

# **FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES (FISCs)**

**Does your work or voluntary activity include field botany and plant recording?**

**Do you want to quantify your plant ID skills?**

**Do you know where you are on the plant ID skills ladder?**

**If you want to find out more...**

**...read about FISCs – the definitive field skills certificates from the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland in partnership with the Field Studies Council:**

**[www.bsbi.org/field-skills](http://www.bsbi.org/field-skills)**



## FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES

In 2006 the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland trialled a new system for assessing skill levels for vascular plant identification, and this year Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs) are available for the fourteenth year.

### What does a FISC entail?

There are usually three parts to a FISC and it takes the best part of a day to take. There are two lab tests where a number of specimens are laid out for identification – the easier ones without books and keys, the more difficult with books and keys. After lunch there is a visit to a site where candidates record everything that they can see for roughly 1½ to 2 hours.

### How long does it take?

The FISC usually starts around 10.30am and finishes by about 5.00pm, but please check precise timings with the FISC centre.

### When and where do the FISCs run?

In 2020, there are eight dates and three locations from which to choose:

Maidstone/ Canterbury, Kent: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June; Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July, (Tyland Barn, Kent Wildlife Trust HQ); September date tbc (Canterbury Christ Church University).

Shrewsbury: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July, Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August ([Preston Montford Field Centre, Shrewsbury](#)).

### How much does it cost?

The 2020 FISC costs £75 – this cost may vary between centres depending on whether or not lunch and/or transport to sites by minibus are provided.

### What do I need to bring?

Identification books and a hand lens (although in an emergency we may be able to provide a lens and some identification guides).

### What sort of plants will there be to identify?

A wide range from a variety of habitats. The lab test will contain species that can potentially come from anywhere in the UK and they are not necessarily all common species.

### Will I pass?

You can't fail! The FISC test allows a skill level to be allocated to you. See the [Botanical Skills Pyramid](#) for the skill levels. You are awarded a certificate from the BSBI stating your skill level. You may wish to come back in a few years to take the FISC again to see how you have progressed.

### Who runs the FISCs?

The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland awards the FISC.

The Field Studies Council and Arvensis Ecology provide study facilities and marking services for the Shrewsbury FISC.

Kent Wildlife Trust provides study facilities and marking services for the Kent FISC.

### How do I book?

Book for a FISC in Maidstone/Canterbury, Kent [here](#).

Book for a FISC in Shrewsbury, Shropshire [here](#).

Booking details for both FISCs are available [here](#), and you can email us [here](#) if you have any queries.