.

Work is ongoing to add missing (mostly historic) records to the database and to add precise dates and locality names to the c.4% of records that currently only have summary information.

Recording in v.c.96 in 2024

As of 8th August, 8030 new records from v.c.96 had been collected in 2024 and added to the DDb. In addition, a further 2230 records from prior to 2024 were added to the database.

In 2024, so far there have been:

- 110 new taxon x hectad records of 99 taxa (4.6%)
- 1823 new taxon x tetrad records of 566 taxa (39.3%)
- 3835 new taxon x monad records of 618 taxa (69.4%)
- 17 taxa recorded for the first time (Table 1)
- 7 species recorded for the first time post 1999 (Table 2)

Table 1. New taxa to v.c.96 recorded in 2024 (to 8th August)

Taxon	Vernacular name	Rank	Status in v.c.96
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> 'Simon-Louis Freres'	Sycamore	Cultivar	Alien
<i>Allium paradoxum</i> var. normale	Few-flowered Garlic	Variety	Alien
<i>Cardamine pentaphyllos</i>	Five-leaflet Bitter-cress	Species	Alien
<i>Centaurea nigra</i> var. radiata	Common Knapweed	Variety	Alien
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> f. <i>arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	Forma	Native
<i>Euphorbia dulcis</i> 'Chameleon'	Sweet Spurge	Cultivar	Alien
<i>Ficaria verna</i> 'Brazen Hussy'	Lesser Celandine	Cultivar	Alien
<i>Gymnadenia densiflora</i>	Marsh Fragrant-orchid	Species	Native
<i>Jacobaea maritima</i>	Silver Ragwort	Species	Alien
<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i> var. <i>varifolius</i>	Bitter-vetch	Variety	Native
<i>Libertia formosa</i>	Chilean-iris	Species	Alien
<i>Linaria purpurea</i> (pink form)	Purple Toadflax	Forma	Alien
<i>Myosotis discolor</i> subsp. <i>discolor</i>	Changing Forget-me-not	Subspecies	Native
<i>Myosotis discolor</i> subsp. <i>dubia</i>	Changing Forget-me-not	Subspecies	Native

<i>Spiraea chamaedryfolia</i>	Elm-leaved Spiraea	Species	Alien
<i>Veronica longifolia x spicata</i>		Hybrid	Alien
<i>Veronica scutellata</i> var. <i>scutellata</i>	Marsh Speedwell	Variety	Native

Table 2. Taxa recorded in 2024 - first v.c.96 record post-1999

Taxon	Vernacular name	First record since
<i>Astrantia major</i>	Astrantia	1973
<i>Hieracium amydrostictum</i>	Pale-spotted Hawkweed	1965
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall Barley	1988
<i>Lepidium campestre</i>	Field Pepperwort	1900
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory-of-the-wall	1970
<i>Photinia davidiana</i>	Stranvaesia	1997-1999
<i>Vulpia fasciculata</i>	Dune Fescue	1971

Recording

As can be seen (Maps 4, 5, 5a and 7 at <https://bsbi.org/easterness>) there are many areas within v.c.96 with few or no plant records. Upland areas at intermediate altitudes, c. 400-800m, are less well surveyed than lowland and (some) montane areas. Records from such locations would be especially welcome. However, records from any part of the vice-county are always very welcome.

Records can be sent direct to the Vice-county Recorder who can advise on format, or can be entered into iRecord - <https://irecord.org.uk/>. If you are a BSBI member, you may wish to use the BSBI recording app - <https://docs.bsbi.org/recording-app>. Records via the iNaturalist app - <https://www.inaturalist.org/> will also be checked by the Vice-county Recorder. While some excellent records have been received via iNaturalist, there are problems with this source of records. Many records of alien plants are from non-wild locations, location names are often spurious and misleading, and many recorders use pseudonyms.

As far as is practicable, in v.c.96 we prefer to collect records of all taxa at minimum 100m precision (using a GPS). The recording apps can use a mobile phone's gps to calculate grid references. Please add photos to the records, especially of less common species, with close-ups of key Identification features as well as of the whole plant. For non-native species, a photo showing a wider view of the plant in its habitat is useful (to confirm that it is in a wild (non garden) location).

Please record all plants in the countryside, i.e. everything outwith gardens, parks and cemeteries, apart from cultivated crops in fields and allotments, or planted as game cover and wildlife strips. If you can be sure that something is planted in a wild situation, please indicate that as part of the record. Please ignore any formal plantings in municipal flower beds, at the entrances to towns and villages etc.. Please do record planted street trees, plantations and shelterbelts. Within gardens, please record anything growing wild (i.e. not originating from plants that were originally planted). In parks and cemeteries do record any species that are thoroughly naturalised. There are always grey areas when it comes to recording. If in doubt please ask!

Access to BSBI plant records

All BSBI members can have access to the DDb, and I would encourage any BSBI members to apply, by completing and submitting this form - <https://database.bsbi.org/membersaccess.php>. Further details regarding access to the DDb are given here - <https://docs.bsbi.org/using-our-data/members-access>. We are fortunate that across the whole of Scotland, BSBI members have access to full details of almost all records. If you are not yet a BSBI member please consider joining - <https://bsbi.org/join-us>

Andy Amphlett
Joint VCR v.c.96

amphlett1958@gmail.com