

BSBI eNews – July 2019

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

New Ireland Officer

Hello everyone! I know Jim introduced me in the last BSBI eNews, but I wanted to say hello myself. I'm settling in well and will even make it out to my first field meeting this weekend (6 July in Youghal, if you want to join us!). I've had a chance to meet a few Committee for Ireland folks and VCRs so far, and am hoping to meet many more at the Irish Annual Meeting and AGM on 21 September at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

If you'd like to get in touch with me you can email sarah.pierce@bsbi.org or call/text +353 87 257 8763. My usual days of work will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, but will vary depending on events and meetings. I'll be based at home in Cork, but usually will be at NBG, Dublin the first Tuesday of every month and will travel there and elsewhere around Ireland as needed. I look forward to working with you all and hope to meet soon!

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Aquatic Plant Project - Irish Midlands Dates

The Aquatic Plant Project, funded by the Irish National Parks and Wildlife Service, is now underway. It kicked off on 22 June with a training day led by Lynda Weekes at Lavistown Study Centre, Co. Kilkenny. This was followed by a field day at Cleggan, Co. Galway, led by Cillian Roden, where people had the chance to see nearly all the aquatic species found in Ireland. We are currently in the midst of 9 field training days in the northwest of Ireland led by Nick Stewart, covering counties Donegal, Sligo and Mayo. So far nearly 50 people have taken part in the project!



Aquatic Plant Project participants, Lavistown, in June

Want to learn more about aquatics? Join us for a day or more in the field with Nick Stewart! In August we'll be holding a series of field-based training and recording days in the Irish Midlands, and plans are underway for Northern Ireland in September thanks to additional funding from CEDaR. Details and booking information will be on the webpage soon (<https://bsbi.org/aquatic-plant-project>), or contact Sarah Pierce at sarah.pierce@bsbi.org if you'd like to be emailed as soon as booking opens. For more general information about the Aquatic Plant Project, contact [Paul Green](#).

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Plant Alert

BSBI has launched a new survey in collaboration with [Dr Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz](#) from the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University. In contrast to our usual recording,

[PlantAlert](#) is a survey of horticultural taxa proliferating in gardens. The aim is to identify potentially invasive alien plants before they become a problem in the wider environment. We are asking gardeners across Britain and Ireland to report taxa that are growing out of control in garden situations - plants that might later escape into the countryside. We hope that results from this long-term project can help guide efforts to contain future problem aliens.

In the short term, a low volume of records from the project will appear in the BSBI Database, but the data will be clearly marked and won't be included on distribution maps. We'll validate the records centrally. For more information please visit this [BSBI project page](#). To contribute records, read more background and view results so far, please go to [plantalert.org](#).

[Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

MapMate

At this crucial point in Atlas 2020, it is more important than ever to back-up after every data entry session. How many records have you entered since your last back-up and how would you like to have to re-enter them? There are two ways to back-up: the first is to create a back-up copy of your MapMate data using the Replicator and save it to the MapMate server and the second is to simply copy your entire My MapMate folder (in Documents) onto an external drive. Both very simple and easy to do. There was a detailed article on how on back-up in the [March edition of BSBI eNews](#).

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Field Meetings

I understand some of the remaining field meetings are rather slow to book up. Do please support Atlas recording field meetings as they make a big contribution the project – especially if well attended.

If you are planning to join a field meeting, make sure that you have read the Guidance to Participants on [Field Meetings](#) webpage. We do ask all those planning to join a national meeting to book in advance and not to just turn up as space may be limited. At local level, things can be more flexible and at most meetings I welcome spur of the moment participants. At one or two sites the landowner may restrict numbers, so it is always wise to check in advance. National and local meetings are listed in the [BSBI meetings diary](#). If you would like your local meetings added let me know where they are.

We like to publish accounts of the national meetings in the BSBI Yearbook, and it is worthwhile writing them whilst the meeting is still fresh in the mind. So far I've received one account (thanks v.c.3!), so despite the busy field season please try and get yours completed and sent to [Trevor James](#) and [me](#).

The deadline for listing future meetings in the Yearbook usually comes sooner than expected, so now is the time to start thinking about what you might offer to members next year. Plans are still being developed for what BSBI will collectively study post Atlas 2020, and they may be agreed too late to arrange meetings in time for the Yearbook. There will however still be interesting places to go and record – new site records always turn up even in well botanised locations and a group meeting increases the chances.

