

BSBI eNews – June 2020

From Jim McIntosh, Senior Country Officer, jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org

BSBI position on the COVID 19 Coronavirus

Please periodically check the [BSBI's notice on COVID-19/ Coronavirus](#), as it is updated regularly.

[Jane Houldsworth](#), Head of Operations

Garden Wildflower Hunt update

We've received almost 700 surveys since the [Garden Wildflower Hunt](#) (GWH) was launched two months ago, and dandelion is still the [most frequently recorded species](#), with 376 records so far. This is likely to change as the season progresses, so we are asking recorders to be sure to submit their observations before Midsummer Day, at which point Kevin Walker plans to start analysing the data and will report back on findings from gardens in early summer. He hopes to address such questions as, what percentage of the British and Irish flora can be found in our gardens.

GWH Phase Two will continue after Midsummer Day and run until the end of the year and it will be interesting to compare which wildflowers are more frequently recorded once dandelion season has ended. Will daisy - currently the second most frequently recorded wildflower in British and Irish gardens - move into the number 1 slot? It has been the most frequently recorded species during every single [New Year Plant Hunt](#) (NYPH). Or how about groundsel, which notched up [518 records during NYPH 2020](#) making it the second most frequently recorded species, but it's languishing at number 10 in the [GWH Top Ten](#) with only 164 records.

Please [submit your GWH records](#) before Midsummer Day (24 June) and watch out for Kevin's GWH Phase One report.

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer, [Kevin Walker](#), Head of Science

Plant Alert in the media

[Plant Alert](#), the joint project between BSBI and University of Coventry to identify potentially invasive garden plants before they 'jump the fence', has been in the media this week, with features in [The Telegraph](#) and the Daily Express (paywalled). Read the [press release here](#) and take part in the project [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

TPP Atlas 2020 Validation

The [Threatened Plants Project](#) (TPP) was a five year (2008-13) project to learn more about 'threatened' species covered by the new [British Red Data List](#). Results were published in [Threatened Plants in Britain and Ireland](#) (2017) and the [full dataset was uploaded to the BSBI Database](#) in March this year. There are about 8,200 Red Data List TPP target species records and 36,000 associated species records.

Could County Recorders please check the [TPP target](#) and [associated species data](#) for their vice-counties. I've already spotted and corrected a grid reference that I wrote down incorrectly on the TPP form and at least one species name that the digitiser mis-interpreted due to dodgy handwriting (*Hypochaeris maculata* entered instead of *H. radicata*!). When viewed in the DDb, TPP occurrence records have an additional tab listing the site meta-data and including a link to a scanned copy of the original recording form, which can be useful to refer back to if there are transcription errors.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

Conservation Status Checklists in the DDb

Most users of the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) will have discovered that they can use the DDb to search for records using GB Red Data List or National Status (i.e. Nationally Rare or Nationally Scarce) checklists. Look at this example of a search for all National Status (i.e. [Nationally Rare and Nationally Scarce](#)) species or you can just search for [Nationally Rare](#) OR [Nationally Scarce](#) species.

But you can also view the actual checklists themselves. To do that simply go to the DDb (no need to login even), Tools > [Checklists](#) and scroll down to the Conservation Status checklists.

As well as National Status, you will see that GB, Irish, English & Welsh Red Data lists plus various schedules of legally protected species are available. Having clicked the checklist you'd like to view, click the "Items" tab and then on the "Taxon" header to sort. You can also download to a spreadsheet.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

Memory Map

[Memory Map](#) is a great app for downloading GPS routes, viewing and printing OS maps and many County Recorders use it with a 1:25,000 map of their vice-county. However, just like MapMate, moving it to a new computer is not always straight forward. (See the [BSBI MapMate support](#) site for guidance on how to move MapMate).

