

Plant Records, 2015.

The *Flora of Staffordshire* dealt with records made up until the end of 2011. This short account is the fourth annual report listing some of the more interesting results of later fieldwork.

Dates are 2015, unless stated otherwise.

New records for VC39

Agave americana: group of 5 plants, hedge, Fordhouses, SJ9003, P. Newton.

Chaerophyllum aureum: one, allotment, Jeffcock Road, Wolverhampton, SO9097, C.B. Westall.

Cotoneaster splendens: with scrub, overgrowing the disused railway, E of Sneyd Green, SJ8949, I.J. Hopkins.

Crataegus monogyna ssp. *azarella*: in hedgerow on the W side of a minor road, Stallington, SJ9439, J.E. Hawksford.

Crocsmia masoniorum 'Lucifer': flowering clump in rough grassland at Hazelslade, SK0212, IJH.

Cyclamen persicum: on base of bonsai imported from Netherlands, Ashwood Nurseries/Garden Centre, SO8687, CBW, 2012.

Eragrostis curvula: ten or so clumps in gaps between pavement surface and kerb stones, Poolhouse Estate, Wombourne SO8692, CBW.

Festuca glauca: in cracks in gully between wall and road (parents in nearby garden), Wombourne, SO8793, CBW.

Hippocrepis emerus: shrub with very distinctive yellow flowers on bank adjacent to Trent & Mersey Canal towpath between Etruria and Middleport, SJ8648, IJH.

Iris foetidissima var. *citrina*: a large clump, in full flower, just to the east of the rough path along a former railway, SK0515, IJH. This was probably the source of the seeds for the smaller colonies near the foot of the railway embankment: at least one of 3 clumps, there, had a few visible blooms.

I. orientalis: a large clump with very conspicuous white and yellow flowers, near to a rough path close to the rim of the former pit containing the pool, near Rawnsley Hills, SK0013, IJH.

Lavendula angustifolia: clump in rough grassland on restored former spoil mound, near Rawnsley Hills, SK0013, IJH.

Linum grandiflorum: several, not obviously cultivated, corner of car park, Bushbury Hill, SO8698, PN.

Liriodendron tulipifera: planted tree near the footpath on the western side of Trentham Lake, SJ8639, IJH.

Ophrys apifera var. *chlorthantha*: two plants in flower, with a possibly third similar plant with the end of its flowering spike bitten off c. 70m away This last also with the usual paler than normal foliage, Cannock Chase Country Park, SK0014, M. Hazell, conf. IJH.

Pontederia cordata: well-established at edge of a shallow pool, NW of Chasetown. SK0308. Certainly at this site for several years, IJH.

Sedum confusum: extending for 50 cm, edge of Wyrley & Essington Canal towpath, N of Willenhall, SJ9600, JEH & J. Handley.

Spiraea douglasii ssp. *menziesii*: with tall-herb vegetation by a track near Norton East, SK0208, IJH.

Ulmus pumila (or perhaps a hybrid with this as one parent): very narrow-leaved elm trees (presumably planted when the area was part of a golf course), NE of Adderley Green, SJ9245, IJH.

Verbascum phoeniceum: grassy hedgerow, Woodford Lane (over the bridge), Wombourne, SO8593, CBW.

Species seen again after a gap of several years

Hieracium grandidens: about 40, steep bank, southern edge of churchyard, plus a few on a bank on other side of lane, Sheriffhales, SJ7512, JEH & JH. First record since 1985.

Euphorbia platyphyllos: garden weed, Rushford Avenue, Wombourne SO8792; allotment, Jeffcock Road, SO9097: both CBW. Last recorded in 1987.

Salvia nemorosa: on a re-seeded bank between platform level and the street below, Longton railway station, SJ9043, IJH. First record since 1937.

New tetrads for rarer taxa

The following had been seen, previously, in a total of less than about seven tetrads, since 1994.

Betula utilis: introduced by a Greenway, near Hanley, SJ8748, IJH.

B. utilis var. *jacquemontii*: several in secondary woodland, Pendeford, SJ8903; a single planted street tree, Dunstall, SJ9100: both PN.

Botrychium lunaria: two plants in pasture, with *Viola lutea*, NW of Noon Sun, SK0462, E. Radford.

Brunnera macrophylla: one plant of the ordinary, green-leaved form (not the silver-leaved form that tends to be cultivated, today), at the edge of the northern limb of Knight's Wood, near Butterton, SJ8342, IJH.

Calystegia silvatica var. *quinquepartita*: growing through a roadside hedge, Marston, SJ9227, IJH.

Camelina sativa: 10m long strip, headland of cereal field, Wrottesley Park, SJ8401, PN; set-a-side, near Brantley Pool, Somerford, Four Ashes, SJ9008, S.R. Moore.

Chara vulgaris: attached to the bottom of a water-filled drain, Doxey Marshes, SJ9123, IJH.

Clematis montana: probably planted, roadside fence, Bushbury Hill, SJ9203, PN.

Conyza floribunda: one, pavement edge, Tettenhall, SJ8800, PN; waste ground, Wednesfield, SJ9400, JEH.

Crocsmia paniculata: a couple of clumps in rough grassland close to the rim of the former pit that now contains a pool, W of Rawsley Hills, SK0013, IJH. Plant was 'Aunt Eliza' of old gardens (and which is probably *C. paniculata* x *C. pottsii*).

Crocus x *luteus* (*C. angustifolius* x *flavus*): grass verge by road, Wrottesley Park/Nurton Hill, SJ8201; originally planted, but spreading over wide areas of grass verge, Wrottesley Hill, SJ8401; grass verge, planted but spreading, Wightwick, SO8798; planted, traffic island, Fordhouses, SJ9002: all PN.

Cymbalaria pallida: at the foot of a house wall, escaped from a nearby garden, SJ9047, IJH.

Epipactis purpurea: single double-flowered spike beside a footpath, Cotwall End Local Nature Reserve, SO9192, M. Waller, 2010.

Euphorbia characias: M6 Junction 10, Bentley, near Walsall, SO9998, M.R. Rand.

E. characias ssp. *veneta*: established on a slag-covered slope overlooking the Trent & Mersey Canal at Etruria, SJ8648, IJH.

Euphrasia confusa x *nemorosa*: a small colony, heathy ride in conifer plantation, The Million, Enville, SO8485, coll. M.E. Smith & A.P. Daly, 2009: det. C. Metherell, 2015.

Fraxinus angustifolia ssp. *oxycarpa*: one planted street tree, Dunstall, SJ9100, PN.

Fumaria capreolata: disturbed ground along edge of private road to Stafford Hockey & Cricket Club, SJ9222, W. Waller.

Gagea lutea: about 50 plants, with a half-dozen in flower, near the bank of a small tributary stream at Ilam Park, SK1250; one non-flowering, opposite Musden Grange, Ilam river bank, SK1251: both B. Machin.

Galanthus plicatus: a notably robust clump near Staffordshire & Worcester Canal, Wildwood Park, Stafford, SJ9320, S.R. Hinsley.

Gaultheria mucronata: a clump growing by the side of a track, NW of Cuckoo Bank, SK0210, IJH.

Hyacinthus orientalis: small patch, amenity grassland by houses, Wightwick, SO8799, PN.

Hydrocharis morsus-ranae: a few plants floating in the shallows of Rough Close Pond, SJ9239, IJH.

Hypericum montanum: one plant, railway sidings, S Stafford, SJ9222, T. Hart.

Hypopitys monotropa: on steep banks under *Salix cinerea* by the access road to Park Hall Country Park, SJ9244, IJH. Spikes from 2014 also present.

Isotoma axillaris: persisting in Jeffcock Road Allotments, Wombourne, SJ8920, CBW, 2013.

Lathyrus odoratus: one, straggling over nettles, in a verge by the track, SW of Kinver, SO8283, APD.

Leucanthemella serotina: grassland verge. Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, SO8990, CBW.

Lonicera tatarica: stream bank by main road over stream, Fordhouses, SJ9103, PN.

Lotus tenuis: a plant, amidst open vegetation, on the path/track running alongside (and below) the M6, W of Doxey Fields, SJ8924, IJH.

Malva alcea: a couple of clumps in rough grassland close to the rim of the former pit that now contains a pool, W of Rawnsley Hills, SK0013, IJH. This sp. is marginally more grey-looking than *M. moschata*.

Mentha x rotundifolia (*M. longifolia x suaveolens*): probable escape, lane near Crateford Wood, near houses, Four Ashes, SJ9009, SRM.

Paeonia officinalis: a clump amidst rough grassland close to the rim of the former pit W of the Rawnsley Hills, SK0013, IJH.

Physalis alkekengi: a single plant on a verge by the path that follows the course of the railway, near Longton, SJ9043, IJH.

Platanus orientalis: edge of old car park, SO8986, APD.

Polypodium x mantoniae (*P. vulgare x interjectum*): along a wall next to road, Back of Ecton, SK1057; quite a lot spread over woodland adjacent to Ilam Rock, SK1453: both M.F. Godfrey.

Polypogon monspeliensis: stoney ground almost beneath the M6 fly-over, affected by run-off from the motorway, W of Cresswell, SJ8925, IJH.

