



## CHAMAEMELUM / ANTHEMIS / MATRICARIA / TRIPLEUROSPERMUM, MAYWEEDS

The superficially similar group of plants often referred to as Mayweeds may give problems with identification, mainly because they do not naturally come together in the keys to Asteraceae. The following keys have been adapted from Philp (1988) and Wilson (1994) (the latter with permission from *British Wildlife*); see also the *Tripleurospermum* account.

The rare alien *Anthemis austriaca* is introduced with wild flower seed (e.g. Philp 1992) and may key out to *A. arvensis* in some Floras, but looks 'wrong'. It has achenes which are compressed (rhombic in TS), rigid receptacle scales and pectinately divided leaf segments. Other *Anthemis* species may also be introduced, and the genus as a whole is fiendishly complex (Q. O. N. Kay, pers. comm. 1997).

### Key to flowering plants

- |   |   |                                     |   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Ray florets absent; strongly aromatic (of pineapples!)  | <i>Matricaria discoidea</i> DC.     |   |
| 1 | Ray florets present; aromatic or not  |                                     | 2 |
| 2 | Ray florets yellow  | <i>Anthemis tinctoria</i> L.        |   |
| 2 | Ray florets white   |                                     | 3 |
| 3 | Receptacle scales present   |                                     | 4 |
| 3 | Receptacle scales absent  |                                     | 7 |
| 4 | Procumbent perennial; tube of disk florets not flattened or winged; achenes ribbed only on one face, rounded above  | <i>Chamaemelum nobile</i> (L.) All. |   |
| 4 | Erect annual; tube of disk florets flattened and somewhat winged below; achenes ribbed on both faces, truncate above  |                                     | 5 |
| 5 | Plant glabrous or slightly hairy, foetid; receptacle scales linear-acute; ray florets usually without styles; achenes tubercled; involucre bracts whitish with a narrow green midrib  | <i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.           |   |
| 5 | Plant usually pubescent or woolly, aromatic; receptacle scales lanceolate-cuspidate; ray florets with styles; achenes ribbed or almost smooth, not tubercled; the involucre bracts all green  |                                     | 6 |
| 6 | Achenes laterally compressed, scarcely ribbed; leaf segments very regularly pectinately dissected   | <i>Anthemis austriaca</i> Jacq.     |   |
| 6 | Achenes not compressed, strongly ribbed; leaf segments finely but irregularly dissected   | <i>Anthemis arvensis</i> L.         |   |
| 7 | Heads with ray florets soon reflexed; receptacle hollow, conical from the first; involucre bracts linear, blunt, yellowish-green with the narrow scarious margins much the same colour; achenes with 4-5 slender ribs on one face and lacking oil-glands; plant pleasantly aromatic                     | <i>Matricaria recutita</i> L.       |   |
| 7 | Heads with ray florets spreading until near end of flowering; receptacle solid, flat becoming conical in fruit; involucre bracts oblong, blunt, with narrow brown scarious margins; achenes with three corky ribs on one face and two conspicuous oil-glands on the other; plant scentless or nearly so |                                     | 7 |

# Plant Crib

- 8 Annual, occasional biennial, erect plant; leaf-segments pointed, not fleshy; heads 2-4 cm diameter; achenes 1.5-2 mm with clearly separated ribs and  $\pm$  circular oil-glands  
*Tripleurospermum inodorum* (L.) Sch. Bip.
- 8 Biennial to perennial, decumbent plant; leaf-segments blunt, fleshy; heads 3-5 cm diameter; achenes 2-3.4 mm with the ribs on the inner face broad and almost touching, and the oil-glands vertically much elongated  
*Tripleurospermum maritimum* (L.) W. D. J. Koch

## Key to vegetative plants

- 1 Plants scentless or nearly so 2  
1 Plants scented 3
- 2 Perennial, usually decumbent; leaf segments blunt, rather fleshy *Tripleurospermum maritimum*  
2 Annual, usually erect; leaf segments pointed, not fleshy *Tripleurospermum inodorum*
- 3 Glabrous except for hair points on leaf tips 4  
3 Hairy 5
- 4 Leaf segments finely divided, up to 1 mm wide, lax *Matricaria recutita*  
4 Leaf segments broader, up to 1.5 mm wide, crowded *Matricaria discoidea*
- 5 Prostrate perennial, rooting at nodes *Chamaemelum nobile*  
5 Erect, not rooting at nodes 6
- 6 Robust biennial-perennial *Anthemis tinctoria*  
6 Annual 7
- 7 Glabrous to sparsely hairy; leaf segments long; odour rather unpleasant *Anthemis cotula*  
7 Hairy; leaf segments shorter; odour pleasant 8
- 8 Leaf segments very regularly pectinately dissected *Anthemis austriaca*  
8 Leaf segments irregularly dissected *Anthemis arvensis*

Guide to typical habitats (see Wilson 1994 for ecological notes)

*Anthemis arvensis* - arable land on chalk and sand.

*Anthemis austriaca* - casual on verges.

*Anthemis cotula* - arable land on chalk and calcareous clay.

*Anthemis tinctoria* - casual often near habitation.

*Chamaemelum nobile* - seasonally inundated turf, heathland, grassland, sports fields and sea cliffs (see Winship 1994).

*Matricaria discoidea* - widespread, especially in compacted soil.

*Matricaria recutita* - arable land on non-calcareous loams.

*Tripleurospermum inodorum* - widespread in disturbed land.

*Tripleurospermum maritimum* - coast, rarely inland on major road verges.

- References** Philp, E. G. (1988). *BSBI News* **50**: 10.  
Philp, E. G. (1992). *BSBI News* **60**: 44-45.  
Wilson, P. J. (1994). *British Wildlife* **5(3)**: 158-162.  
Winship, H. R. (1994). *British Wildlife* **5(3)**: 163-165.

**Authors** E. G. Philp, Q. O. N. Kay, P. J. Wilson & T. C. G. Rich, November 1997.