

WILTSHIRE BOTANICAL SOCIETY



Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* © Dave Green

EDITOR'S FIRST PAGE



Welcome to the latest edition of the WBS newsletter. I could not resist placing our Chairman, Dave Green's photograph of Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* on the front cover. He came across this stunning patch of 'rabbit-tails' whilst searching through his local landfill site last autumn.

Dave also features in the first item. As many of you will know, he travels on occasion to the Wye Valley and the surrounding areas to seek out, study and record the many native Whitebeam *Sorbus* species and sub-species that grow there. In 2013, he discovered two new species to science, Green's Whitebeam *Sorbus greenii* (named for him), and Herefordshire Whitebeam *Sorbus herefordensis*

and now he has been at it again. This article first appeared in *British & Irish Botany* 6 (1): 1-6, 2024. and is printed in the original style. Although the detail is not Wiltshire's, I hope you will find this of interest.

Fran Sinclair has been walking along the Kennet and Avon canal and discovering Beggarticks *Bidens frondosa*. In turn this led to an interest of what might be discovered in herbaria not least Donald J Grose's collection at the Devizes Museum.

Someone else wandering the countryside is Steve Jackson who discovered an interesting Elm *Ulmus* ssp. 'in the middle of nowhere' posing the question of how it got there?

Richard Aisbitt and Kat Newbert give us a round-up of the plants discovered in 2024 following which is list of plants new to the County, Vice-county and new to a 10km square (hectad). Of particular note this year is the finding of Small Goosegrass *Galium murale*, firstly in Chippenham by Sam Braine and then coincidentally, later in the year, second and third records on the same day by Sharon Pilkington and, Richard Aisbitt. This diminutive leaved goosegrass has the appearance of young or perhaps trodden on Cleavers or Goosegrass *Galium aparine*. Are we all missing this plant?

There then follows the round-up list of the new 10 km square (hectad) records for 2024. Perennial Beard-grass *Polypogon fugax* has been discovered anew in VC7 by Fran Sinclair and at the end of the article there is a note of Dave Green and Kat Newbert's efforts to discover more.

Obituary: Sadly, we have to report the passing of Barbara Last, a founder member of the Wiltshire Botanical Society; we include a short obituary.

A new species of *Aria* (Rosaceae) from the Wye Valley, Wales

D. Green
Bradford-on-Avon, UK

Corresponding author: d.green7@btinternet.com

This pdf constitutes the Version of Record published on 21 June 2024

Abstract

Aria wyensis D.Green is a new endemic species of whitebeam from the Wye Valley, Wales. It is a member of the *Aria porrigentiformis* group with small (6–9 cm), broadly obtrullate to oblanceolate leaves with few (5–7) pairs of lateral veins, prominent, forward-facing, acuminate, biserrate lobes and small (5–6 cm across), few-flowered inflorescences. Flow cytometry indicates it is tetraploid. The population when first found consisted of 16 trees but this number has subsequently been reduced due to inappropriate action by climbers to 12 trees. Conservation action is required to prevent further loss.

Keywords: *Aria wyensis*; Critically Endangered; endemic; *Sorbus*; whitebeam.

Introduction

In 2012, whilst looking for whitebeams in the Wye Valley, Wales, I found a distinctive population of trees in a small quarry which differed from other whitebeams known in Britain and Ireland (Rich et al., 2010; Rich et al., 2014). The trees have been studied for ten years and are here described as a new species.

I follow the recent split of *Sorbus* sensu lato in Europe (Sennikov & Kurtto, 2017) and describe it as a member of *Aria* (Pers.) Host (= *Sorbus* subgen. *Aria* Pers.).

Aria wyensis D.Green **sp. nov.**

HOLOTYPE. Wynd Cliff Quarry, St Arvens, v.c.35 Monmouthshire, Wales, SO5307797377, 75 m altitude, 20 July 2022, D.E. Green (**NMW** accession no.V.2023.004.1, Fig. 1. Isotype: herb. **D.E. Green**).

