

# **Recording methods for BSBI vascular plant projects in Midlothian (VC 83), 2015-2019**

© Barbara E.H. Sumner, 2014

## **Current projects**

Recording activities in VC 83 from 2015 to 2019 will focus on gathering data for two BSBI projects simultaneously: (1) the next Atlas of the British & Irish Flora (the Atlas 2020 project); (2) the next edition of the Rare Plant Register for Midlothian. The recording methods outlined below are designed to collect data suitable for both these projects.

### **(1) Method for the next Atlas of the British & Irish Flora (Atlas 2020)**

The mapping units for the national atlas will be hectads (10 x 10 km. squares), and it is recognised that it may not be possible to record all monads or tetrads (1 km., or 2 x 2 km., squares) in every hectad in the time available (deadline: end of 2019). Therefore, there has to be a sampling strategy. The BSBI is aiming for a minimum of 5 tetrads to be recorded in each hectad. In Midlothian my aim is to obtain the maximum list of species from each hectad, by selecting the tetrads to cover as many habitats in the hectad as possible. As I prefer recording in monads for better resolution, each monad of a tetrad is recorded separately. For hectads that are only partly in Midlothian, the sample is reduced proportionately. However, in addition to this minimum tetrad sample, extra sites and monads are also recorded to gain better coverage of habitats and therefore a better species list. Extra records are also received unexpectedly from other sources. All records are welcome.

For a field excursion to walk through a site, a separate plant list is made for each monad through which the site runs. (For a small site, this may be only one monad.) For common plants, the location details are the site-name and the 4-figure O.S. grid reference of the monad, but for uncommon plants, the site-name and a 6-, 8- or even 10-figure grid reference is noted, according to rarity. This should enable rare plants to be re-found in the future.

For a field excursion to walk around a monad, it may not be obvious what site-name to give it. If it is near a place, with place-name 'X', I often choose a site-name such as 'X, near', 'X area', 'X vicinity', or 'X, east of'. If place 'X' is included in the area recorded, I might choose a site-name such as 'X & vicinity' or 'X & area'. The grid references for common and uncommon plants are noted as above.

Habitat details are recorded for the sites visited, and also (if time) anything significant about a particular species or plant, e.g. abundance, or whether flowering or fruiting.

After each excursion I draw a map of the recording route so that the same route can be repeated on future visits, or avoided if different parts of a site or a square are to

be explored. The aim is to record each monad in the atlas sample as fully as possible, and more than one visit is required to do this. An early- and a late-season visit should catch most species. Ideally, a mid-season visit could be included too.

## **(2) Method for the next edition of the Rare Plant Register for VC 83**

Scarce or rare plants may be discovered during the fieldwork for the national atlas, and these records will be included in the next edition of the Rare Plant Register (RPR), if the species is a **self-sown and established native or archaeophyte**. The latter is an alien introduced before AD 1500, and long-established in the British or Irish flora. As well as new discoveries, searches are being made for previously-recorded, scarce or rare natives and archaeophytes, to see if they are still extant. All native and archaeophyte species with conservation designation, which occur in Midlothian, are included in the RPR whether or not they are scarce or rare in VC 83. All nationally scarce or rare species occurring in VC 83 are also included. National rarity depends on the number of hectads occupied in the most recent national atlas (15 or fewer, rare; 16-100, scarce). Local rarity is based on the number of sites a species has occupied from 1970 to date (1-3 sites, rare; 4-10 sites, scarce; more than 10 sites, too common for the RPR, unless the species has conservation designation). Most locally scarce or rare natives and archaeophytes are included in the RPR. The first edition of the RPR was published in the spring of 2014. I am aiming to produce the second edition after the end of 2019, when the data for the national atlas will have been gathered.

N.B. Native species or archaeophytes which have been deliberately planted are not eligible to be included in the RPR, unless a re-introduction or conservation scheme is in progress, which requires record or comment. Alien species introduced since AD 1500 (neophytes) and aliens which don't persist (casuals) are also ineligible, even though they may be scarce or rare.

### **Record submissions**

It is convenient if records are entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then sent as an e-mail attachment to the BSBI recorder for VC 83. A spreadsheet with suitable column headings is available on this website. If you have any difficulties with this mode of record submission, please contact the VC recorder (e-mail address below and elsewhere on this website).

Thank you, and enjoy yourselves,  
Barbara Sumner.

(BSBI recorder for VC 83; e-mail: [bsvc83-mail@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bsvc83-mail@yahoo.co.uk))