Primula x pruhonicensis (*P. vulgaris x juliae*): grass verge, SK06M, ER.

Prunus serrulata flore pleno: introduced by a stream, Middleport, SJ8649, IJH; seven pink-flowered plants, amenity grassland, Fordhouses, SJ9002, PN.

Pseudosasa japonica: long-standing garden throw-out by the Staffordshire & Worcester Canal, Brick Bridge; by the Wom Brook: both Wombourne. SO8692, CBW.

Quercus x crenata (*Q. cerris x suber*): a single tree and a further three in a tight group, all very mature, Wrottesley Hall, SJ8501, PN.

Salvia verbenaca: area of spoil/soil excavated a few years previously for a new marina: probably from seed-mix, Great Haywood, SJ9923, R. Middleton.

Sambucus nigra forma laciniata: a shrub with dissected leaves on waste ground at Longton, SJ9143, IJH. Either spontaneous, or a relic of cultivation.

Santolina chamaecyparissus: 'Lemon Queen' (sulphur coloured flowers), established on bank adjacent to light railway, Chasewater Country Park, SK0308, IJH.

Sasa palmata: spreading from adjacent garden, amenity grassland, Fordhouses, SJ9002, PN.

Scilla sardensis: several patches, edge of playing fields. Appears to be this rather than *S. forbesii*. Pendeford, SJ8803, PN.

Sedum anglicum: roadside, Four Ashes Bridge, SJ9308, SRM.

Senecio x albescens (*S. cineraria x jacobaea*): wide grass verge, N of Willenhall, SJ9501, JEH & JH; a few, wall by steps down to Trent & Mersey Canal from Branston Road at Branston Bridge, with *S. jacobea*, SK2121, JEH.

S. x subnebrodensis (*S. squalidus x viscosus*): edge of waste ground, pavement E side of Longbridge Hayes Road, Longport, SJ8549, JEH.

Sorbus thibetica (probably cv. 'John Mitchell'): a roadside tree with leaves in excess of 20 cm long, near Blythe Bridge, SJ9640; roadside tree, Hilderstone Road, SJ9338: both IJH.

Sparganium erectum ssp. *oocarpum*: Wyrley & Essington Canal, N of Walsall, SK0100, JEH; Wyrley & Essington Canal, N of Willenhall, SO9700, JEH & JH.

Spiraea x arguta (*S. thunbergii* x *multiflora*): introduced by the fence line preventing access to the train line, near Longton, SJ9043; shrub in Weston Sprink, SJ9243; small bush by the stream, Townsend, SJ9147: all IJH.

Stellaria palustris: N of Blithfield Reservoir, SK0526, MFG.

Tilia tomentosa: amenity planting on roadside, Bushbury Hill, SJ9203; many planted as street trees about 5 years previously, Fordhouses, SJ9003: both PN. Introduced tree, next to a path, at Festival Park, SJ8748, IJH.

Viburnum rhytidophyllum: planted on the bank between the A34 and a lay-by between Trentham and Tittensor, SJ8739, IJH.

Vicia lutea: Beacon Way, side of reservoir, Chasewater Country Park, SK0207, P.S. Worrall.

A selection of other observations concerning rarer taxa

In the Flora of Staffordshire, it is pointed out that recent research concluded that most of the many records for *Hieracium acuminatum*, in the county, are likely to be referable to either *H. argillaceum* or *H. consociatum*. The latter has longer teeth on its leaves. We now have a total of 21 sites for each of these. It is interesting that, in the BSBI Distribution Database, the totals for Britain and Ireland are far from equal, with 1071 for *H. argillaceum* and 382 for *H. consociatum*. There is no obvious difference in their overall areas of distribution and they occupy similar habitats.

In Staffordshire, we have 15 records for *Cotoneaster frigidus* (Tree Cotoneaster) and 44 for *C. x watereri* (Waterer's Cotoneaster), its hybrid with (the narrow-leaved) *C. salicifolius*. In Britain and Ireland, as a whole, the totals are, respectively 541 and 1029. It could be that we have been more careful in our determinations than some botanists, elsewhere, who have been more ready to record the pure species, rather than spotting the hybrid.

IJH produced large lists for the Chasewater Area, in 2015, but notes that, despite this, there were a number of rare plants that he failed to re-find. He wonders how many have survived the near-draining of Chasewater between 2011-2013 and the possible influence of that event on the local water table?

Ian also notes the *Euphrasia confusa* x *nemorosa* record, as listed above, and comments that Edees mentioned that this hybrid had been recorded several times, but without details. Ian suspects that we could add the far south-west of VC39 to the northern uplands of the vice-county as likely to provide interesting records of *Euphrasia*.