Wynd Cliff whitebeam

Description

Shrub to at least 6 m tall. Bark of the larger trunks brown with lenticels. Leaf buds ovoid-conical, acute, pilose. Broad leaves of short sterile shoots (6–)7–9 × (4–)5–6(–6.5) cm, 1.3–1.5 times as long as wide, obtrullate to obovate in outline and widest at 50%–64% of the way along the leaf length, base cuneate, apex acute, with distinct lobes up to 3 mm deep with pronounced acuminate tips, the toothing biserrate reducing down to nil at the base, pairs of veins 5–7(–8) augmented by finer tertiary veins, held at an angle of 25–32° to the midrib, upper side of the

young leaf shiny, bright green when young, aging to a mat green at maturity, lower side greyish-green tomentose with some arachnoid hairs on veins. Petioles 10–20(–25) mm. Inflorescences 5–6 cm across, flat-topped with a slight crowning. Flowers 10–14 mm across. Sepals bright green, narrowly triangular with a blunt tip, sparsely glandular, arachnoid hairs on the margins. Petals 4.0–4.5 mm long, orbicular to round, creamy white. Anthers cream with slight pink/red tinge. Styles 2, free almost to base. Largest fruit 10–12 × 12–15 mm, wider than long but mostly globose or almost cuboid in some aspects, dark orange in colour maturing to red with small lenticels. Seed 6–7 × 1–2 mm, dark brown; shiny, with longitudinal striations on the top face which is convex with two longitudinal ridges. Chromosome number: flow cytometry of three samples indicates that this specimen is a tetraploid (pers. comm. Jaume Pellicer 2012).

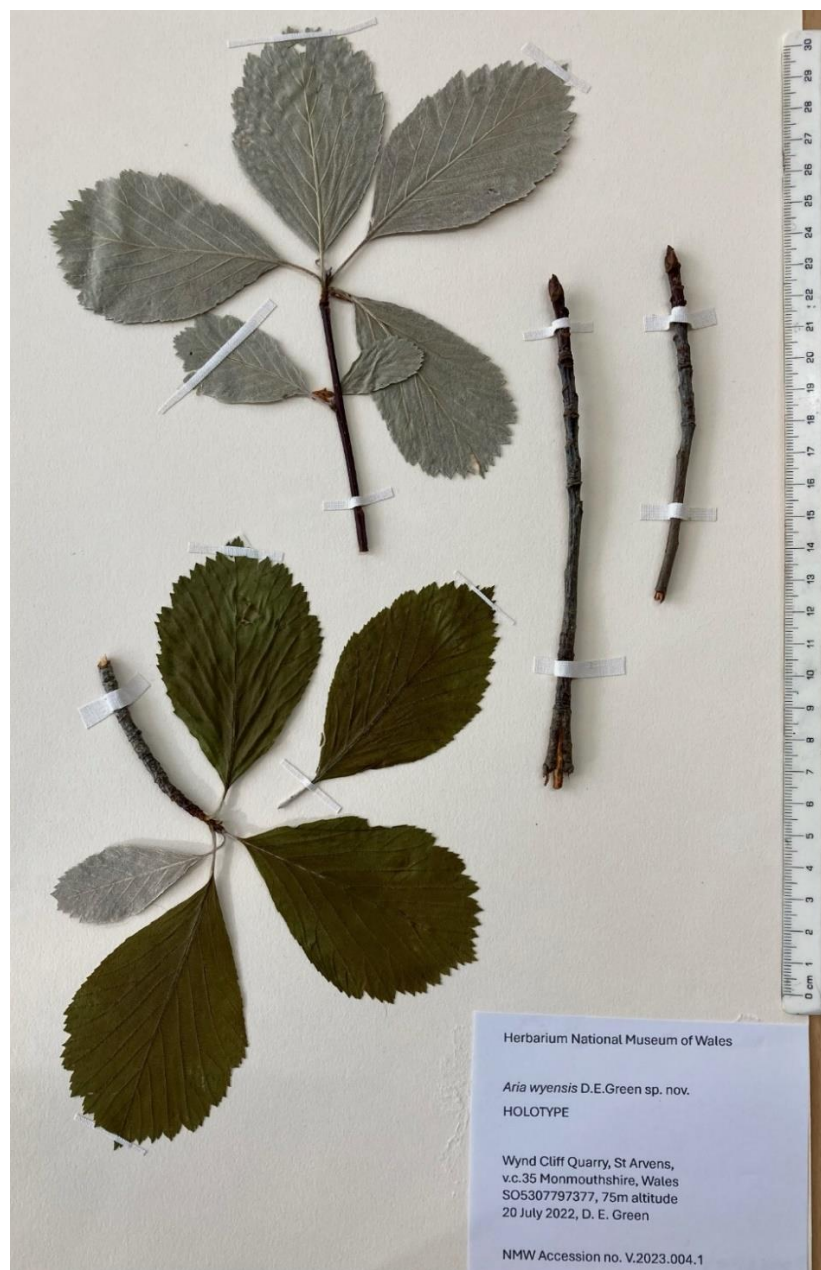


Figure 1. Holotype of *Aria wyensis* (NMW)

Aria wyensis is a member of the *Aria* with simple leaves that are tomentose underneath and red fruits, and it has clear affinities to the *A. porrigentiformis* (E.F. Warb.) Sennikov & Kurtto *sensu lato* group. Within *Aria*, *A. wyensis* is characterised by the small, broadly obtrullate to obovate leaves with few pairs of lateral veins, prominent, forward-facing, acuminate, biserrate lobes and small, few-flowered inflorescences (Figs. 2-4).



Figure 2. Typical leaves of *Aria wyensis* from short lateral shoots



Figure 3. *Aria wyensis* inflorescence in bud



Figure 4. *Aria wyensis* fruits

Aria wyensis is similar to some other species of *Aria* which grow in the lower Wye valley (Rich *et al.*, 2009 updated by Rich *et al.*, 2019). It is most similar to the triploid *Aria greenii* (T.C.G. Rich) Sennikov & Kurtto but lacks the prominent leaf apex of that species. The tetraploid *A. porrigentiformis* differs in its scarcely lobed but regularly toothed leaves and larger inflorescences, as does the triploid *A. evansii* (T.C.G. Rich) Sennikov & Kurtto. The triploid *A. saxicola* (T.C.G. Rich) Sennikov & Kurtto has narrowly obovate leaves. The tetraploids *S. eminens* (E.F. Warb.) Sennikov & Kurtto and *S. parviloba* (T.C.G. Rich) Sennikov & Kurtto both have larger, broadly elliptical leaves. The variable diploid *Aria edulis* (Willd.) M. Roem (= *Sorbus aria* (L.). Crantz) differs in having leaves typically ovate to elliptic with 9–14 pairs of veins and fruits longer than wide.

Aria wyensis also differs in that leaf-burst and flowering is consistently three weeks later than the other *Aria* species (I have noted this over 10 separate springs). The growth mode in this single locality is multi-stemmed and shrublike, which may be partly due to cutting back of stems by climbers.

All known trees show little variation in leaf, flower or fruit.

Distribution

Aria wyensis appears to be a Welsh endemic, limited to a single quarry and associated cliffs near the Wynd Cliff, Lower Wye Valley, v.c.35 Monmouthshire. It occurs as a pioneer species growing on spoil on two quarry benches in a recently disused, SE-facing carboniferous limestone quarry (Fig. 5). Other whitebeams and relatives occurring here are *Aria edulis*, *A. eminens*, *A. porrigentiformis* and *Sorbus aucuparia*.



Figure 5. Dave Green with *Aria wyensis*, 2017. Image: T.C.G. Rich

Origins

Like other members of the *A. porrigentiformis* group, the tetraploid ploidy level suggests it is probably derived indirectly as a cross between the diploid *Aria edulis* and a member of the *A. porrigentiformis* group though exactly how is unclear due to the relatively uncommon characters of small, lobed leaves with few veins.

It must have arrived in the quarry as seed, possibly fallen from parent trees on the adjacent, near-vertical cliffs above the quarry.

Conservation status

With the small, declining population restricted to one locality it is IUCN (2022) Red List Category 'Critically Endangered' (Criteria A, B, C and D).

It was first found and collected by D.E. Green in 2012 when 16 individuals were recorded. In 2017, only 12 bushes were present, the population reduced by unofficial inappropriate management by climbers. The quarry is part of the Lower Wye Valley SSSI, and Natural Resources Wales are now aware of its occurrence. Twelve bushes were still present in 2022.

Etymology

This epithet is derived from the Wye Valley where *A. wyensis* occurs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Martin Lepší, Jaume Pellicer and Tim Rich for their help and Sally Whyman for help at **NMW**.

