TARAXACUM SECTION NAEVOSA

Section Naevosa species are mostly found in the western and northern districts of the British Isles, becoming scarce in the south-east and midlands of England where they are mostly restricted to marshy semi-natural habitats. Elsewhere, they occur in a range of habitats from mountain cliffs to lane banks and grasslands, but they are rarely found in waste places as ruderals or weeds.

Fourteen species are known from the British Isles (Dudman & Richards 1997; Margetts 2007). In addition, *T. berthae* and *T. olgae* (section Celtica), western spotted relatives of *T. nordstedtii*, are also included in the key here as they have leaf spots; *T. fulgidum* may have blackish smudges along the midrib and is not covered (see section Celtica crib). Naevosa species are closely related to section Celtica species and might well be included in the latter section. They differ by a single conspicuous character, dark spotting on the upper surface of the leaf, a feature nearly unique to sections Naevosa and Spectabilia. Some but not all Naevosa species also have roughly hairy leaves. A western group (*T. ronae*, *T. drucei*, *T. cornubiense*, *T. pseudomarklundii*) exhibit distinctive, but inconsistent dark flecking on smooth, rather tenuous leaves.

Sections Naevosa and Spectabilia can be separated as follows:

Section Naevosa: Leaves typically roughly hairy, coarsely lobed; achene body (including cone) < 4.0 mm, narrowly top-shaped; outer row of exterior bracts erect to recurved; ligules striped grey, grey-purple, purple, red-purple, rarely red; pollen present or absent.

Section Spectabilia: Leaves typically spatulate, entire or shallowly lobed; achene body (including cone) > 4.5 mm, oblong; outer row of exterior bracts usually appressed; ligules usually with red stripes on lower side; pollen usually absent.

Otherwise leaf spotting is found in *T. inopinatum* (section Erythrosperm), *T. pycnostictum* (section Taraxacum) and *T. melanthoides* (section Ruderalia; very small spots).

Leaf spotting should not be confused with interlobe blotching (which is exhibited on both leaf surfaces in many section Hamata and Ruderalia), or damage from insects, fungi etc. (also usually on both surfaces, often brownish). Examination with a lens should reveal whether spotting is innate or environmental in origin.

References


1a. Species lacking pollen or almost so (pollen is extruded from anthers by the stigmas; check with a x20 lens)  (see page 4 for lead 1b)

2a. At least inner (upper) exterior bracts erect (3a-3b)

3a. Lateral leaf-lobes 2-4 pairs, sigmoid on distal margin (4a-4b)

4a. Stigmas blackish; exterior bracts green, lanceolate; achene body < 3.0 mm. Rare, Solway Firth  
   **T. olgae**

   ![Image of T. olgae](image1)

4b. Stigmas paler; exterior bracts pruinose; achene body > 3.0 mm (5a-5b)

5a. Exterior bracts ovate, bordered; leaves spatulate, scarcely hairy  
   **T. berthae**

   ![Image of T. berthae](image2)

5b. Exterior bracts lanceolate; leaves narrowly lanceolate, hairy  
   **T. maculosum**

   ![Image of T. maculosum](image3)
3b. Lateral leaf-lobes 5-7, ±straight on distal margin; exterior bracts not bluish or pruinose, crowded. *T. richardsianum*

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2b. All exterior bracts spreading to recurved (6a-6b)

6a. Petioles winged; exterior bracts mostly >3.0 mm wide, bordered, pruinose; ligules striped purple (7a-7b)

7a. Leaves densely bristly-hairy above, brownish-green; inner ligules tipped reddish, achene body >4.0 mm, chestnut. N Scotland beaches. *T. rufofructum* (*T. rubellum*, non M. P Christ)

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7b. Leaves sparsely hairy above, green; ligules tipped yellow; achenes brown, widespread. *T. euryphillum*
6b. Petioles ± unwinged; exterior bracts mostly <3.0 mm wide, unbordered; ligules striped brown

T. subnaevosum

1b. Species bearing pollen (8a-8b)
8a. At least inner (upper) exterior bracts erect throughout (9a-9b)
9a. Leaves hairy, thick; involucres crowded (see T. richardsianum); achenes with spines at top T. stictophyllum

9b. Leaves subglabrous, tenuous; terminal lobe obtuse to rounded; exterior bracts few; achene spines absent or few, leaf spots inconstant (10a-c)
10a. Terminal lobes of inner leaves mucronate; interlobes often present; exterior bracts bordered (Devon) T. pseudomarklundii
10b. Terminal leaf-lobes rounded, leaf-lobes cucullate; exterior bracts unbordered; stigmas pure yellow; scarce, Atlantic rocks and cliffs

10c. Terminal leaf-lobes obtuse but not rounded; exterior bracts few, narrowly bordered; achenes spinose at apex. South-west England and Ireland

8b. All exterior bracts spreading to recurved (sometimes suberect at apex) (11a-11b)

11a. Exterior bracts <3.0 mm in width, recurved; leaves subglabrous above (12a-12b)

12a. Leaves heavily suffused with coalescing spots at first, spots fading; distal leaf-lobes entire. Widespread in N Britain
**Plant Crib 3**


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**12b.** Spots small, discrete, punctate, inconstant; distal leaf-lobes dentate. Cornwall

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**11b.** Exterior bracts >3.0 mm in width, spreading to suberect distally; leaves bristly hairy above (13a-13b)

**13a.** Upper surface of leaves dull grey-green, densely hairy; stigmas orange. Shetland

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**13b.** Upper surface of leaves mid to dark green, rather sparsely hairy; stigmas yellowish, becoming discoloured when dry. Widespread in N Britain (14a-14b)

**14a.** Open capitula >50 mm in diameter; leaf-lobes subpatent
14b. Open capitulum usually <50 mm in diameter; leaf-lobes heavily recurved

T. naevosiforme