



Recorder eNewsletter

for the botanical recording community

August 2025

Defending against scam emails

We have recently heard from members who have been sent scam emails supposedly from the BSBI President. Scam emails often appear genuine but are faked and will try to trick you to send money urgently, reveal sensitive information or follow a link to a malicious website. Always check the email address is genuine: look for bsbi.org in the address, see the [Who's Who](#) webpage or the Yearbook. Don't reply to or follow links in any message unless you are certain that it is genuine. Please let us know about scam emails you receive that purport to be from BSBI, by either contacting me at julia.hanmer@bsbi.org or sending an email to enquiries@bsbi.org.

[Julia Hanmer](#), BSBI Chief Executive

Discounts for fans of urban plants

The Field Studies Council has just published a new fold-out ID sheet called '[Urban Plants of Scotland and Northern England](#)'. It retails at £4 but if you order it before 31 July, you'll pay only £3.

Secondly, if you're a BSBI member, you can save £25% if you buy a copy of '[Urban Plants](#)' the latest book by BSBI trustee Trevor Dines. Just head to the password-protected [members' area](#) of the BSBI website to find out how to claim your discount.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Targeted Aquatic Plant Project

Six fantastic Targeted Aquatic Plant Project field days have already taken place across Ireland in 2025, thanks to funding from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A further two events on **9th and 10th August in Co. Donegal** are [open for bookings now](#).

[Polly Spencer-Vellacott](#), TAPP Event Co-ordinator

An update on FISCs in Ireland

A very successful trial [FISC assessment](#) was held on 21st July at Galway University campus, where eleven people undertook two laboratory-based ID tests (both with and without reference books) and a two-hour field survey to find out where they might sit on the [Botanical Skills Ladder](#). Big thanks are due to the University of Galway, who very kindly provided the venue; all those who helped with behind-the-scenes organising, selecting and collecting specimens for the tests, assessing the trial candidates and undertaking the definitive survey against which candidates' species lists will be compared; BSBI Training Co-ordinator Chantal Helm for setting the whole thing in motion and preparing for the day, and of course the 'guinea-pigs' themselves, who remained calm and cheerful even in the face of even the most diabolical ID challenges and whose feedback will be invaluable in (hopefully) helping progress this into a regular event in Ireland.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM

According to the Celtic calendar, we are officially moving into the autumnal period of Lughnasa, so it seems appropriate to post a reminder of our annual [Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM](#), which will be held this year on Saturday 4th October at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. This is always a great botanical day out, so keep the date free and do come along if you can. Further details of what to look forward to will be posted nearer the time.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Irish Upland Plants Project

It's not too late to sign up for the [Irish Upland Plants Project](#), if you have not already done so, and head out to the hills to hunt for long-unseen occurrences of a diverse and interesting range of upland plants. Visit the [project webpage](#) for more details of what's involved and how to sign up: whether you're based in Ireland or just holidaying here, we would love your input, however small! There is also a project WhatsApp group, which you can sign up to if you wish, where you can share your photographs, queries and glorious upland moments!

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

VCR Teams

Recognising that there can be many aspects to the role of a Vice-County Recorder - just a reminder that many areas now have VCR teams, where two or several people work together to share the workload and responsibility.

There are many advantages to this approach and different people do not necessarily have to do the same tasks but can split the role as their skills and availability allows. If you're a VCR in Ireland, and feel you'd like to investigate this approach further, or if you feel you have skills you could share with a recorder in your area, please do [get in touch](#).

Also, although an increasing number of records are now being submitted via [iRecord](#), we currently have very few people working to verify iRecord records submitted in Ireland. If this is a role that you feel you could fill for your county, whether you're already a VCR or could work alongside an existing VCR, then please let me know.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Specimens of *Arctium* wanted

Arctium (Burdocks) is better recorded these days but could still be a complex of difficult taxa. There are four native taxa with variable taxonomies and, occasionally, the distinctive *A. tomentosum* (Woolly Burdock), but for the purposes of this note, it more or less follows Stace (2019).

I am looking into certain characters of *Arctium* and would welcome specimens of a main branch of flowering heads or later, preferably with mature seeds. Please also include 2-3 petioles of the lowest (basal) leaves (the actual leaves are not necessary), posted in an A4 envelope with recording details. A photo of a main branch still *in situ* would be useful and any other images would be welcome. It is likely that the genus needs a genetic study in Britain, to tease out some of the complexities. This is a preliminary study, and I'll post in Recorder eNews a bit earlier next year.

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

Publicising exciting botanical discoveries

In the last issue, we invited you to tell us about your botanical finds, so we could spread the word - and you've started doing exactly that!

Tristan Norton, County Recorder for South Hampshire, shared the story of [Hypopitys monotropa \(Yellow Bird's-nest\) refound in a Hampshire Wood after 89 years](#); the press release was picked up by local media.

BSBI Wales Officer Alastair Hotchkiss also shared an update about some of the interesting plant records generated so far by the Priority Plants on SSSIs in Wales project. The [press release](#) generated media coverage across Wales and interest from the BBC.

Several more press releases about the plants that you're finding are also in the pipeline, so keep an eye on the [media page](#) and remember to send your stories about plant finds to me and to your Country Officer, so they can be shared with the wider world: let's put BSBI botanists in the spotlight, where they belong!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Quiz questions wanted!

On the Wednesday evening of the [Annual Summer Meeting](#), we are planning a team quiz. This needs some botanically related questions covering such areas as Scotland, the Melrose area, plants, potluck *etc.* We're therefore asking recorders to send in questions either easy or challenging, whether you are coming to the ASM or not. Booking for the ASM has closed and we're expecting around 55 participants. Please send any questions to Jonathan Shanklin jdsh@bas.ac.uk

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

BSBI website redevelopment

The project to redevelop, spring clean and improve the design of the BSBI website has been taking place over the last few months thanks to the efforts of James Drever and a small staff team, assisted by input from officers and volunteers. The aim is to make the website more user friendly, better at making use of the wealth of resources available and fit for the next era of BSBI activity.

Once initial development of a structure and design has been finished, and content from the current site has been migrated, we will be in touch with all those whose roles have cross-over with the site, including VCRs, committee members, and officers, as well as undertaking general testing, to make sure it is fit for purpose. We also want to encourage suggestions for future development and projects.

So do watch this space and expect to hear more in due course. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to get in touch.

[Sarah Woods](#), Fundraising and Engagement Manager and Website Project lead

Interested in joining the BSBI Skills & Training Committee?

If you have an interest in botanical skills and training, BSBI's [Skills & Training Committee](#) is looking for new members to help BSBI achieve its training-related [strategic goals](#). These include to deliver, encourage or support opportunities for learning, local engagement and participation for people of all botanical skill levels. The committee meets twice a year. Its remit covers oversight of BSBI's training provision, including FISC and Identiplant. Please contact me to find out more or visit [the webpage](#) to read more about the committee and to submit an application.

[Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

County Recorder Resources

Along with the [documentation website](#), the [County Recorder resources page](#) collates the key support materials and guidance vital to the VCR role. If you have an idea of a resource to add to this page, please let me know.

If, as a VCR, 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

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 eNews](#).

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