References

- IUCN 2022. *Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria version 15.1 (July 2022)*. Gland: International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- Rich, T.C.G., Charles, C.A., Houston, L. & Tillotson, A. 2009. The diversity of *Sorbus* L. (Rosaceae) in the Lower Wye Valley. *Watsonia* 27:301-313.
- Rich, T.C.G., Houston, L., Robertson, A. & Proctor, M.C.F. 2010. Whitebeams, *Rowans and Service Trees of Britain and Ireland. A monograph of British and Irish Sorbus* L. BSBI Handbook no 14. London: Botanical Society of the British Isles.
- Rich, T.C.G., Green, D., Houston, L., Lepší, M., Ludwig, S. & Pellicer, J. 2014. British *Sorbus* (Rosaceae): Six new species, two hybrids and a new subgenus. *New Journal of Botany* 4:1-12.
- Rich T.C.G., Houston, L. & Tillotson, A.C. 2019. *Sorbus* diversity in the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC, Wales. *NRW Evidence Report Series no: 332*. Cardiff: Natural Resources Wales.
- Sennikov, A.N. & Kurtto, A. 2017. A phylogenetic checklist of *Sorbus* s.l. (Rosaceae) in Europe. *Memoranda Soc. Fauna Flora Fennica* 93:1-78. 2017.

Copyright retained by author(s). Published by BSBI under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

ISSN: 2632-4970

<https://doi.org/10.33928/bib.2024.06.001>

The Grose Herbarium, Wiltshire Archaeology & Natural History Society, Wiltshire Museum, Devizes

An enthusiastic talk at the BSBI conference in November 2024 urged members to make use of the excellent resources of herbaria, so when I found myself wondering about historical plant records in Wiltshire I asked the local fount of botanical knowledge, Dave Green, and learnt that the nearest one isn't at Kew or the Natural History Museum in London but in Devizes.

I had become intrigued by the spread along the Kennet & Avon canal of Beggarticks *Bidens frondosa* after initially finding a specimen in 2023 – a year after Dave Green achieved the first County record at Murhill – and I subsequently found plants scattered along the canal from Limpley Stoke to the northern edge of Devizes. The harpoon-like spines on the achenes are fascinating, especially as they are the best diagnostic feature to separate *B. frondosa* from Trifid Bur-marigold *B. tripartita*.

Bearing in mind that the species' first record in Britain was in 1953 on the Worcester & Birmingham canal, I found myself wondering why it took so long to reach Wiltshire and if, therefore, some historic records of *B. tripartita* may have been *B. frondosa*.

On the Wiltshire Museum's website (see below) it is very easy to search for your general and specific areas of interest via the Collections tab. You can then fill in a request form listing the items you would like to see and book a visit via the Archive and Library page.

In a research room, with the wonderful scent of old leather-bound books, I was able to study a box of voucher specimens from Donald Grose's herbarium. This was part of his Asteraceae collection, with three *Bidens* pages. One was Nodding Bur-marigold *B. cernua* – my first meeting with the plant in the flesh, albeit desiccated – and two were *B. tripartita*. One was a very nicely mounted specimen collected by Grose at Staverton in 1962 and there could be no doubt about its identity. The other was showing its age rather, as it was collected in 1884 by W Hussey, Esq. in Salisbury.

