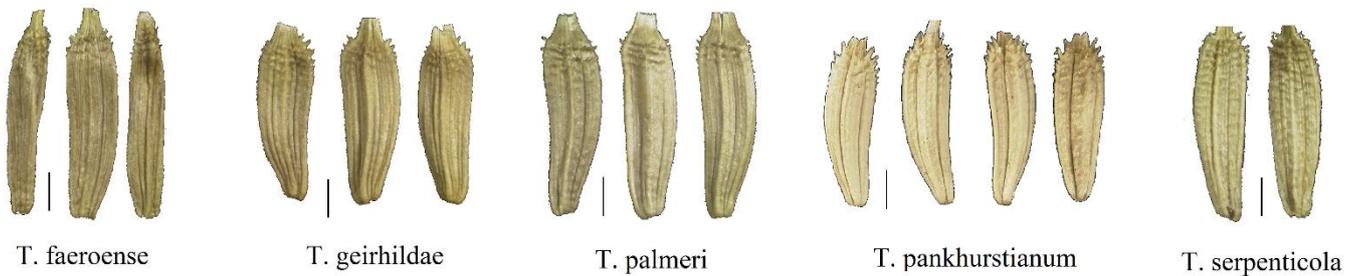


TARAXACUM SECTION SPECTABILIA

Taraxacum Section *Spectabilia* (Dahlst.) Dahlst. comprises 5 species in Britain and Ireland, of which *T. faeroense* is widespread and the remaining 4 species are very rare in Scotland (3 are endemic). Most species found in semi-natural wet acidic upland sites.

Section *Spectabilia* comprises about 25–30 species mainly from the North Atlantic region of Europe. They are characterized by being small to medium-sized plants with olive-green or grey-green, entire or simply lobed, spatulate leaves which are variable spotted or blotched, red and green striped midribs, erect to appressed exterior bracts, red to purple-striped ligules and 4–5 mm long, broad achenes (seeds), and most lack pollen (Dudman & Richards, 1997).

Section *Naevosa* species also show spotting or blotching on the leaves, and are the species most likely to be confused with Section *Spectabilia*. Section *Naevosa* species typically have roughly hairy, coarsely lobed leaves, narrowly top-shaped achenes less than 4.0 mm long, erect to recurved outer exterior bracts, grey, grey-purple, purple, red-purple (rarely red) -striped ligules, and pollen present or absent.



Achenes of Section *Spectabilia* species. Scale bars 1 mm.

Margins of bracts ciliate, often more hairy in bud

Bracts ovate to lanceolate; pollen absent. St Kilda

T. pankhurstianum

Bracts oblong-lanceolate; pollen usually present. Shetland

T. palmeri

Margins of bracts glabrous (rarely with a very few hairs)

Pollen present; ligule stripes dark purplish-grey; capitula 45-50 mm across. Shetland

18a. T. geirhildae

Pollen absent; ligule stripes pink to deep carmine; capitula 30-40 mm across

Leaves thick, leathery, nearly unlobed; bracts purple-flushed. Shetland **18b. T. serpenticola**

Leaves thin, usually lobed (rarely unlobed); bracts green (rarely purple-flushed at apex).

Widespread and common in much of the north and west.

18. T. faeroense

18. *Taraxacum faeroense* Faeroes Dandelion

Widespread in Britain and Ireland but very scarce in the lowlands. It typically occurs in damp or wet grasslands and beside streams, rarely on rocks.

This variable species is characterised by the dark, spotted, unlobed or 2–5 lobed leaves with coloured petioles, the heads to 40 mm wide, the ovate to lanceolate exterior bracts with glabrous margins (occasionally a few hairs may be present), the streaky reddish-striped ligules and the absence of pollen. It is quite variable in size and leaf shape depending on growth conditions. Achene body 4.0-4.5(-5.0) mm with cone (0.2-)-0.3-0.5(-0.6) mm.



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18a. *Taraxacum geirhildae* Shetland Dandelion

Endemic to Mainland, Shetland (V.c. 112) where it grows on grassy ledges and niches amongst the rocks, rarely in open heathy grassland (Palmer & Scott 1995; Scott 2011).

This species is characterised by the unlobed, sparsely spotted, broadly obovate leaves with a strongly contrasting midrib, the large heads 45-50 mm across, bracts slightly glaucous with glabrous margins, the dark purplish-grey striped ligules, the discoloured styles when fresh, presence of pollen and achenes 4.3-4.6 mm.



It differs from *T. faeroense* in the larger, deeper yellow heads with dark purplish-grey stripes, and presence of pollen (no pollen, pinkish-red ligule stripe). The leaves are also thicker in texture and glossy (dull in *T. faeroense*).

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18b. *Taraxacum serpenticola* Serpentine Dandelion

Endemic to serpentine on Unst, Shetland (V.c. 112), where it occurs in grassy places amongst serpentine rocks (Scott & Palmer 1987; Scott 2011).

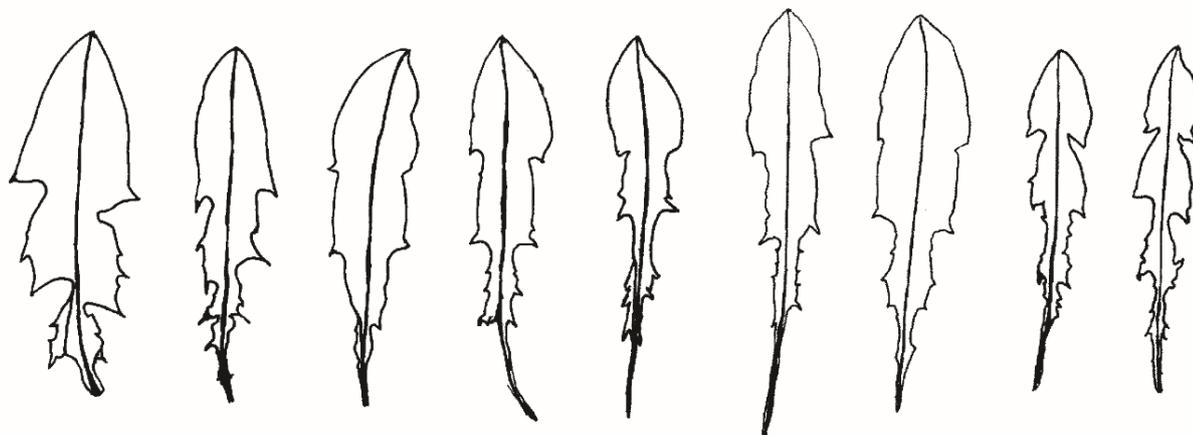
This species has \pm unlobed leaves, small capitula 30–35 mm across, ovate to broadly ovate narrowly bordered bracts with glabrous margins, deep carmine (solid) ligule stripes, no pollen and achenes with many spines and a very short cone.



Taraxacum palmeri Palmer's Dandelion

Rare in Mainland Shetland (V.c. 112) where it grows on riverside rocks, and in the Faeroes (Scott & Rich 2013).

This species characterized by the leaves with sparse, pale brown spots and \pm unlobed with 2 lateral lobes on each side, the lobes convex on the distal margins, the large (35–)40–50(–55) mm diameter, deep yellow capitula, the oblong-lanceolate, narrowly bordered outer bracts with ciliate margins, the pale to dark greyish-purple striped ligules and sparse pollen.



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Taraxacum pankhurstianum Pankhurst's Dandelion

Endemic to St Kilda (V.c. 110), where it grows in open damp grassland mainly around the settlement and quarries.

This species has \pm unlobed to shallowly lobed, leathery leaves which are hairy above, ovate to lanceolate exterior bracts with hairy margins and surfaces (the latter more noticeable in bud), ligules with a pink stripe, discoloured styles and no pollen (Richards & Ferguson-Smyth, 2012).



Taraxacum pankhurstianum is currently thought to be the only species present on St Kilda, but *T. faeroense* could also be present (this lacks the fringed bracts and has a deeper red ligule stripe).

Plant Crib 3

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