To migrate Memory Map:

- First, update the version of Memory Map on your old computer (Web > Check for updates...)
- Install Memory Map on the new computer following [Memory Map's guidance](#)
- Copy your maps from any DVD(s) to the newly installed C:\Maps_v5 folder and
- Then copy the "Map Overlays" folder in Documents on your old computer and paste it, completely replacing that on your new machine.
- You'll need to visit licence management. So, in Memory Map, Help > Licence management ... and "Sign in..." and then select GPS features and Printing in turn and "Activate" them.
- You should be able to recover any maps you have previously bought and downloaded from the Digital Map Store - go to "Online services" and click "My Online Maps".

I previously supplied Scottish Recorders with VC and SSSI boundaries for displaying in Memory Map. It is easy to lose them, so if you need a new copy let me know.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

Field Meetings

Please look at our [news](#) and [events](#) pages for the status of individual meetings. Lockdown is beginning to ease in Britain and Ireland in varying ways across the countries so there are now differences in what

is and isn't permitted in each. [BSBI's official notice](#) covers this and strongly recommends that individuals look at the latest guidance for their country before making any plans.

While following the rules in England, during daily exercise I have made a few surprising finds in my local area. This includes my first record of *Valeriana officinalis* (Common Valerian) in Cambridge city, apparently since 1860 (and unusually growing on an old wall) and of *Spergula arvensis* (Corn Spurrey) since 2004.

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

Irish Grasslands Project

We're launching a brand-new project to increase awareness of Irish semi-natural grasslands and help to improve the identification skills needed to record them. We're hoping this will turn into a multi-year project, but for this summer we're sticking with helping recorders and members get a good grounding in the basics. This will include:

- 5 free online training courses including an introduction to grass identification, vegetative grass identification (2 parts), an introduction to sedges, and an introduction to Annex I grassland habitats. Further details are available on the [Irish Grasslands Project webpage](#).
- A downloadable pdf resource to help with identifying key species of grasses, rushes, sedges, and forbs which are indicators for Annex I grassland habitats. We'll be asking for photo contributions soon from anyone willing to help!
- "Grass of the week" posts by Jessica Hamilton on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to highlight some of our fantastic grass species. You'll be able to follow along on twitter using the hashtags #IrishGrasslandProject and #IrishGrassoftheWeek

Keep an eye on our new [Irish Grasslands Project webpage](#) for all the details. Huge thanks to NPWS and CEDaR for funding this project.

[Sarah Pierce](#), Ireland Officer

Fern identification: online ID course for beginners

Botanist and BSBI member Joshua Styles followed his recent, very popular, online [dandelion ID](#) course (which attracted more than 300 participants) with a 'fern ID for beginners' course, delivered live via Zoom and recorded on video (lasts around one hour). Joshua charged £7 per person for the fern ID course and donated all proceeds to BSBI, raising more than £1000 for our training and outreach programmes - thank you Joshua!

Joshua is now offering BSBI members a video link to his fern ID course at a reduced rate of £5 per person and again, all proceeds will go to BSBI. Details of how to access and pay for the link (which will be unique to you) are available via our new [Fern Identification page](#) which also has links to BSBI plant cribs for ferns and to relevant galleries and websites.

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

BSBI YouTube channel: our first video!

BSBI has just set up a [YouTube channel](#) so we can publish our own videos and also point people to interesting botanical videos produced by others. Our first in-house production is [this short video](#) about the plants and other wildlife found in a Northants. water-meadow, produced at no expense

whatsoever (using free software and borrowed equipment) by BSBI England Officer Pete Stroh. It's his first ever attempt at making a video but we think it captures the sights and sounds of this beautiful site really well!

We hope that lots of you will subscribe to the BSBI YouTube channel (it's free!). If you have spotted any botanical videos on YouTube which you think might interest fellow botanists, please let us know and we'll add them to a [playlist](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

English Botanical News

I am pleased to announce that the [first issue of English Botanical News](#) is now available [on the BSBI website](#). This first issue runs to 84 pages, is fully illustrated and includes reports of the England Annual Meeting, County Recordors' Zoom meetings, vice-county annual reports, new and interesting county finds and hints and tips. I would welcome contributions for future issues and also a volunteer editor!