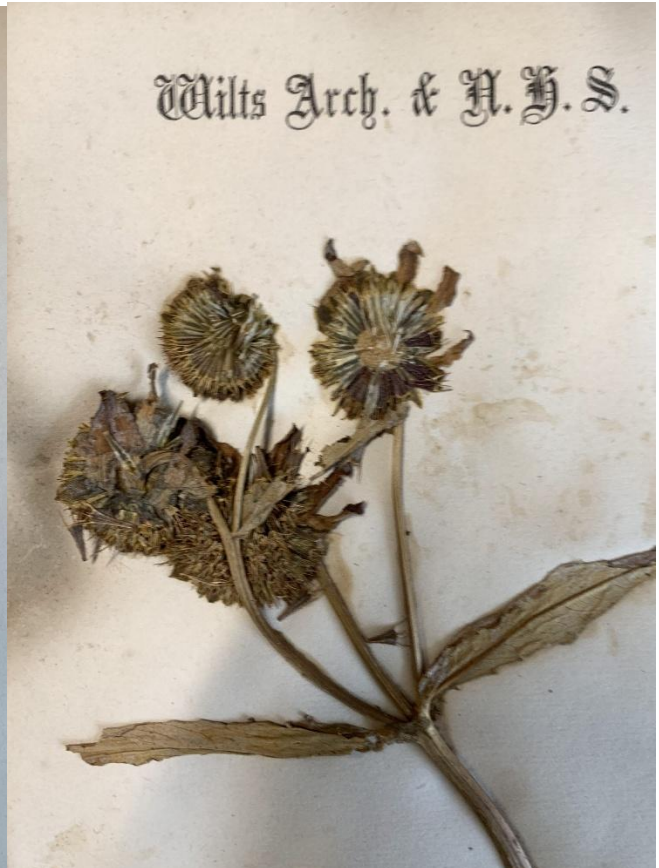
There was no disappointment in not finding *B. frondosa* in the repository as the whole experience was very satisfying. There were interesting diversions in the box, too, among them were several specimens of Small Cudweed *Filago minima*, and a beautifully pressed Leopard's Bane *Doronicum pardalianches*.

The staff could not be more welcoming and helpful, and it is, indeed, an amazing resource.

<https://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk> and see the Collections drop-down menu.

<https://bsbi.org/herbaria> for a list of 166 herbaria in the UK.

Fran Sinclair



Bidens tripartita above left, and, *B. Cernua* above right. Photographs by Fran Sinclair, with kind permission of the Curator, Devizes Museum. Below, left and right, Beggarticks *Bidens frondosa* found by Fran on the Kennet & Avon Canal, both © Fran Sinclair.



Siberian Elm – an unusual hedgerow tree

Dr Steve Jackson

I was progressing down the Woodford Valley (north of Salisbury) in a southerly direction on the 1st November 2024 when my friend with whom I was walking directed my attention to a particular tree. At first, I showed little interest, but was urged to examine it more closely. On so doing, it transpired that it was not something I had encountered before. Perplexed, I consulted the identification apps on my phone – we were birding, not botanizing, so had no ID books to hand. Alas, the results were inconclusive. **Obsidentify** was 96% sure it was an elm (*Ulmus*); **Flora Incognita** was 94% sure it was Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila*); **LeafSnap** suggested Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*); while **PlantNet** was 81% sure it was Siberian Elm (*U. pumila*). So definitely an elm! And quite possibly Siberian Elm!

Back at home where ID guides were available, I consulted Rose, Streeter, and Stace, to no avail. And nothing in older books such as Clapham, Tutin and Warburg. Forestry Commission Booklet 42 *Field recognition of British Elms* shed no light, neither did Brian Eversham's [*Identifying British Elms Ulmus*](#). But it did mention *pumila* as a hybrid – so at least some progress. Finally, I looked at Alan Mitchells's *A field guide to the trees of Britain and northern Europe*. Yes! Siberian Elm, but, "Rare; a few collections mainly in S. England" and obviously non-native as it originates from "Siberia, Turkmen, Manchuria, Korea" and appears to have been introduced in 1860. He also noted that it has often been confused with the Chinese Elm, not surprising then that the apps disagreed with each other! See this [article](#) by Leopold 1980.

But I was still not sure. County Recorders! Yes! These are useful and helpful folk. The photos and leaf samples were sent to Kat Newbert who kindly confirmed my suspicion of Siberian Elm.





With this confirmation, I delved deeper into the literature. Firstly with [Wikipedia](#) which was quite helpful in providing additional information. It appears that in north America it is invasive and hybridizes with the native *Ulmus rubra* (Slippery Elm) and likewise in Spain and Italy where it readily hybridizes with *Ulmus minor* (Small-leaved Elm). In the UK, there is only one record in the BSBI database (Andover) and three records in iNaturalist – York, Sheffield and Winchester. But it does occur more frequently in arboreta such as RBG Wakehurst Place, the Hillier Gardens, Westernbirt Arboretum, and in the Brighton & Hove Plant Heritage (NCCPG) Elm collection. It also appears to be resistant to Dutch elm disease and is listed as a hybrid in Butterfly Conservation's *Disease-resistant elm cultivars*. Siberian Elm hybrids could be important if the English countryside is to recover from the deprivations of Dutch elm disease in the 1970s and the elm is to regain its iconic status as depicted by John Constable in numerous paintings. Nevertheless, care would need to be taken as Siberian Elm may show a degree of allelopathy* as demonstrated on common species under laboratory conditions ([Prerez-Corona et al. 2013](#)); and the invasiveness ([Lykholat et al. 2018](#)) and potential to hybridize could impinge on native vegetation and native elms.

We should also not forget that the elm had shown a significant decline in the Neolithic period variously linked to human activity or disease ([Friman 1996](#); [Batchelor et al. 2014](#)).

Lastly, why was the tree there? It was a hedgerow, so there is the possibility that it was planted – but it would be a very unusual choice as a hedgerow tree. It may have arisen from a local seed source. Two nearby estates (Heale House and Little Durnford Manor) may have been the origin of the seed but this is speculation needing further investigation.

[* Allelopathy is the release of a toxin to suppress or inhibit the growth of nearby plants -Ed.]

Wiltshire plant report 2024

The Wiltshire Botanical Society finished a county-wide plant survey for the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) Atlas 2020 at the end of 2019. This left some gaps in this one-kilometre square scale survey, and we have been filling these gaps in the following years. During 2024, we made around 40,000 new records, which brings us down to 68 monads (1km squares) with few or no recent records. This is out of around 4,000 such squares in Wiltshire. Some of the under-recorded monads are difficult or impossible to access on the Salisbury Plain Training Area, but we hope to fill many of the gaps during 2025.

With all this data, we plan to produce a new county flora; the last one was published in 1993. A small group has been exploring options for publication, both in book form and on the web. We are busy looking at the occurrence data for all the Wiltshire taxa and planning the writing of species accounts and longer articles.

The previous Wiltshire Flora was based on a full county survey, so we now have two data sets to compare and can assess gains and losses for all the various plants. The raw counts and distribution maps for each species will show changes but can be influenced by differences in the thoroughness of recording. Statistical analysis like that used for monumental BSBI Atlas 2020 (and the 2014 England Red List for plants) would tell us more. This analysis was based on Mark Hill's Frescalo software, which compensates for differences in recording effort, and provides confidence limits for the changes seen. Colin Harrower and Oli Pescott of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology worked on the data for Atlas 2020 and have provided me with advice and computer code to carry out the analysis. It is a work-in-progress but hopefully will give us more confidence in assessing any changes in plant distributions.

Many of our new records are garden and farm plants escaping and establishing themselves in the wild, but several other native plants have made a first appearance. The most spectacular and unexpected of these was Bladderwort *Utricularia australis*, which appeared in a recently cleared and re-profiled woodland pond in the newly-acquired WWT reserve, Great Wood, Grittenham. It was abundant across the pond and flowered profusely, which made distinction from the vegetatively similar *U. vulgaris* possible. Its origin is unknown, but it could have come from fragments carried on a bird's feet.

The orchid hybrid *Ophrys x flahaultii* (*O. apifera* x *sphegodes*) was another surprising and unusual find, appearing on a grass verge. One of the parents, *O. apifera*, is widespread and increasing in Wiltshire, but *O. sphegodes* has not been seen here since 1989.

We gained a new *Bidens*, Fern-leaved Beggarticks *B. ferulifolia*. Another, plain Beggarticks *B. frondosa* was first spotted in 2022, and is continuing its progress eastwards along the Kennet and Avon Canal, and has now reached Devizes

Although noticed in 2023, we had our first records for Tiny Goosegrass *Galium murale* in both VC7 and VC8. The VC7 plants were in a concrete crack outside my garage! There were also Ivy Broomrape *Orobanche hederæ* and *Polypogon fugax*, both new to VC7.

We ran a BSBI dandelion weekend in April based in Devizes at the Wildlife Trust offices (thanks to Jon at the record centre for hosting this), led by the national expert John Richards. Dandelions reproduce apomictically (without pollination) and have split into over a hundred distinct (to the expert) microspecies, which are effectively clones. Most botanists do not tackle the subtle differences between microspecies and record them as just 'Dandelion' (*Taraxacum* agg.) Wiltshire is poorly-recorded for *Taraxacum* microspecies, so this was a wonderful opportunity for the twenty or so taraxophiles ('dandelion lovers') to put things right. We visited Oliver's Castle, Pewsey Downs, Webb's Wood, and Clattinger Farm, topping this up with urban Devizes. We made exciting finds, but I have yet to receive the final list – some have to be identified from plants grown on from seed.