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

Acknowledging record contributors

I know everyone is really busy but it would be great if County Recorders could find time to thank people who contribute records. There is nothing more dispiriting for contributors to never get a reply. Conversely helpful feedback and kind words might enthuse and encourage the next generation of botanists! So, it is always time well spent.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

BSBI Scottish Botanists' Conference

The 2019 Scottish Botanists' Conference will be held on Saturday the 2nd November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and will have a great mix of talks, mini-workshops, posters and exhibits. Our main speaker will be Prof Richard Crawford on *Plants at the margin in a changing climate*. Everybody welcome! Put the date in your diary and look out for a flyer in the September issue of *BSBI News*.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Brachypodium pinnatum / *rupestre* – Tor Grasses

Distinguishing these taxa is relatively difficult as *B. rupestre* can have hairy spikelets and variable amounts of prickly hairs between the ribs (even within the same colony), see Stace, 2019. Though, in general, habitat preferences are useful - except perhaps where introduced/alien.

If you are unsure, please collect 2-3 stems, from base, of flowering or fruiting plants and I would be pleased to help. Send them to the address below. They can be roughly folded into an A4 envelope with no special requirements, though fresh material in a plastic bag is more useful. Flowering plants are particularly useful in order to look for putative hybrids, in which case it would be worth providing 10 fig grid refs with any specimens.

M. Wilcox – 43 Roundwood Glen, Greengates, Bradford, BD10 0HW, W Yorkshire.

michaelpw22@hotmail.com

Record a Plant form

The new [Record a Plant form](#), launched earlier this year, is proving very popular. There were two main aims behind the setting up of the form: for novice recorders, we wanted to make it easier to get started with plant recording and to raise awareness of BSBI resources such as aids to ID, local group activity and the advantages of BSBI membership; and for County Recorders, we tried to ensure that records forwarded to them would have the relevant information (location/ grid ref, date etc.) and, wherever possible, be correctly identified. We are always looking at ways to streamline the process and improve the guidance on the Record a Plant [webpage](#) so would be very glad to hear feedback from users (whether novices or more experienced recorders) and also from our network of County Recorders.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Photographic Competition

Remember to take your camera with you when you are out and about this summer and take photographs of plants for the BSBI Photographic Competition. The two 2019 categories are 1) Natives and 2) Aliens so that should give you plenty scope! [More...](#)

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

New on the BSBI website in June

- The Cambridgeshire Rare Plant Register is now available on the [RPR webpage](#) and the latest RPR for East Perthshire can be downloaded from the [Perthshire page](#).
- County pages for Lanarkshire, Clyde Islands and Co. Down were updated with new contact details, reports on recent meetings etc. Link to all the county webpages via the [Local Botany page](#) where you will also find the interactive map for Britain & Ireland.
- The [Plant Alert webpage](#) went live (see above) with links through to the new Plant Alert website.
- The [Aquatic Plant Project](#) was updated and now links straight through to online booking forms for forthcoming training sessions.
- The [Plant Identification page](#) features a link to a new draft *Vegetative Key to Wetland Plants*, developed by John Poland in conjunction with the Freshwater Habitats Trust.
- [Obituaries](#) for the following botanists have been uploaded: Ken Butler; Gill Gent; Rod Stern; Geoffrey Wilmore; and Rob Wilson.
- A corrected *Anthyllis* crib was uploaded to the [Plant Crib page](#)
- The [Taxon Lists webpage](#) was updated to include links to the [World Flora Online](#) and the [Euro+Med PlantBase](#)

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in June

We encouraged you to [record observations of spittle on wild plants](#), with the aim of understanding more about factors contributing to the likelihood of the plant pathogen *Xylella fastidiosa* gaining a foothold in the UK; we invited you to [nominate an outstanding wildlife recorder](#) in the annual NBN awards; and we looked at [downy birch](#), an ingredient in Byron's Gin. Our June report from a recipient of a BSBI Training Grant featured [Huw's account](#) of the 'Difficult Higher Plants' course he was able to attend thanks to his grant; we reported on the launch of the [Aquatic Plant Project](#) in Ireland (see above); and we featured a [full-length interview with Mike Waller](#), Lesser Butterfly Orchid Species Recovery Project Officer, and invited you to submit records of this lovely orchid, classified as Vulnerable on the GB Red List.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer