

Kent Rare Plant Register: Appendix B

'Probably extinct' Kent plants



Limonium humile collected by J.T.B. Syme
at Whitstable, 1869.



Cuscuta europaea collected by R.L. Baker
at Folkestone, 1873

Reproduced from Herbaria@Home, specimen in University of Birmingham Herbarium

Compiled by Geoffrey Kitchener
Issue date: February 2025

This is a list of plants which would have been in the Kent rare plant register¹ if still present in the county (vice counties 15 and 16), together with others treated as doubtful. They are listed under three headings:

Part 1: those which have not been seen in the wild in the county since 1970, in consequence of which it is reasonable to assume that they will not be seen again. They might be regarded as locally 'extinct', although this is a term which has attracted some critical comment.

Part 2: those for which record has been traced since 1970, and which could be locally 'extinct' but which may still persist or may be capable of reappearing, and for which there is therefore potential for rediscovery.

Part 3: those where there is enough doubt as regards their original identification, location or native status that it would not have been reasonable to include them in the rare plant register in any event. It is proposed, where there is some uncertainty about native status, to operate on the presumption that it is better to include the taxon in the register, so as to encourage gathering data which may help define the extent of uncertainty.

Details are given, where practicable, for the last record which has been identified. Some of these last records were in places where the plant had not been previously recorded and so might be suspect, but are incapable of verification now if specimens were not retained.

¹ The rare plant register focuses on plants which are considered to be native to Kent but does not discount those which are native elsewhere and have reached Kent by 'natural' means. Nor does it discount ancient introductions which are regarded as having the status of archaeophytes, so all references to "native" plants are to be regarded as including archaeophytes. An archaeophyte is a plant which was introduced by man (or arrived naturally from an area in which it was present as an introduction) and became naturalised before AD 1500.

Part 1
'Extinct' native taxa
(not seen in the wild since 1970)

- Achillea maritima* (= *Otanthus maritimus*, Cottonweed): before 1778. It is no longer found in Britain.
- Aegonychon purpureocaeruleum* (*Lithospermum purpureo-caeruleum*) (Purple Gromwell): 1871 as a (probable) native, from Darenth Wood, near the middle of the wood, c. 150yds left of Dartford-Stone public path, flowering only second year after coppicing; a 1910 record from Bearsted was considered by Francis Rose to be an escape.
- Alchemilla glabra* (Smooth Lady's-mantle): 1951, R.A. Graham at alluvial meadow, Birling Marshes, TQ6960.
- Arnoseris minima* (Lamb's Succory): 1845, Fletcher at Bexley Heath; probably extinct in the British Isles.
- Atriplex pedunculata* (Pedunculate Sea-purslane): 1924, E. Graham at Pegwell Bay, TR 346 638 (or perhaps 1930, A.J. Wilmott at Ebbsfleet, Pegwell Bay, according to Francis Rose).
- Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort): before 1899 at Dover, record from the Rev. C.H. Fielding accepted by Hanbury & Marshall (1899) with hesitation.
- Asplenium obovatum* (Lanceolate Spleenwort): 1859, Tunbridge Wells; extinct there at least by c.1885.
- Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort): In West Kent, 1960, F.R. Browning at Bedgebury Pinetum. In East Kent, 1947, F. Rose at the top of Detling Hill, in pasture on the east side of the A249 behind a low flint wall, TQ804587. The frontage may have been affected by A249 dualling and the site appears to have been developed in the 1990s; adjoining land is bramble-dominated.
- Bromus interruptus* (Interrupted Brome): 1942, W. Howell at Kelsey Park, Beckenham, TQ3769; considered extinct in the wild in the UK. Sown deliberately at Ranscombe Farm, 2015, and since established.
- Bupleurum rotundifolium* (Thorow-wax): East Kent, 1950 or later, TQ94 in BSBI database; West Kent, 1906 L.C.C. Botany Dept at Eynsford, although the species almost certainly persisted longer in the latter area; and a casual was seen, probably from a wild flower seed mix, at Grosvenor & Hilbert Parks, Tunbridge Wells in 2015; also escapes from cultivation in arable near Patricbourne in 2016, onto an Eynsford pavement in 2018 and on a spoil heap at Oare, 2019.
- Calamagrostis canescens* (Purple Small-reed): 1967, R. English at TQ 930 305, north of Chapel Bank.
- Campanula patula* (Spreading Bellflower): before 1899; the last dated record appears to have been published in 1821, a specimen having been known from Cobham Park dated 1815.
- Carex depauperata* (Starved Wood-sedge): 1830, Charlton Wood, at the back of Charlton Church, since built over. The Species Recovery Trust (2025) has proposed its 'reintroduction'.
- Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge): East Kent, 1968, R.M. Burton and other LNHS members at Dungeness, between old coastguard cottages and main Open Pits; loss probably due to falling water levels and growth of *Salix cinerea*. A more recent claimed West Kent occurrence is unconfirmed and unlikely.
- Carex viridula* Small-fruited Yellow-sedge): 1947, Dungeness; mentioned in Philp (2010) which states that other records are in error (notwithstanding that A.M. Massee in the December 1964 *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* wrote as though it were currently present on the bare shingle shore of the north-east side of Open Pit 3). However, in the Oxford herbarium of Dillenius (d. 1747) is a specimen from Shooters Hill det. by C.G. Druce as *C. oederi* Retz., probably with the intention of referring to what is currently *C. demissa*; but (*fide* D. Pearman) this is true *C. oederi* (now *C. viridula*).
- Cephalanthera rubra* (Red Helleborine): 1919, vouched for by T.W. Attenborough near Wye (there have been subsequent reports but not of sufficient authority; nor has there been Kent-collected material at any time).
- Colchicum autumnale* (Meadow Saffron): as a probable native, seen in 1825 (moist field between Shooter's Hill and Plumstead Common, J.T. Cooper) and probably extinct by 1899; subsequent casual records (e.g. 3 plants on New Hythe Marshes, 1931 – *Rochester Naturalist* 132 (1932) p. 137) are taken to be non-native.
- Cuscuta europaea* (Greater Dodder): W Kent, 1902 (Lord Justice James Stirling near Combwell); E. Kent, 1873 (R.L. Baker at Folkestone).
- Cynoglossum germanicum* (Green Hound's-tongue): 1930, F. Forsyth, in a shaw south of Crookham Wood Snodland (unconfirmed); abundant presence near Trottscliffe / Ryarsh is from a deliberate 1958 introduction by F. Rose, and it has spread c. 1km away from original introduction site; presence at Halstead (2016-22) is a garden escape.
- Damasonium alisma* (Starfruit): W. Kent, c.1890 (Tucker's Pond, Angley Wood, Dr. Ranger); E. Kent, 1802 (between Sandgate and Folkestone, Dillwyn; lost by 1829).
- Dryopteris cristata* (Crested Buckler-fern): 1962, F. Rose, Dungeness, almost certainly pit no. 6 in TR0618, where it had been known in the 1950s.
- Echinophora spinosa*: disappeared before 1777, and has been long excluded from British Floras as extinct in the British Isles.
- Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort): 1948, F. Rose at Marshall's Lake, Bedgebury, TQ7233.
- Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass): either 1847 (Harringe near Sellindge, Mrs Robinson) or (date unknown) before 1899 (W.R. Jeffrey at Willesborough Lees – although this record was doubted by Francis Rose).
- Eriophorum vaginatum* (Hare's-tail Cottongrass): before 1884, as a native (Tunbridge Wells, probably Fisher's Castle).

Erodium aethiopicum (*E. lebelii*) (Sticky Stork's-bill): E Kent 1955 (P.H. Morgan at Sandwich, TR355 573); W Kent -a casual on soil banks at Green Street Green Common, TQ5770, was reported by J.R. Palmer for 22/06/2004 ('fls. >5mm across; lvs, stems, sepals, pedicels a mass of glandular hairs, sticky').

Erophila majuscula (Hairy Whitlowgrass): 1924, D.G. Catchside at Keston Common. Records in 2018 reported for two W Kent sites were withdrawn.

Euphorbia peplis (Purple Spurge): 1900, J. Roffey between Deal and Sandwich, perhaps St George's golf links; probably extinct in the British Isles.

Filago lutescens (Red-tipped Cudweed): E Kent 1963 (E.G. Philp near railway bridge at Tutt Hill north of Hothfield, TQ 973 468 - M20 since constructed here). W Kent: known at western edge of Farningham Wood until 1959.

Gagea lutea (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem): 1898, although poor status – L. Kitching, running wild in garden at Bockhill, TR3745.

Galeopsis segetum (Downy Hemp-nettle): 1836, Daniel Cooper at Darenth Wood; probably extinct in the British Isles.

Genista pilosa (Hairy Greenweed): 1831, G.E. Smith, south of road from Wrotham Heath to Ightham, uphill towards mill (cf. road called Windmill Hill).

Gentiana pneumonanthe (Marsh Gentian): 1896, Sir James Stirling at Goudhurst (actually Combwell Wood, Bedgebury).

Hammarbya paludosa (Bog Orchid): before 1899, probably after 1891, at Friezley Bog, Cranbrook.

Hordelymus europaeus (Wood Barley): 1956, F. Rose in beechwood east of the road at Riverhill, Sevenoaks, TQ5451 or TQ5452.

Hymenophyllum tunbrigense (Tunbridge Filmy-fern): before 1899, from Penshurst (?on the sandrocks at Redleaf) and Tunbridge Wells. The latter site was probably at Hungershall Rocks, within a few hundred yards from High Rocks, but in vc 16 (which they are not). Material from Eridge Rocks was transplanted there by Clive Stace – C.A. Stace (1962) Transplantation experiments: *Hymenophyllum*, *Kent Field Club Bulletin* 7: 16-17). Not seen at Hungershall Rocks when surveyed 2016, but probable location identifiable. Any surviving transplants may well have been removed in any event, as appears to have been the intention, cf. *British Fern Gazette* (1962) 9: 84.

Isatis tinctoria (Woad): before 1899.

Juncus foliosus (Leafy Rush): 1890, TR15.

Limonium humile (Lax-flowered Sea-lavender): 1869 (Whitstable, J.T.B. Syme); Philp (2010) reserved the position regarding its occurrence at all.

Liparis loeselii (Fen Orchid): 1802, L.W. Dillwyn at Ham Ponds.

Littorella uniflora (Shoreweed): 1950, F. Rose at St Leonard's Lake TQ65. It was also present at Dungeness in 1947 (Philp, 2010), but A.M. Masee in the December 1964 *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* wrote as though it were currently present on the bare shingle shore of the north-east side of Open Pit 3.

Logfia gallica (*Filago gallica*) (Narrow-leaved Cudweed): Claimed by F. Forsyth for c. 1946 on Lower Greensand between Snodland and Borough Green; otherwise 1840s (?), E. Edwards at side of Darenth Wood.

Lycopodiella inundata (Marsh Clubmoss): W Kent, 1930 (S.E. Chandler at Keston Bog); E Kent, 1931? (recorded but unconfirmed at Hothfield, there were attempted introductions here in the 1940s as well)..

Orchis militaris (Military Orchid): 1881 - there are 19th century specimens at least one of which, from Cobham in 1836, was accepted by Francis Rose, but not by Philp (2010), who considered that those which he had seen were *O. purpurea* or cultivated. However, there are further specimens determined on good authority, including one collected by De Crespigny in 1881 from Maidstone and a pre-1747 specimen from the collection of Dillenius identified by G.C. Druce; also two specimens from Wye (one 1873, the other undated, but may be as late as 1923) accepted as *O. militaris* by D. Lang, P. Gay and, in one case, J.E. Lousley. The position is complicated by DNA studies of *O. purpurea* indicating that the species may cover two genetic entities, one with some DNA characteristics normally associated with *O. militaris*; but there is now plenty of authority for acceptance of *O. militaris* as formerly a Kent plant.

Oxybasis urbica (*Chenopodium urbicum*) (Upright Goosefoot): before 1930.

Pedicularis palustris (Marsh Lousewort): 1954 (dike between Hacklinge and Worth Minnis, not seen after this was dug out and widened in 1956).

Petrorhagia nanteuilii (Childing Pink): E Kent, 1960, (at Hythe – probably roadside south of the ranges canteen, TR13 – and at Richborough, on waste ground by railway sidings); W Kent, 1882 (sandy railway bank at Malling).

Phyteuma orbiculare (Round-headed Rampion): E Kent, 1913 (L. Day at Kingsdown); W Kent, 1877 (E. de Crespigny at N. Downs near Sevenoaks, probably Moraunts Court Hill).

Pseudorchis albida (Small-white Orchid): 1877, Dr Bailey near Chatham (this record, from C.H. Fielding, may be suspect).

Pulicaria vulgaris (Small Fleabane): 1877 (Lewisham, by the Ravensbourne, E. de Crespigny).

Rosa sherardii (Sherard's Downy-rose): before 1950.

Sagina subulata (Heath Pearlwort): 1957, G.H. Morgan and E.G. Philp at Aylesford sand pits.

Schoenoplectus triquetet (Triangular Club-rush): perhaps 1938, but recent records appear to have been in respect of the hybrid with *S. lacustris*.

Scilla autumnalis (Autumn Squill): 1920, Miss Bacon, at Blackheath.

Stachys germanica (Downy Woundwort): 1933, H. Elgar at Pilgrims Road between Lower Bell and Boarley, Maidstone.

Thesium humifusum (Bastard-toadflax): 1963, C.A. Stace on roadside bank at Chartham Downs (gone by 1978 due to close mowing).

Tilia platyphyllos (Large-leaved Lime): pre-historic; historic records are taken to be introductions.

Trichophorum cespitosum (Deergrass): W Kent 1962 (F. Rose at Keston Bog, 2 clumps; gone by 19690; E Kent 1829 (Willesborough Lees).

Trifolium ochroleucon (Sulphur Clover): 1666, Christopher Merrett, between Northfleet and Gadshill. This record may well be correct, but the same cannot be said of subsequent records.

Turritis glabra (Tower Mustard): 1958, although an assumed non-native occurrence was recorded at Lesnes Abbey ruins, 2018 (following building works which either introduced it or disturbed a seed bank) and recurred each year to 2023.

Utricularia minor (Lesser Bladderwort): a 1966 record from the Royal Military Canal has been rejected by Philp, 2010; however the species was given in Hanbury & Marshall (1899) at locations including Ham Ponds TR35, although doubted by Philp (2010), albeit that either Hanbury or Marshall had personally confirmed it at Ham; and there is a further record from that location by Lady J.C. Davy, 1900.

Valerianella eriocarpa (Hairy-fruited Cornsalad): E. Kent, ?1970 (this is an assigned date for record by C.A. Stace at Dungeness, could have been any time from mid 1950s); W Kent, 1956 (gravel pit west of Brandbridges, TQ 673 482, C.A. Stace). This species was previously regarded as a neophyte, but is now considered a British native at least in Dorset.

Valerianella rimosa (Broad-fruited Cornsalad): 1963.

Viola lactea (Pale Dog-violet): G.E. Shaw, c.1936, Tunbridge Wells.

Part 2
Native taxa, perhaps extinct
(seen in the wild since 1970, but may not persist: potential for rediscovery)

Blysmus compressus (Flat-sedge): E Kent, 1991 (Francis Rose at Ham Fen). Last W Kent record 1988 (J. Pitt at Snodland where site since destroyed); also 1985 by LNHS at Foot's Cray meadows, TQ 479 716 where gone by 1990 with site dry and overrun by *Cirsium arvense*).

Cephalanthera longifolia (Narrow-leaved Helleborine): W Kent, 1989 (J. Pitt at Brasted Chart, TQ 467 535 in beech woodland and scrub behind row of houses, original find location by R.A. Clarke given by him as TQ 466 528 – may have been affected by the clearance operations following the 1987 storm creating disturbance and resulting in more ground flora competition); E Kent, c.1930 (F. Forsyth at Boxley Warren).

Cerastium pumilum (Dwarf Mouse-ear): E Kent, 1977 (J.P. Huntley at Wye, TR 088 479); W Kent, 1972 (Mrs Hewson at Knole Park, TQ55G).

Cirsium dissectum (Meadow Thistle): In E Kent, last recorded on 24 July 1991 by Francis Rose at Ham Fen. In W Kent given in Philp (1982) (between 1971 and 1980) near Bayham Abbey TQ63N (may be a Francis Rose 1979 record west of Ellis Wood, probably a valley site dammed as a lake before 1990). Philp (1982) also mentions Hawkenbury Bog TQ53Y (habitat since changed, but site was in vc 14, East Sussex).

Coeloglossum viride (Frog Orchid): 1998, P. Green at Coombe Hill, Dover, a 1984 record gives TR 301 427 (probably subsequently overgrown).

Drabella muralis (*Draba muralis*): 1986, G. Kitchener, top of ragstone wall bounding former sand quarry, Shoreham Lane, Riverhead, TQ 51595 56180, where it was casual for a couple of years.

Epipactis leptochila (Narrow-lipped Helleborine): August 1972, E.G. Philp at Trenleypark Wood TR15Z; or between 1971 and 1980, near Kingston TR25A or Alkham TR24R.

Galeopsis speciosa (Large-flowered Hemp-nettle): between 1971 and 1980 at Tunbridge Wells TQ53Z or Chiddingstone TQ54D.

Galium tricorntum (Corn Cleavers): 1980, behind sea wall east of Gravesend, TQ67S, probably introduced with spice adventives; long gone as an arable weed in the county.

Lolium temulentum (Darnel): 1974, C.G. Hanson at Stone tip, TQ 565 746 – modern rubbish tips now appear unsuitable; long gone as an arable weed in the county.

Lycopodium clavatum (Stag's-horn Clubmoss): between 1971 and 1980 – seven tetrads were given in Philp (1982); potential for finding where forestry plantations are felled.

Mespilus germanica (Medlar): between 1971 and 1980, at Pluckley TQ94B, Eastling Wood TR34D or Churchfield Wood, TQ5073 – surely this must still be present somewhere, other than obviously planted!

Myriophyllum alterniflorum (Alternate Water-milfoil): W Kent, 1974 (W.E. Coultrup at Ashurst TQ53E); E Kent between 1971 and 1980 (near Brabourne, TR04V.)

Potamogeton alpinus (Red Pondweed): E Kent, 1974 (W.J. Morgan near Woodchurch in pond, TQ 953 367); W Kent, 1865 (marsh ditches, Tonbridge).

Pyrola minor (Common Wintergreen): W Kent, between 1971 and 1980 at (Scords Wood TQ45R, apparently a chert pit which has since become overgrown, SL, 2019; or Sevenoaks near Gracious Lane, TQ 533 586); E Kent, 1911 (East Farleigh).

Ranunculus omiophyllus (Round-leaved Crowfoot): 1938, Hayes: there is a later, 1943, claimed specimen from Furnace Farm, Lamberhurst, but this, although marked vc16, appears likely to have been from East Sussex, vc14, and in any event is *R. x novae-forestae*.

Rosa obtusifolia (Round-leaved Dog-rose): W Kent, 1972 (R.A. Clarke at Chafford Bridge, TQ5140); E Kent, 1890 (Ham Street).

Stellaria palustris (Marsh Stitchwort): 1986, R. FitzGerald at Ashford TR 009 406.

Tephrosia integrifolia subsp. *integrifolia* (Field Fleawort): mid 1970s at Scarborough Spur, Burham, in an area since scrubbed over and which has become woodland.

Torilis arvensis (Spreading Hedge-parsley): W Kent, between 1971 and 1980 (at West Malling, TQ65Y); E Kent, 1971 (at Minster, TQ9573).

Vicia parviflora (Slender Tare): E Kent, 1972 (E.G. Philp at edge of ride in Ellenden Wood, TR16B); W Kent, 1953 (Gilridge, N of Penshurst).

Part 3

Extinct taxa, doubtful as to identification, location or native status

Cystopteris diaphana (Greenish Bladder-fern): recognised as native in Britain in 2005, although already referred to as growing at Tunbridge Wells in Pratt (1871); but as herbarium specimens from the 1850s are marked as from Harrison's Rocks nr Tunbridge Wells, and this location is in East Sussex (vc14) rather than West Kent (vc16), there is insufficient evidence of this having been a Kent plant.

Daphne mezereum (Mezereum): native status queried by Hanbury & Marshall (1899); and Philp (2010) considered this probably always introduced as a garden escape in Kent.

Festuca altissima (Wood Fescue): last record has been given as 1852, but this relates to Harrison's Rocks in vc14; other Kent records in Hanbury & Marshall (1899) are unconfirmed. Francis Rose was of the view that this was probably never found in Kent.

Herniaria glabra (Smooth Rupturewort). 2005, K. Kersey near Detling Hill, TQ85R. This and previous occurrences are taken to be non-native.

Linum perenne subsp. *anglicum* (Perennial Flax): Philp (2010) refers to old records, but the pre-1899 records collated by Hanbury & Marshall (1899) were considered by those authors to be in error for *L. bienne*; probably never a Kent plant. *Linum perenne*, however, was noted as a casual at Crockenhill in 2018 and north of Sutton-at-Hone in 2022.

Melittis melissophyllum (Bastard Balm): 1879, J.E. Little in the Medway Valley, published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, but subsequently disclaimed by Little in correspondence.

Pilularia globulifera (Pillwort): whilst there are records, they do not come with supporting data, and a Sutton Valence report mentioned by Hanbury and Marshall (1899) was apparently accepted by them on the basis that it was unlikely to be confused with anything else; nonetheless, it may be doubted, and Philp (1982, 2010) considers that the species may always have been recorded in error in Kent.

Ranunculus fluitans (River Water-crowfoot): Philp (1982) stated that no definite records had been traced and the preparatory work for this (in *Kent Field Club Bulletin*, 1978) states that the taxon was probably recorded in error; the taxon is disregarded in Philp (2010). This would have been with the clear knowledge that Francis Rose claimed it near Staplehurst at a Kent Field Club meeting on 24 August 1963 and in writing up his report said that it had earlier been found in the Beult at Sherway Bridge, Smarden and in the Medway at Hartlake Bridge.

Rosa mollis (Soft Downy-rose): Philp (1982) refers to a plant at Culverstone Green TQ66G between 1971 and 1980; but native status seems unlikely. See Kent Botany 2011 and 2015 for a discussion of historic and recent potential records at Kingsdown, resolved in 2015 by identification as *Rosa villosa*, probably long-term naturalised escapes. See Maskew, R. (2017). *Rosa villosa* L. in Kent, new to Britain. *BSBI News* **134**: 36-37.

Scirpoides holoschoenus (Round-headed Club-rush): an introduction at Conyer disused brickworks, 1971-86.

Acknowledgements and references

The compilation of these listings was greatly facilitated by the information published in Philp (1982 and 2010), also the contents of Francis Rose's manuscript *Flora of Kent* and the BSBI database; and the compiler is also indebted to the late Eric Philp for answering various queries; as also David Johnson, Joyce Pitt and Stephen Lemon. Views expressed above as to the categorisation of plants are, however, those of the compiler, unless otherwise indicated.

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