That's the good news, now the bad. Hampshire-based Tristan Norton and Martin Rand found and mapped Water-primrose *Ludwigia grandiflora* growing abundantly around Sturtmoor Pond and its outflow (boundary peculiarities put the pond in VC8 South Wiltshire, but in the administrative county of Hampshire). This thuggish alien throw-out will be a challenge to eliminate.

Richard Aisbitt and Kat Newbert

Wiltshire plant records 2024

Introduction

The recording of the remaining 1km squares in the county toward the publication of the Flora of Wiltshire 2000 to 2024 continued this year with several areas covered that had not been visited before even for the *Wiltshire Flora* 1993 publication. As a result, many of the records were of very common species and so extensive that the account below has had to be limited.

The following list, however, contains all species, both native and non-native, which are new to the County or Vice-counties as well as those new to a 10k square. ['New' refers to records gathered since the early 1980's and the publication of the 1993 *Wiltshire Flora*.]

The information contains both scientific and common names based on the *New Flora of the British Isles 4th edition* (Stace); together with site, 10k square, brief description where supplied and the initials of the recorder [Recorders and their initials can be found at the end.] First County or Vice-county records appear in bold italics.

Plant species new to Wiltshire

Allium cepa (Onion); North Wraxhall (ST8275), mature plants originating from garden throw-out, FB & FS.

Carex comans (New Zealand Hair-sedge); Westbury (ST85), garden escape, FS.

Carthamus lanatus (Downy Safflower); Swindon, Old Town (SU1483), a single flowering plant at the base of a street tree, RAi.

Cucurbita maxima (Pumpkin); Trowbridge (ST8558), growing out of spoil heap, FS.

Galium murale (Small Cleavers); Chippenham (ST918745), Frequent patches found over 30m at pavement/kerb edge and, kerb to road angle, SBr. ***1st County record***



Trowbridge (ST8358), at wall to kerb and pavement angles in residential area and locally abundant; Trowbridge (ST8458), an enormous and extensive population in pavement cracks and road, kerb, and wall angles along Broadmead and adjoining roads, both SPi. 2nd County record.

Swindon, Old Town (SU1483), Goddard Avenue, back alley; several plants in concrete cracks in front of garage door, RAi. 3rd County record. [SPi and RAi records found the same day.]

Photo left: *Galium murale*
© Richard Aisbitt

Iberis sempervirens (Perennial Candytuft); Bradford-on-Avon (ST86), garden escape, FS.

Nicotiana alata (Sweet Tobacco); Trowbridge (ST8558), growing out of spoil heap, FS.

Oenothera stricta (Fragrant Evening-primrose); Westbury (ST8651), HCr & DG.

Salvia microphylla (Baby Sage); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8260), The variety 'Hot Lips' growing at wall to pavement angle outside Westbury Gardens, FS.

Sutera cordata (Bacopa) Upavon (SU1355), two plants at foot of The Ship pub wall, probably self-sown from previous hanging baskets, JRM; Trowbridge (ST8557), single at wall to pavement angle, FS.

Taraxacum insigne (A dandelion); Codford St.Mary (ST965399), single at pavement edge, DLe.

Thalictrum delavayi (Chinese Meadow-rue); Green Lane Wood Nature Park (ST8757), garden escape, near new pond adjacent to housing estate, RAi.

Utricularia australis (Bladderwort); Grittenham, Great Wood (SU0282), dominant over the whole width of a pond, RAi & SPi.

Verbascum speciosum (Hungarian Mullein); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8361), self-set plant, FS.

VC7 North Wiltshire

Alisma lanceolatum (Narrow-leaved Water-plantain); Ravensroost Meadow (SU0287), in a large pond, WBS.

Allium oleraceum (Field Garlic); Bradford-on-Avon (ST86), in Belcombe Road, FS.

Allium schoenoprasum (Chives); Malmesbury, south (ST98), single clump, DG & FS.

Althaea officinalis (Marsh-mallow); Broad Hinton (SU1175), four plants at field edge of lucerne and clover crop, RAi.

Anisantha diandra (Great Brome); Spirthill (ST97), in the corner of a cornfield, DG & FS.

