

RUMEX CRISPUS

Three distinct variants of the highly polymorphic *R. crispus* can be recognised in the British Isles and NW Europe, each associated with a particular type of habitat. There are also a number of other named taxa, but these are not very significant.

1. Nut 1.3-2.5 mm; tubercles of fruiting inner perianth-segments usually less than 2.5 mm, distinctly unequal in size, sometimes one only developed; weed of cultivation and ruderal communities
subsp. *crispus*
1. Nut 2.5-3.5 mm; tubercles of fruiting inner perianth-segments up to 3.5 mm, often subequal; plants of seashores and tidal muds 2
2. Stems usually less than 100 cm; inflorescence dense in fruit; plants of seashores, sand-dunes and salt marshes
subsp. *littoreus* (Hardy) Akeroyd
2. Stems 100-200 cm; inflorescence lax in fruit; plants of estuarine tidal mud
subsp. *uliginosus* (Le Gall)

Var. crispus occurs throughout the British Isles. *Var. littoreus* occurs all around the coast of these islands, but may be present as mixed or of littoral habitats. *Var. uliginosus* is a local but remarkably abundant plant of the rivers of southern Ireland (notably the estuary of the Shannon, and its tributary, the Fergus), and the rivers Wye and Avon in the Bristol Channel, with few records from elsewhere in southern Britain, and one in Scotland. It is much overlooked, and is worth a search on steep mud banks, especially near the limits of tidal influence.

- References** Akeroyd, J. R. & Briggs, D. (1983). Genecological studies in *Rumex crispus* L. *New Phytologist* **94**:309-323.
Akeroyd, J. R. (1989) *Watsonia* **17**:444.

Author J. R. Akeroyd, February 1988, updated 2012