



Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

BSBI New Year Plant Hunt 2025

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Dan Ryan and his six-year old daughter Ada examine Three-Cornered Leek during one of their 2025 New Year Plant Hunts in Cornwall

Image courtesy of Dan Ryan

Thousands of people across Britain and Ireland took part in the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland's fourteenth [New Year Plant Hunt](#), which ran from 29 December 2024 to 1 January 2025. This annual event encourages plant lovers, whether seasoned nature enthusiasts or people who are curious about the world around them, to go out and hunt for wild or naturalised plants in bloom in midwinter. The data collected by these intrepid plant hunters are providing us with robust evidence of how our wild plants are responding to a rapidly changing climate, and the implications this may have for all our wildlife.

Around 3,000 citizen scientists, armed with [spotter sheets](#) of the species most likely to be found in their area and hunting solo, with family and friends, or as part of a series of organised [group hunts](#) across Britain and Ireland, submitted almost 25,000 individual plant records. They used the BSBI recording app, launched in Summer 2024, to upload their records. Their lists varied from 97 species recorded in Swanage to single observations of Gorse blooming in frosty Scottish glens.

Daisy was the most frequently recorded plant, with 1,499 observations from Guernsey to Westray in the Orkney Islands. As in previous years, Dandelion and Groundsel completed the 'Top Three' – each was recorded more than one thousand times. In total, 647 different species were recorded in flower, the third highest total in the event's history. The [homepage](#) of the New Year Plant Hunt Results website features an interactive map, and a list of Longest Lists, allowing everyone to view the results of surveys across Britain and Ireland. Viewers can also filter by country and by year, allowing them to compare results going back to 2017. More details about the New Year Plant Hunt methodology, history and the results from previous years can be found via the links on the [New Year Plant Hunt archive page](#).

340 of the 647 species (52%) were flowering late compared to around a quarter flowering early and a quarter as expected, being all-year-rounders or winter specialists. 312 of the 647 species (48%) were native rather than alien. These proportions are similar to previous years. The [species 2025 page](#) on the [New Year Plant Hunt Results website](#) now features information about status (native/neophyte/ archaeophyte) and more information about these terms can be found in the [Definitions page](#) on the BSBI website. The Results website also specifies whether each of the species recorded was flowering early, late or as expected.

As in previous years, coastal locations, which are less subject to late frosts, yielded longer lists, as did southern vs northern locations. Urban areas also tended to have more non-native species in flower than rural areas, as there are more sheltered and disturbed places with warm microclimates where alien plants can thrive: the 'heat-island' effect.

Surprising finds included:

- Little-Robin, a wild Geranium species whose stronghold is in Cornwall, blooming in downtown Peterborough, while Bur Chervil, frequent in East Anglia, was found blooming in Cornwall;
- Annual Buttonweed, a rare non-native plant, flowering in North Lincolnshire – only the second record for the county;

- Northern Dead-nettle flowering near Inverness (the first time it had ever been seen in that 2km x 2km grid square);
- Early Virgin's-bower, a garden plant which had "jumped the garden fence" and self-seeded onto a wall in Hull, was flowering very early indeed – at New Year! – and this was also the most northerly naturalised (rather than planted) record of this plant in Britain.

More information about the 647 species recorded during the New Year Plant Hunt, and thousands more species recorded over the years across Britain and Ireland, including flowering times, altitudinal records, conservation status and more, can be found by visiting the [Plant Atlas 2020 website](#).

Variations across Britain and Ireland

The species recorded this year were very similar to previous years – Common Chickweed was the only species to appear in this year's Top Twenty compared to last year's – and there was a high degree of uniformity across Britain and Ireland. More details can be found via the New Year Plant Hunt Results website but below we summarise participation across the countries.

Ireland:

In the Republic, 133 surveys were carried out, comprising 1,625 records of 198 different species. and the longest list was from Co. Wexford (69 species). In Northern Ireland, there were 44 surveys, comprising 410 records of 106 different species. The longest list was from Portaferry (57 species). Dandelion, rather than Daisy, was the most frequently recorded species (112 records in the Republic and 35 in Northern Ireland)

Scotland:

181 surveys were carried out, comprising 1,336 records of 174 different species. Daisy was the most frequently recorded plant (123 records) and the longest list was from Coldingham (53 species)

Wales:

114 surveys were carried out, comprising 1,221 records of 178 different species. Daisy was the most frequently recorded species (80 records) and the longest list was from Glamorgan Botany Group (72 species).

In Conclusion/ Next steps

Once again, New Year Plant Hunt results show how our weather is changing, impacting flowering times and other wildlife - birds, bees, butterflies, and a wide range of pollinators - that depend on our wild plants. Climate change is the chief suspect, but to be certain we'll need more data, collected by our wonderful members and citizen scientists, at other times of the year. We are therefore planning to extend the project across the whole year, to gain a better understanding of the full impact of changing weather patterns. More details will be available via the [BSBI website](#) in due course.

Thanks

With thousands of people now taking part in the New Year Plant Hunt, the Support Team has become more important than ever, so our thanks go to volunteers Astrid, Azeem, Carina, Ella, Harjivan, Isabelle, Jabin, Jo, Joni, Lindsay-Anne, Moira, Nancy and Toby who worked alongside BSBI staff members Chantal, James D., Jen, Matt, Sam and Sarah, helping with ID enquiries, entering data, answering emails and engaging with plant hunters on social media. Special thanks go to BSBI Database Officer Tom Humphrey, for sterling work devising the BSBI recording app and being on hand throughout the Hunt to advise Plant Hunters on its use.

We would also like to thank our [County Recorders](#), the organisers of group hunts, and everyone who has contributed to the success of New Year Plant Hunt, in 2025 and since its inception in 2012.