



## Recorder eNewsletter

for the botanical recording community  
May 2024

### Looking for species-rich grassland sites in Scotland

Information held by NatureScot on lowland species-rich grasslands is dated. Some work was started about five years ago to rectify this, but it appears there are gaps still, with several vice counties without any grassland sites. I'm working on a digital mapping project this year to map as many of the best species-rich grasslands in Scotland and I'd like to fill in some blank areas. Can you help?

What do I mean by species-rich? These are grasslands which have less than 30% rye-grass, white clover and agricultural species across the sward. It should have four indicator species from this list. Mainland Scotland is a priority, but we hold no records for Orkney and a number of the Western Isles. I'm not looking for a comprehensive list but about a dozen sites for blank local authority areas, so we have better representation across Scotland.

I'm particularly keen to receive potential sites in local authority areas where the Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) list hasn't many grassland sites. I would also be interested in details on upland sites if you think of any that merit special attention.

What do I need? A six-figure grid reference with a name is the basic information required. A line or two on the reason why it's a good example, e.g. diversity of species, rarity of the habitat in the area, or presence of a rare species, would be enormously helpful.

[Eleanor Stamp](#), Grassland Adviser, NatureScot

### Two recent publications of interest to botanists in Ireland

*Aquatic Plants in Ireland - A Photographic Guide* (J. Caffrey, R. Matson and R. O'Briain), published by Inland Fisheries Ireland, was showcased by Ronan Matson at our recent [BSBI Irish Spring Conference](#). An excellent field guide that covers marginal/wetland plants and wetland bryophytes as well as 'true' aquatics, it's available to buy [online](#) in both paperback (€40+postage) and hardback (€75+postage).

Several BSBI members have been involved in writing the National Biodiversity Data Centre's new *Identification guide to Ireland's Regulated Invasive Alien Plant Species* (A. Torsney, E. Cole, D. Finch, M. O'Brien, D. Reidy and N. Smyth). This field-friendly ring-bound guide presents a species account for all regulated plant species in Ireland (i.e. those which are legally required to be controlled to prevent further spread) including photos, ID features, seasonal variation, regulation and impact level listing, mechanisms of reproduction, dispersal and spread. Tables listing key differences of some similar or confusing species are also provided. It costs €14 plus postage and can be purchased from NBDC's [online shop](#).

Finally, with regard to invasive plant species, a reminder that this year it would be greatly appreciated if recorders could provide full record details for invasive plants, particularly those listed as [Invasive Species of Union Concern](#), (including, if possible, 10-figure GPS grid references and notes on population size etc) when adding them to the DDb.

Also: remember that if you come across plants in your garden that look like they have the potential to become invasive and problematic in future, you can report them under the [Plant Alert project](#).

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

### **Searching for null records in the DDb**

Null records can be extremely useful in recording the change or loss of plant populations in your vice-county, and by providing a record of search effort even when unsuccessful, they can help you plan your future recording.

When entering a null record via MapMate, using the quantity '-7', this should pull through into the DDb with 'not found' appearing in the right-hand column when a search returns the record. However, an ordinary search in the DDb will exclude them.

To search for null records, on the search page you need to go to more options > attributes > status (intrinsic), and then set the 'status (intrinsic)' to 'include any status'. Or you can set it to 'looked for but not found' to only return null records, as in this example for Stirlingshire:

[records where vice-county: VC86 and status 'looked for but not found'](#)

For Scotland there are over 600 null records entered in the DDb from 2000 onwards, an important dataset representing a significant recording effort!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

## Wales Annual Meeting

Are you interested in visiting a selection of brownfield/ post-industrial and coalspoil sites in South Wales to check out some of the unusual plants they support? Keen to sharpen your ID skills on Forget-me-nots at a workshop with a national expert? Want to hear about collections, research and conservation at the National Botanic Garden Wales, learn more about Glamorgan's special plants, or find out what Plantlife are up to in Wales? Then you won't want to miss this year's [Wales Annual Meeting & AGM](#), which runs from 5-7 July and is based at Univ. Swansea Bay Campus. Check out the [draft programme](#) and then [here's the booking link](#).

[Julian Woodman](#), Committee for Wales

## BSBI Annual Summer Meeting: one room left!

Have you booked yet for this year's [Annual Summer Meeting](#) in Guernsey? There is one of the pre-booked rooms still available at the Premier Inn, or you can make your own booking. There will be plenty of unusual plants to see on Guernsey, so if you haven't [booked](#) yet, do consider attending the event.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

## The Botanical Society of Scotland (BSS) Talks

The BSS arranges a great programme of monthly botanical talks. They are generally held in RBGE and everyone interested is very welcome! You can get more details of the [BSS lectures programme](#) on the new [BSS website](#).

The talks are recorded and there is a great back catalogue on [BSS YouTube](#). The three most popular recent talks are: [Carrifran Wildwood after two decades](#) by Dr Crinan Alexander; [Reflowering Scotland](#) by Kate Holl and [Seagrass in Scotland](#) by Dr Alistair Lyndon.

Other great talks include [Can nettles swim? The riddle of how plants cross oceans](#) by Dr Richard Milne, [The origins of Oxford Ragwort](#) by Simon Hiscock, Professor of Botany at Oxford Botanic Garden and an update (2023) on [Plant ID Apps](#) – Prof Lyn Jones. Take a look and subscribe!