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Chair of the Committee for England

BSBI Periodicals

We've introduced a handy menu side-bar on the webpages for many of our [periodicals](#) so you can go straight to the title of your choice. We've included current periodicals such as [British & Irish Botany](#) and our country newsletters: there are four of them now that we can welcome [English Botanical News](#) (see above) to the fold. We've also included the webpages for former/ archived periodicals such as [New Journal of Botany](#), [Watsonia](#) and [Botanical Exchange Club reports](#). For *BSBI News*, there's an option to click on the [archive for back issues](#) or go straight to the [BSBI News page](#) and find out more about the current issue, although recent issues remain, as always, in the password-protected members-only area of the website. And of course you'll find a link to the [BSBI eNews page](#) on the new menu so it's easier than ever to access current and back issues of this periodical!

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

British & Irish Botany: print copies

Although [British & Irish Botany](#) was always intended as an online publication, we have received enquiries from readers who would be interested in having print copies of the journal. There is an option for individuals or institutions to receive a print version of the four issues which comprise Volume One (2019) of *British & Irish Botany*, bound and in a cover, for £25 plus P&P but we can only do this if enough people request this option. To express an interest, please email gwynn.ellis@bsbi.org

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

Index to BSBI News #121-130

Another helpful resource for BSBI members wanting a quick and easy way to find the articles they want in [back issues of BSBI News](#): Gwynn Ellis has produced an Index to issues #121-130. Thank you, Gwynn! You'll find the Index in the password-protected [members-only area of the BSBI website](#). Email me if you've forgotten your password.

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

BSBI Vice-County Annual Reports for 2019

Thanks again to everyone who submitted an Annual Report for 2019 and completed the questionnaire. We have just uploaded the collated [English](#) reports and along with the [Irish](#), [Welsh](#) & [Scottish](#) reports they appear on the BSBI country webpages. The English reports also appear in the newly published English Botanical News.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

Also new on the BSBI website in May...

- The [Plant ID: getting started](#) page has been updated with some new resources. There are crib sheets produced by Moira O'Donnell to help people get started with identifying [buttercups](#), [speedwells](#), [strawberries](#) and [violets](#). There's also a link to a new [Plant ID for Beginners online key](#) by Richard Milne.
- The [Activities 2020 page](#) was updated to point people towards more options from BSBI and partners for botanical engagement under lockdown, such as the [spittlebug survey](#).
- FISC tests scheduled to take place in Shrewsbury this year have all been cancelled – more info on the [FISC page](#). Participants who booked a FISC this year are encouraged to check with the FISC centre nearer the time.
- There are new GiftAid forms on the [Join Us page](#): GiftAid makes it possible for any money you give to BSBI – whether it's your annual membership subscription or a donation – to go even further, so if you are a UK tax-payer, please do consider filling in a GiftAid form.
- County pages and links for Norfolk, Cheshire and Brecknock were updated with the latest email contacts, photos of some top plant finds, newsletters or lists of axiophytes. Links to all county pages and updated contact details for County Recorders are available via the [Local Botany page](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in May

We promoted [Josh Styles' forthcoming fern ID workshop](#) – this has now taken place and raised over £1000 for BSBI; we put out a call for botanists to [take part in the national spittlebug survey](#), whether in their gardens or during permitted exercise; BSBI President Lynne Farrell posted about her [hunt for Fingered Sedge *Carex digitata*](#) in her local area, carried out while following [BSBI guidance around Covid-19](#) and social distancing; and [Kevin Walker's Wildflower of the Month for May](#) was Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

A link to BSBI eNews is sent out to 369 subscribers, including Recorders, Referees, staff, committee members and ordinary members. A total of 162 County Recorders subscribe (67 in England, 44 in Scotland, 35 in Ireland and 15 in Wales). But it is freely available to all on the [BSBI eNews](#) page of the BSBI website. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. BSBI eNews is normally published on, or near, the last Friday of each month so contributions should ideally reach me at least two days before that. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles appearing in BSBI eNews.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer