



Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

Irish VCR Newsletter No. 5, December 2015

Hello Irish VCRs,

This is the fifth Irish Vice-county Recorder (VCR) newsletter, and I hope it finds you all well this Christmas. It has been a very good year for BSBI in Ireland, with an unprecedented number of field meetings (especially gatherings >1 day) and a record number of attendees across events, with both new and familiar faces turning up. Here's to a continuation of this trend in 2016!
Maria

RECORDER NEWS

Congratulations to John Faulkner, VCR for Armagh (H37), who has recently been elected as President of the BSBI. Best of luck in the new role John – you are going to be busy!

Pat Lenihan has retired as joint-VCR for Monaghan (H32), leaving the new but very keen and capable Alexis FitzGerald as sole VCR for the county. Many thanks Pat for all your contributions to BSBI, and long may your involvement continue.

A big thanks is due to Robert Northridge for volunteering to take on Cavan (H30) until the Atlas in 2020. This is, of course, in addition to his other VC, Fermanagh (H33, with Ralph Forbes).

Currently, our vacant VCs are:

1. Mid-Cork (H04)
2. East Cork (H05)
3. Longford (H24)
4. East Donegal (H34) – but this VC receives great attention from Oisín Duffy and Mairéad Crawford, along with significant help from neighbouring VCR Ralph Sheppard.

Note also that we have a group of enthusiastic and active members in Cork, many of whom are taking on squares and/or liaising with the local group which was set up this year. Many thanks to Clare Heardman (VCR for west Cork, H03), John Earley (VCR for Roscommon, H25, but based in west Cork) and Edwina Cole (BSBI member based in east Cork) for their work with this new and vibrant local group. (Email Edwina to join local group mailing list: edwinacole@eircom.net)

And the final note for this section is to encourage VCRs to write notes or articles for BSBI News. Please do consider it! We have lots of interesting finds here each year, an abundance of knowledge, particularly among the seasoned and experienced recorders, and one of the youngest and most vibrant memberships from across all of the BSBI. So let's get the information out there, thus sharing knowledge and also raising the profile of our Irish recording community. If you have an idea for a piece (be it an account of an event, or a botanical ID piece, etc.) and want help, feedback, or some constructive criticism... do feel free to run things by me.

CFI NEWS

Here is the make-up of the current CFI (Committee for Ireland) which was elected at the AGM in September:

Chairperson – Robert Northridge	Ordinary Committee Members:
Vice-chairperson – Joanne Denyer	- Con Breen
Hon. Secretary – Paula O’Meara	- Micheline Sheehy Skeffington
Hon. Treasurer – Rory Hodd	- Gerry Sharkey (co-opted)
Field Meetings Secretary – John Conaghan	- Mark McCorry (to be co-opted)

Paul Green – invited, IBN editor
Maria Long – invited, Irish Officer
Mike Wyse Jackson – invited, NPWS
Mark Wright – invited, NIEA

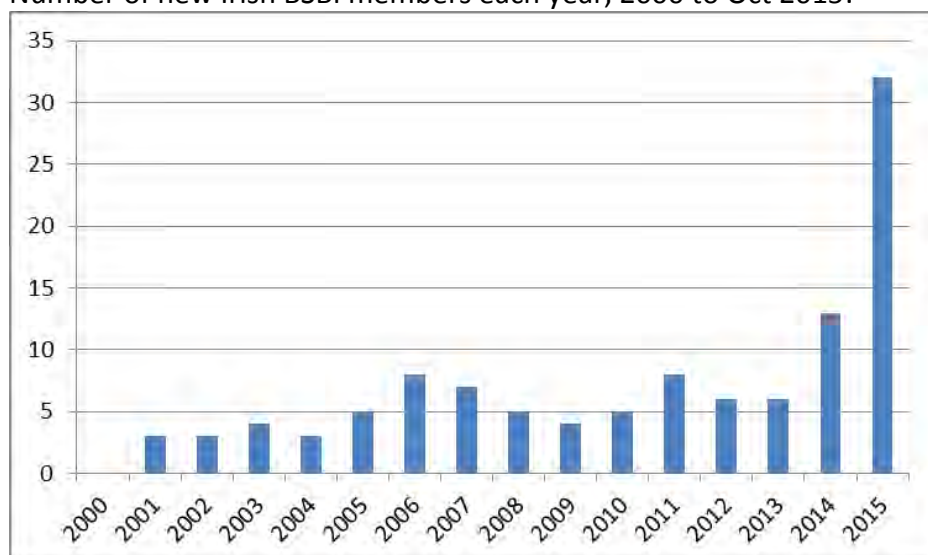
Some news in brief from CFI (via Hon. Sec. Paula O’Meara):

- The Wildflower Society has funding for expenses for targeted Atlas recording. The BSBI Records and Research Committee has agreed that this funding can be spent on supporting recording in Ireland.
- CFI/BSBI supports the Irish Pollinator Initiative and has joined the 68 Irish organisations that have come together to sign their support for the Pollinator Plan – see it [here](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/all-ireland-pollinator-plan-2015-2020-is-released/) : <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/all-ireland-pollinator-plan-2015-2020-is-released/>
- Irish Species Project – Almost all of the data has been collected and it is envisaged that analysis will begin in the New Year. Volunteers will be asked to analyse one or two species each. Any outstanding records welcome.
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre and CFI members have met recently to progress data transfer between NBDC and BSBI. NBDC holds significant datasets, such as the Semi-natural Grasslands Survey, the Raised Bog Survey and the Woodland Survey which could be released to BSBI.
- The Environmental Recorders’ Group Grants, administered by CEDaR, will provide a sum for contributions to BSBI’s Atlas 2020 recording in Northern Ireland.

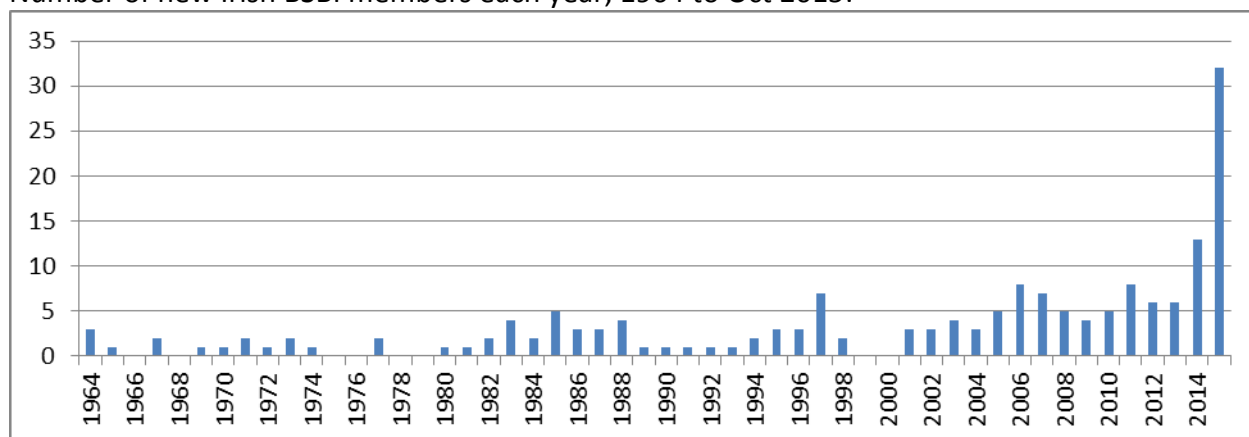
IRISH OFFICER NEWS

Intrigued by a mention of BSBI membership numbers in Ireland in the Secretary’s report at the AGM this year, I decided to look a little more at the numbers of new members that have joined BSBI each year. The first graph below shows the numbers of new Irish members who have joined for each of the past 15 years. And I went further – as far back as 1964!, shown in the second graph. Note that I don’t have details of people who perhaps lapsed for a year or two and came back, or other such nuances, but the overall trend is apparent. I think we can take heart from the strong interest, backed up by a willingness to pay the membership fee!, shown by new members in recent years. It is our challenge now to welcome and nurture these newcomers, and do our best to facilitate their needs and keep them interested in the BSBI and plant recording in Ireland. They may well be the recorders of the future!

Number of new Irish BSBI members each year, 2000 to Oct 2015:



Number of new Irish BSBI members each year, 1964 to Oct 2015:



The New Year Plant Hunt

The New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH) will run again this coming year, between 1st and 4th January 2016. You can find out all you need to know by visiting this webpage: http://www.bsbi.org.uk/new_year_plant_hunt.html, or by emailing the co-ordinators, Louise Marsh and Ryan Clark, at: nyplanthunt@bsbi.org This was great fun last year – a mix of the challenge of botanising in the middle of winter, the excitement of getting out at a time when fieldwork is a distant memory (for most), and a nice social gathering that doesn't necessarily involve excesses of food and drink after the Christmas period!

The idea is simple: choose a 3 hour period between 1st and 4th Jan and go in search of plants in flower. Make a list and send it in. Photos welcome also. And you can make as many lists as you like – i.e. visit as many sites over those four days as you wish! Of course, garden plants are not allowed.

Last year, 21 separate plant lists were submitted from Ireland, with a total of 410 individual plant records from 136 species. These came from across 12 vice-counties and there was an average of 20 species per list. An impressive 24 botanists braved the cold to get involved; some of them were beginners/improvers and new to BSBI, along with some experts too of course. The longest Irish list had 40 species in flower and came from Bull Island, Co. Dublin (but this list had the benefit of seven pairs of botanical eyes to compile it). Overall,

across Britain and Ireland, a surprising 368 different species were recorded in flower (15% of the flora) – more than any of the previous years (but then, there were more recorders also).

Although I haven't asked specifically about who will take part this year, I am aware of plant hunts planned for Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Waterford and Wexford, and I am certain that there will be many more. Fingers crossed for mild weather!

BSBI talks – on tour!

This year, and thanks largely to the extra day per week that I now work for BSBI due to support from NPWS, I have been able to dedicate more time to many aspects of my work in supporting BSBI VCRs and members. It has allowed me to spend time at events that otherwise would not have been possible – so for example I spent almost eight days in Mayo for the fantastically successful recording week. During this I gave a talk to the public, co-organised and supported by Mayo County Council. I also gave a talk on the Saturday night of the Cork field meeting weekend, also open to the public. Both events went down really well and I got great feedback.

I am very happy to continue to give talks about the BSBI in Ireland (who we are, what we do, why it is important, and how people can get involved or learn more) – to interested amateurs, to the public, to professionals – so if you know of places/groups who might like to host such a talk, please get in touch (maria.long@bsbi.org).

Volunteer help

Building on work begun by volunteer Tanya Martin during the summer, this winter I have been delighted to have help from Hannah Mulcahy. Hannah is an east Clare-based, active BSBI member (e.g. she's been an avid Irish Species Project recorder), an NUIG Botany graduate and has an MSc Biodiversity and Taxonomy from Edinburgh. She has been helping to digitise plant records from Co. Westmeath. Thanks for the work so far Hannah, and thanks also to Con Breen.

Irish BSBI Conference 2016

The Irish BSBI Conference in 2016 will take place in the National Botanic Gardens, to whom we are very grateful, on Sat 12th and Sun 13th of March. Hopefully the dates are in your diaries already! This year the Committee for Ireland and the Irish Officer plan to have a very strong emphasis on recording and working towards Atlas 2020, and this will be reflected in the programme. All VCRs are strongly encouraged to attend – we have only four recording seasons left! Plans are still forming, but likely topics/elements include:

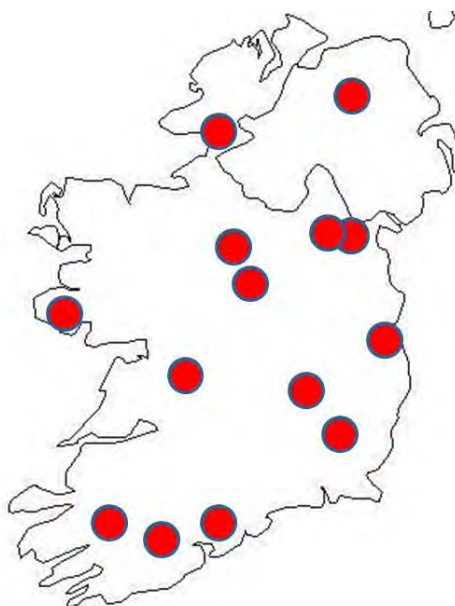
- VCR round-table meeting to discuss progress to Atlas
- Atlas Q&A with Pete Stroh (Atlas 2020 Co-ordinator)
- talks about recording strategies
- MapMate sessions with Jim McIntosh (Scottish Officer, MapMate whizz)
- DDb sessions with Tom Humphrey (Database Officer)
- a talk about the Kilmacurragh Botanic Gardens
- Conifer identification
- ??Horsetails - an introduction/refresher workshop
- talks/workshops on other plant groups

Please get in touch if you have any other suggestions, we would be delighted to hear them, or better still, if you would be willing to lead an ID workshop!

FIELD MEETING NEWS

Irish BSBI field meetings 2016

Feb 13 – Euphrasia workshop (part 1), NBG
May 21/22 – North Kerry
May 28/29 – West Galway
June 4 - Leitrim
June 18/19 - Cavan
July 10 – Monaghan
July 16 – Laois
July 22/23/24 - Longford
July 30 – Carlow
Aug 6/7 – East Donegal
Aug 13 – Derry/Londonderry
Aug 20/12 – South-east Galway
Sept 1/2/3/4 – Cork
Nov 12 – Euphrasia workshop (part 2), NBG



Also keep your eyes and ears open for news of training days and weekends which may be added to the schedule for 2016. Among the things in the pipeline are:

- Charophytes and other aquatics (Clare)
- Sedges (Cavan)
- Grasses (?Monaghan)

Mayo recording week 2015

A particular success of 2015 was the Mayo recording week, 27th July to 3rd August, during which nearly 11,000 vascular plant records were collected. Over 40 botanists, ranging in age from early 20s to early 80s, spent eight days covering the length and breadth (and heights) of Mayo. This was a fantastic success on a number of levels. We learned that botanists can be mobilised when such an event is organised; we saw how much can be learned by improvers by going into the field with experts, and having time in the evenings to work on IDs; and we significantly helped the local recorder Gerry Sharkey with covering this huge county. Among the botanical highlights was the finding of the rush *Juncus planifolius* by Paul Green. But rather than me tell you all about it, here are two accounts from attendees.

A botanist abroad: an account of the Mayo recording week - by Flora Donald

Will I be able to identify *anything*? I recognise some of the plants on the optimised lists for H26 (East Mayo) and H27 (West Mayo) but maybe they'll look different with all that famous Irish moisture? Maybe everyone else will be experts and none too pleased to have to answer all my daft questions. And how am I going to get both wellies and walking boots in my flight rucksack? Just a few questions plaguing my mind as I packed for the journey across the water; well, first across the Minch (separates my home on South Uist from the Isle of Skye) and then across the Irish Sea from Inverness to Dublin. Currency, connections and clothes (how many layers?) were also primary concerns. This was my first visit to Ireland and initial impressions were superb: even the man in the booth at passport control was friendly! I watched the green fields glide past from the train and then all of a sudden hills appeared and I was in Castlebar, home for the week. Base camp was at Lough Lannagh holiday village which was a real find - drying rooms, hearty breakfasts and a dedicated annex for the botanists that was soon strewn with ID

books of varying dog-eared degrees and the usual shredded specimen detritus that denotes botanists at work.

I had expected to be up to my knees in blanket bog all week but I have never had drier feet on a recording trip! Mayo is a vast county and was effectively a blank canvas in atlas terms with most hectads needing an update. The variety of habitats meant we encountered something different each day from coastal grassland and saltmarsh to deciduous woodland, town kerbsides to limestone pavement and yes, indeed, some very fine bogs. We gathered each morning and decided on groups and locations to spend the day with before setting out armed with a map, a recording card and no expectations. We were always rewarded with something for our efforts - species we'd never seen before, a novel way of remembering names, a new ID tip that doesn't appear in any key or just simply a great day out in the field with other people as obsessed about plants as you.

One such day was when Alexis, Cilian, Micheline, Sunniva and I took a short boat trip out to an island on Lough Conn to hunt for *Pyrola media*. Unfortunately, our search was in vain but we had a good laugh crashing through bracken twice our height and saw lots of *Sanguisorba officinalis*, one *Spiranthes romazoffiana* spike and some wonderful old yew trees. My 'new species' tally increased markedly the following day on limestone pavement near Ballinrobe with Eamonn, Katharine and Oonagh where I saw *Blackstonia perfoliata*, *Ophrys insectifera* and *Sesleria caerulea* for the first time. Other highlights were Paula showing me the hairs on *Pedicularis sylvatica* subsp. *hibernica* (I now inspect every lousewort flower just in case it's made its way over to the Hebrides), implicitly trusting Paul when he told me to touch the leaf of *Urtica dioica* subsp. *galeopsifolia* and strolling out with Margaret from our accommodation on the last evening to find *Epipactis palustris* in full flower on the shore of Lough Lannagh.

I feel really privileged to have been part of the first recording week in Ireland. It was so much fun, everyone was so welcoming and the sheer volume of notes and specimens spilling out of my notebook is testament to how generous everyone was with their expertise. I would encourage everyone to take part in a BSBI recording week and know for sure that you're in for a great adventure if you choose Ireland as your destination.

Mayo recording week - by Oonagh Duggan

I thoroughly enjoyed the BSBI recording week in Mayo. It was like a botany immersion course for me - a beginner. I took advice and volunteered to 'tick off' the plants found in the recording card which helped me to learn the Latin names of the plants. I was also heartened that I knew more than I thought and got a lot of encouragement from the friendly botanists around me. Getting to explore the variety of plants at several habitat types over the course of the week made for a very enjoyable and diverse week. I particularly enjoyed the hike with the Rough Crew up Mweelrea and seeing plants (e.g. *Mastigophora woodsii*) that I studied for my MSc thesis and seeing the stunning view across Mayo. I also just loved being outside every day and exploring. I particularly enjoyed one day where in a very small space we recorded plants of limestone pavement and calcareous fen. Overall, it was an exceptionally well organised week with books, maps and learning aids available as well as really good accommodation and meals.

ISP (Irish Species Project) NEWS

Work on the ISP data gathered has yet to begin in earnest as the final push to get all data sheets in has just happened. A very big thank you from myself and the CFI to all who participated – your efforts are greatly appreciated. We have had a big response, and there are record cards from almost every vice-county. I had hoped to have an overview of some facts and figures for you in this newsletter, but I'm afraid that will have to wait. The datasheets are collated and ready for review – but the review just hasn't happened yet! Watch this space!

ROUGH CREW NEWS, by Rory Hodd

The rough crew was set up with the aim of having informal gatherings of adventurous botanists to record in remote sites such as mountains and offshore islands. To date there have been six highly successful rough crew outings to counties Mayo, Wicklow, Waterford and Galway, which were attended by a range of enthusiastic botanists. Outings have included visits to remote corries high in the Mayo mountains, where special mountain plants such as *Saussurea alpina* and *Saxifraga oppositifolia* were found, and trips in the Wicklow and Comeragh mountains in search of clubmosses. In the course of these outings, the rough crew have lived up to their title, tackling long walks, hard climbs, swollen rivers, driving rain, dense fog and extensive floods. Plans are already afoot for lots of interesting and exciting outings in 2016. If you have any suggestions of where the rough crew should visit in your area, please let us know, all suggestions very welcome! Contact me at rlhodd@gmail.com for more information or to be added to the email list.

[Note from Maria: I might just add that the NPWS funding, which gives me one extra day a week working for BSBI, has allowed me to attend more rough crew outings that I would otherwise have, and the emphasis on gathering records for lycopod species has given the rough crew an excellent focus. Quite a few trips have had searching for uncommon lycopods as the central aim, and this has worked a treat. We collect straight-forward data such as grid ref, altitude, habitat, and then make full record cards for that and other squares during the day.]

ATLAS NEWS

Atlas 2020 – Taking Stock

So far this year, 21 vice-counties have added 94,605 Irish records to the DDb. A great achievement! But of course that also means that records for 19 VCs have yet to reach the DDb. So it would be great if all VCRs could make a real push to get records digitised and sent through by the end of February if possible. We will then be able to take stock of where we are – essential for planning the final four years of Atlas 2020. And very useful in advance of the Irish conference in March also! Please get in touch if you need support, in any form at all. We really do need to make this happen this year.

Incidentally, of those almost 95,000 records the vast majority are at monad resolution. And are you curious about the top ten most commonly recorded species in 2015? Here they are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> | 6. <i>Urtica dioica</i> |
| 2. <i>Taraxacum</i> | 7. <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> |
| 3. <i>Ranunculus repens</i> | 8. <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> |
| 4. <i>Trifolium repens</i> | 9. <i>Hedera hibernica</i> |
| 5. <i>Festuca rubra</i> | 10. <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> |

Atlas 2020 – Using the BSBI Distribution DataBase (DDb)

There are still a few VCRs not using the DDb. It is a fantastic tool and I would encourage everyone to register, log-on and explore it.

The DDb feature called “*my county*” helps identify gaps in Atlas 2020 coverage - assuming all your data is in the DDb! This menu option should appear to the left of “*message board*” when Recorders login, along with “*my mapmate records*” – if you are a MapMate user. The “*my county*” option has three tabs: *Summary* which includes a year-by-year breakdown of recording

since 2000, *Data validation* and *Atlas 2020 survey coverage*. This last tab displays colour-density maps of your VC showing the *Number of intensive tetrad surveys* and another showing *Taxa not refound since 2000 (at hectad scale)*.

Atlas 2020 - Guidance for Vice-County Recorders

Much new Atlas 2020 guidance has been published this summer and is now available on the [Atlas 2020](http://www.bsbi.org.uk/atlas_2020.html) page of the BSBI website (http://www.bsbi.org.uk/atlas_2020.html). The most important is the [Atlas 2020 Guidance for Vice-county Recorders](#) – a collation of all the information and advice specifically for Recorders that has already appeared in various editions of BSBI News, so little is new, but it is really useful to have it all set out in one place in logical order. Another essential read is guidance on [Where and what do we record?](#)

Many of you will remember the series of green Atlas 2000 guidance booklets which were distributed during the Atlas 2000 project. These guidance booklets have been comprehensively updated and revised and are now available online. I recommend that all Atlas 2020 recorders read [Notes on identification works and difficult and under-recorded taxa](#), which was distributed with September's BSBI News, very carefully. The other booklets in the series include [Collecting and Pressing Specimens](#), [Atlas 2020 Instruction Booklet](#) and [A Beginner's Guide to Recording](#). The holiday period is a good chance to review all this guidance. Please get back to me if you have any queries.

[Much of this Atlas section was compiled originally by Jim McIntosh – thanks Jim!]

OTHER NEWS & CONTRIBUTIONS

- [Irish Botanical News](#) will, as always, be put together this year by Paul Green. The deadline for submissions is Jan 31st (paulnewross@eircom.net). Remember that you can see all of the previous issues of IBN on the [Irish webpage](#). If you lead a field meeting in 2015, you will, I'm sure, remember to write a [field meeting report](#) or ask for a volunteer from the attendees to do so (it can be a lovely way to include attendees more).
- Ronan Cooney and Inland Fisheries Ireland have designed a survey focusing on [watersports and invasive species](#). It is running in November and December 2015. If you practice any paddlesports, please take five minutes to fill in [this questionnaire](#) (link: <https://surveyplanet.com/55cbac88008b4ddb4d326646>)
- Very valuable work has been done by Jerry Clough on [digitising Irish vice-county boundaries](#) using open source maps and software. Many thanks Jerry, keep up the great work! Read more here: <http://sk53-osm.blogspot.ie/2015/10/irish-vice-counties-creation-of.html>
- [In Praeger's footsteps](#): remember that Matthew Jebb, Director of the National Botanic Gardens, has provided Praeger's historic walks and the species list to go with them, so you can follow the same route and compare the species list to 100 years ago. Download sample field cards here: http://www.botanicgardens.ie/praeger_footsteps/
- And to finish up this section, a little-known fact about one of our recorders: Did you know that [David McNeill](#), recorder for Co. Antrim, is a [Sudoku and puzzle champion](#)!? He was ranked 4th in the world in Sudoku in 2007 (read more here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/6521107.stm) when the rest of the world was still catching up on the Sudoku craze. In October 2015, David finished just inside the top 20 in the latest World Sudoku Championship in Sofia, Bulgaria. He came home with the world title for competitors aged over 50 and also claimed the over-50 World Puzzle

Championship title. Last year, the World Sudoku and Puzzle Championships were hosted by the United Kingdom and David set many of the puzzles, including some with outdoor and gardening themes. David is also addicted to crosswords. Fair play David!

Altitudinal limits of British and Irish plants – by Paula O’Meara

Most Irish altitudinal data dates from 1916. With next year being the centenary of those records, it's high time to update them. Any records over 310m (1000 feet) can be included. You don't need to climb to the top of the mountain! Lowland records below a 1000 feet for alpine species are just as valuable. If you have any existing records with a six figure grid reference, you will be able to convert it to an altitudinal record. Check out the web page for details: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/altitudes.html>

‘Voucher specimens, the DBN herbarium and BSBI county recording’

by Howard Fox, Botanist, DBN herbarium, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

Botany with your own herbarium voucher specimens available from previous field work allows for anatomical understanding of higher plant parts.

Only recently I was informed that a pomegranate produces 613 seeds. In checking this out further online, the 'pomegranate seed' statistics are on www.aquaphoenix.com There are numerous other anatomical features of botanical interest that can be studied with a fruit-bowl, and ones imagination that values scientific activity and questioning. Almost fifteen ago, a bug found by a breakfaster in microwaved porridge from somewhere along the east coast of America arrived in Dublin for forensic analysis and was passed along to the herbarium for investigation. Dissections of the bug returned a satisfying result that it was an edible blueberry, *Vaccinium corymbosa* (*Ericaceae*).

As a botanist into the identification of lichens, mushrooms, micro-fungi, mosses, liverworts, slime moulds and seaweeds, my use of vascular plant herbarium resources has been focussed mainly on woody plants (trees and shrubs; native and introduced) as substrates for epiphytic life.

Higher plant parts that I am interested in, as part of epiphyte ecology, include twigs and branches with bark, buds, leaf and bud abscission scars, dead attached branches with bark, trunk bark, and twig and branch timber with tree rings. Terminal branches from leafless hedgerow bushes collected in winter from September to April in the farmed Irish landscape can be very challenging to identify without herbarium reference collections. Willow, hawthorn, sycamore, ash, sitka spruce, *etc.* can all be placed.

With herbaceous plants, one becomes interested in what specifically rots them down, and one begins to gather interesting plant leaves with rusts and mildews, and herbaceous litter stems from deep ditches and hedgerows for dainty ascomycete fungi for study. When one is walking by the sea, beach-combing it is always interesting to attempt to identify plant and plant parts in the sand. Sources include wetland, dune front and salt marsh plants, with river mouth flotsam including riparian tree and reed parts.

A standard reference is Ellis & Ellis's *Microfungi on Land Plants*. This is now in its second 1997 edition. Ellis and Ellis consider land plants as substrates for fungi and have the following categories (1) plurivorous wood and bark fungi, (2) plurivorous leaf litter fungi, (3) fungi specific to trees, shrubs and woody climbers, (4) plurivorous fungi on herbaceous plants, (5) fungi specific to herbaceous plants in general, (5) plurivorous fungi on grasses, (6) fungi specific to grasses, (7) fungi specific to rushes, sedges, bur-reeds and reed maces, (8) fungi specific to ferns, horsetails and clubmosses, (9) fungi parasitic on rusts and powdery mildews. The jargon plurivorous refers to fungi feeding on many different kinds of plant in a non-specific way. Analogously, one could suggest most corticolous lichens are pluricolous, each species living on many host tree genera.

In order to broaden ones experience in botany in the field, becoming a specialist in locating plants in the landscape is a very satisfying apprenticeship. Herbarium resources are built from reference collections needed by botanists, and are made for various botanical purposes. In DBN, we are keen to support floristic botany in Ireland, and our collections are open for researchers to visit and consult. We have kept a wide range of voucher samples from floristic explorations, and from ecological studies, and have filed all plant flowering shoots in a systematic sequence. There are collections of seeds, timber

anatomy slides, DNA extracts and other reference materials of value for the identification of plants, and plant parts, to their botanical species.

Frodin's (2001) *Guide to standard Floras of the world* is a compendium of the literature created and written by botanists for botanists for use in each geographical region. This provides a good guide to what can be made with herbarium specimens. Womersley (1981) shows how ethnobotanical collections can lead to a herbarium. Dalby & Dalby (1980) provide advice on line drawing from specimens. Mitchell (2000) gives a list of floristic botanical publications in Ireland. Since then, more works have appeared (Fox, in manuscript). Lawrence & Hawthorne (2006) advise on making plant identification keys and they set out the steps involved in making such publications from herbarium voucher specimens, written with the primary purpose of assisting people with plant identification.

I would like to conclude this article by calling for the making of herbarium specimens from one's own *ad hoc* collections of plants and plant tissues. Being in the field, doing botany is an expense and a luxury to satisfy one's nosiness for what grows where, and how to find it. Making voucher specimens suitable for addition to herbarium collections is a worthwhile end use for plant materials gathered from a day's botany.

As part of a network of herbaria globally (Thiers 2011), we in DBN can support this activity of keeping herbarium specimens in a practical manner (OPW, 1992). Herbarium labels and standard mounting sheets for use with wood glue can provide impetus to encourage one to tend to processing one's plants, pressed and dried, in folded newspapers, into something more formal and permanent. We use evostick wood adhesive and cut out straps from paper to mount material. For advice on methods, one can turn to the herbarium handbook (Bridson & Forman, 1998).

If you are recording plants with the BSBI in Ireland, do visit us in DBN to see how your *ad hoc* plant gatherings, that support your studies and intellectual explorations of plants in Ireland, can be made into something more.

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TECHNOLOGY SECTION:

Synching tip:

If you use Mapmate, a good way to ensure that none of your records have gone astray is to Reset Sync Record with the hub (i.e. with BSBI 'central'), and then to sync ALL your records through again. It is a really good idea for everyone who uses MapMate to do this. Please make sure you receive the 'confirmation of receipt' email entitled "Sync Received OK from 2qg to [your cuk]" from Bob Ellis (bob.ellis@bsbi.org) and check with him if it doesn't arrive.

DDb tip:

It is very useful to find out what data sources and datasets hold records for your VC on the DDb. You may not be aware of all of them. See the query below, run for Co. Armagh as an example, and run it for yourself, adapted for your VC of course. Just ask me if you need more detailed instructions. The figure shows that the majority of records for Armagh (since 2000) have come from John Faulkner himself through MapMate, or from CEDaR, who hold and manage most of the data for Northern Ireland VCRs. If you run this query for yourself you can further investigate all the different data sources and datasets.

Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland Distribution Database > search

Tools New maps search search history

my mapmate records | message board | my details

Search form Search templates

search for Records (specimens or observations)

taxon taxon name

grid reference grid square

county/region Co. Armagh

date recorded from 2000 from for vague record date ranges use start date

checklist/attributes checklist

bounded area area name any area type

include this area include intersections buffer 0

group by data source data set

more options

Current search-form filter
records where grouped by data source, data set and from 2000 and vice-county: VCH37

display results email results download results save query reset search form

help...

results table download help

13 groups matched your query.

data source	data set	total freq
MapMate	MapMateCentre.cat	22663
CEDaR	Co Armagh records from CEDaR	18761
Tyrone	Flora of Tyrone	542
BSBI MapsScheme	BSBI Maps Scheme HECTADS	298
MapMate	MapMateCentre:2vp	28
Paul Hackney	Paul Hackney	12
BSBI MapsScheme	BSBI Maps Scheme	3
BRC Vascular Plants Database	Updates to cyperaceae records May 2005. Mainly pink cards and manuscript, input by Val.	3
BRC Vascular Plants Database	Records used for maps in BSBI Sorbus handbook	3
BRC Vascular Plants Database	Hybrid vascular plant records from Alex Lockton as EXCEL spreadsheet - part 4	3
BRC Vascular Plants Database	David Holyoak	3
BSBI Threatened Plants Database	PVT	2
BSBI Threatened Plants Database	Cardiff National Museum of Wales	1

Useful online resource:

I haven't yet had a chance to play around with this, but the new 'GeoHive' (<http://www.geohive.ie/>) from Ordnance Survey Ireland promises to be a good resource. It aims to provide easy access to publically available spatial data. Using this facility you can:

- Explore their content and maps created by you.
- Their MapViewer makes it easier than ever to view data from multiple sources.
- Simply re-arrange dataset layers for a clearer perspective. Adjustable transparency gives you more control.
- Share links to an area of interest.
- Choose from a wide selection of Ordnance Survey Ireland base maps

FINAL WORDS

As always, just get in touch with me if you want any further information on anything in the newsletter. I hope you find the newsletter useful – please let me know. The newsletter will go up on the [Irish webpage](#) in the next few weeks, and will be sent out by email also.

Thank you all very much for your hard work recording plants and part-taking in BSBI initiatives. The network of VCRs is the core, backbone and spirit of the BSBI.

I hope you all have a lovely festive season, and I wish you Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, when I hope to see and/or talk to you all in the coming months.

Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer

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Remember: If your contact details change, **please** let me know (postal address, email or phone number).