[Jim McIntosh](#)

## Supporting beginner botanists in Northern Ireland

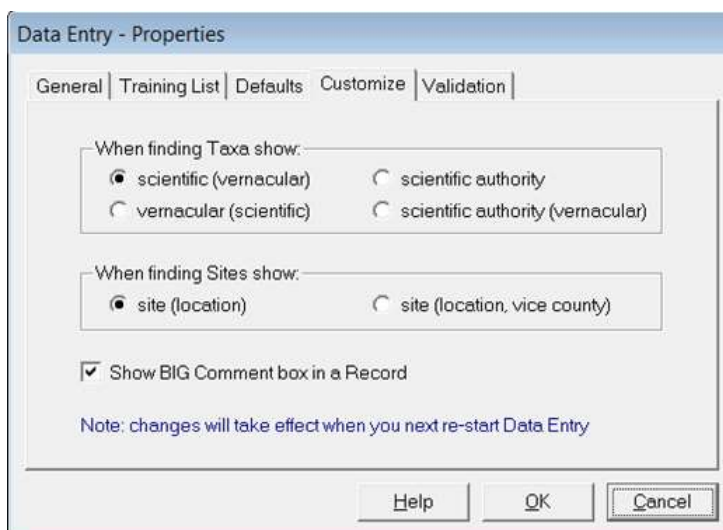
Do you know any beginner botanists in Northern Ireland who would like to get involved in recording but don't yet feel confident enough in their identification skills? A Wildflower ID Workshop at the Ulster Folk Museum on 15 June could be just the boost they need - and they will benefit from a 50% discount if they are already [BSBI members](#).

[Find out more](#) and help us spread the word!

[Jen Farrar](#), BSBI Botanical Skills Officer, Northern Ireland

## Resizing the Comments field for MapMate records

When entering data in MapMate using the Data Entry tool, each record has a Comment field at the bottom. This field can contain more characters than are initially visible – to show the full comments go to Data Entry > Records > Properties and click the Customise tab, then tick the 'Show BIG Comment box in a Record' option to make your Comment field bigger.



There have been some cases recently when importing records from an incorrectly formatted spreadsheet, where the Comments field has included unwanted text. If you can't spot this text in your MapMate, resizing the Comment box like this should help you find it and edit it.

It may be a good idea to untick the 'Show BIG Comment box in a Record' option once you've made your edits, as having all that space to fill can encourage overly long comments!

Jim McIntosh & [Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officers past and present

## Kincardineshire Rare Plant Register (RPR completed)

The completed Kincardineshire RPR is the first of its kind for the vice-county, the culmination of nearly four years' work by David Elston and the late David Welch; it covers an impressive 449 taxa and is available on the recently updated [Kincardineshire webpage](#). You can also [view and download the RPR taxon list](#) on the DDb.

If you are working on a RPR project for your vice-county and would like a draft taxon list uploaded to the DDb, then all you need to do is send a spreadsheet to your Country Officer, with columns for the taxon name and RPR status code (e.g. LS, LR etc.). A third column for vice-county occurrence status (e.g. native, archaeophyte etc.) can be informative but is entirely optional.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

## *X Festulpia* hybrids

I'm looking into records of *Festuca* × *Vulpia* hybrids. If you have a recorder or you are the recorder that has recorded any of these hybrids, please get in touch; email first (Yearbook). If you have a specimen, I would be grateful to have a look at it. If any went to an herbarium, please let me know which one. When recording these hybrids, please try to gather a live specimen and send it on. At present, of particular interest will be *Festuca rubra* × *Vulpia bromoides* and *F. rubra* × *V. myuros*, but also the coastal taxa too. When collecting, please try to collect any potential parent material in very close proximity. Thank you.

[Michael Wilcox](#) – see [BSBI Yearbook](#) for postal address

## County Membership Lists

If, as a BSBI volunteer such as a County Recorder, you need access to members' contact details in your area, we can arrange this. We will need you to read and sign our Volunteer Confidentiality and Data Protection Agreement. For more information see the [membership list](#) page on the password-protected [members' area](#) of the BSBI website.

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Manager

## **Great Seagrass Survey**

If you live near the coast, would you like to combine recording with a swim or a stroll along the beach? You can - by recording seagrass!

A seagrass bed is an amazing underwater habitat which produces oxygen, protects coastlines and absorbs carbon - but we don't know much about it. In fact, we don't even know where most of the seagrass in the UK actually is, so we can't protect or restore this vital habitat. You can help by taking part in the [Great Seagrass Survey](#) to discover the UK's hidden seagrass beds - and because seagrass lives in shallow water, you can take part in the survey while simply strolling on the beach!

[Katherine Knight](#), Science & Survey Officer, Seawilding

## **Recorder eNewsletter**

Recorder eNewsletter is aimed at all BSBI recorders, referees, members and supporters involved with recording. If you have active recorders in your county that you think would appreciate receiving it, then please encourage them to [subscribe to it here](#).

I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest to fellow readers. Recorder eNewsletter is generally published at the beginning of each month so contributions should reach me at the beginning of the preceding week. I'd also be pleased to have feedback.

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Manager