

## Recording methods for vascular plants in Midlothian (VC 83)

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### General recording methods

A typical recording excursion is a walk, making a list of the plants you see as you go, and noting their location details. For a particular site the location details are the site name and an O.S. grid reference. To record a site, walk through all the habitats included in the site, and make a separate plant list for each km. square (monad) through which the site runs. A small site may be present in only one monad, yielding one plant list, but larger sites may cover several monads and so yield several lists. For common plants, record the location details as the site-name and the 4-figure O.S. grid reference of the monad. For uncommon plants, the site-name and a 6-, 8- or even 10-figure grid reference should be noted, according to rarity. This facilitates the re-finding of rare plants in the future. If the site is named on the O.S. 1: 25,000 map, use that name and relevant grid reference(s) for your location details. If the site is not named, or the excursion is aiming to record a monad rather than a site, the following procedure can be used.

For a field excursion aiming to record a monad (or an un-named site), it may not be obvious what site-name to give it. If it is near a place, with place-name 'X', I often choose a site-name such as 'X, near', 'X area', 'X vicinity', or 'X, east of' (or another compass point according to where 'X' is). If place 'X' is included in the area recorded, I might choose a site-name such as 'X & vicinity' or 'X & area', or 'X' monad. Grid references for common and uncommon plants are used as noted in the above paragraph.

Habitat details should be recorded for the sites visited, and also (if time) anything significant about a particular species or plant, such as abundance, and whether flowering or fruiting. It is important also to note whether the species might have been deliberately planted rather than a natural occurrence. Planted species are not eligible for inclusion in the Rare Plant Register (see below).

After each excursion it is helpful to draw a map of the recording route so that the same route can be repeated on future visits, or a different route used if different parts of a site or a square are to be explored. To record a site or a monad as fully as possible, more than one visit will be required to do this. An early- and a late-season visit should catch most species (e.g. May, and then August or September). Ideally, a mid-season visit could be included too.

### Method for the next edition of the Rare Plant Register for VC 83

Scarce or rare plants may be discovered during your field excursions, and these records will be included in the next edition of the Rare Plant Register (RPR), if the species is a **self-sown and established native or archaeophyte**. The latter is an

alien introduced before AD 1500, and long-established in the British or Irish flora. As well as new discoveries, searches should also be made for previously-recorded, scarce or rare natives and archaeophytes, to see if they are still extant. All native and archaeophyte species with international or national conservation status, which occur in Midlothian, are included in the RPR whether or not they are scarce or rare in the Vice-county. Local rarity is based on the number of sites a species has occupied in VC 83 from 1987 to date (1-3 sites, rare; 4-10 sites, scarce; more than 10 sites, too common for the RPR, but included if the species has international or national conservation status). Most locally scarce or rare natives and archaeophytes are included in the RPR. The first edition of the RPR was published in the spring of 2014. The second edition has been compiled in 2020, after the completion of data-gathering at the end of 2019 for the next Atlas of the British and Irish Flora.

**N.B.** Native species or archaeophytes which have been deliberately planted are not eligible to be included in the RPR, unless a re-introduction or conservation scheme is in progress, which requires record or comment. Alien species introduced since AD 1500 (neophytes) and aliens which don't persist (casuals) are also ineligible, even though they may be scarce or rare.

### **Record submissions**

It is convenient if records are entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then sent as an e-mail attachment to the BSBI recorder for VC 83. A spreadsheet with suitable column headings is available via a link from the Midlothian webpage. If you have any difficulties with this mode of record submission, please contact the VC recorder (e-mail address linked to this webpage).

Thank you, and enjoy yourselves.  
Barbara Sumner, 2020.