Arum italicum (Italian Lords-and-Ladies); Maisey Hampton (SU19), self-seeded into hedgerow from nearby garden, MBu.

Atriplex littoralis (Grass-leaved Orache); Notton PRV, (ST9169) east side of A350 at road edge, RAi, KAn & EGr.

Atropa belladonna (Deadly Nightshade); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8261), self-sown in garden, FS.

Barbarea intermedia (Medium-flowered Winter-cress); Yatton Keynell (ST87), FS; Froxfield, south-west (SU26), at arable field edge, RAi.

Barbarea stricta (Small-flowered Winter-cress); Great Cumberwell, landfill site (ST86), Ten or more plants. First record since 1990, DG.

Bidens ferulifolia (Fern-leaved Beggarticks); Trowbridge (ST85), Park House, self-sown FS.

1st VC7 record

Camelina sativa (Gold-of-Pleasure); Melksham (ST96), at kerb angle, FS.

Carex comans (New Zealand Hair-sedge); Westbury (ST85), garden escape, FS.

Carex x pseudoaxillaris (C.otrubae x remota); Great Wood, Grittenham (SU0281), two large clumps on woodland ride, KN, confirmed by Robin Walls, BSBI Carex referee.

Carthamus lanatus (Downy Safflower); Swindon, Old Town (SU1483), a single flowering plant at the base of a street tree, RAi. [Safflower is sometimes added as a component of birdseed, and this may well have been the origin of this specimen – Ed.]

Chara curta (Lesser Bearded Stonewort); Ravensroost Meadow (SU0287), in a large pond, WBS.

1st Wiltshire record

Chrysosplenium alternifolium (Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage); St. Edith's Leigh Wood and Hayfield Copse (ST973677), Sporadic but widespread amongst *C. oppositifolium*, MBu. This is a re-find of a record made by B.N.Boothby and J.D.Grose in 1954. **1st VC7 record**

Cucurbita maxima (Pumpkin); Trowbridge (ST8558), growing out of spoil heap, FS.

Dryopteris borreii (Scaly Male-fern); Great Wood, Grittenham (SU0281), two close populations recorded on separate dates, WBS, and RAI & SPi.

Echinops bannaticus (Blue Globe-thistle); Seend Cleeve (ST96), within K & A canal towpath, FS.

Eryngium planum (Blue Eryngo); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8260) a single self-sown plant in kerb. Parent plants in adjacent garden, FS. [This represents only the 2nd Wiltshire record of this commonly grown herbaceous perennial – Ed.]

Erysimum cheiri (Wallflower); Sells Green, Broad Lane Farm (ST96), numerous self-sown plants in stone and brick walls, and concrete yard cracks, MBu.

Euphorbia characias (Mediterranean Spurge); Winsley (ST76), garden throw-out, FS.

Euphorbia oblongata (Balkan Spurge); Brinkworth (SU08), DG & FS; Great Bedwyn (SU26), WBS.

Galinsoga quadriradiata (Shaggy-soldier); Etchilhampton, Wabi Farm (SU0459) three growing in concrete yard cracks, MBu.

Galium murale (Small Cleavers); Chippenham (ST918745), Frequent patches found over 30m at pavement/kerb edge and, kerb to road angle, SBr. **1st County record**
Swindon, Old Town (SU1483), Goddard Avenue, back alley; several plants in concrete cracks in front of garage door, RAI. Found on the same day as record in VC8, see below, RAI. * see VC8 **3rd County record**

Glyceria notata (Plicate Sweet-grass); Highworth Golf Course, south (SU19), WBS.

Glyceria x pedicellata (*G. fluitans* x *notata*); Highworth Golf Course, south (SU19), WBS.

Groelandia densa (Opposite-leaved Pondweed); Beckhampton, Hemp Knoll (SU0767), dew pond, MBu.

Helianthus tuberosus (Jerusalem Artichoke); Lacock, Wick Farm (ST96), a rectangular patch of plants between a railway embankment and a track, approx..40m x 5m, MBu.

Helleborus argutifolius (Corsican Hellebore); Malmesbury, south (ST98) five plants at wall to pavement angle, DG & FS.

Helleborus orientalis (Lenten-rose); Corsham (ST87), churchyard escape from a planted grave, FS.

Iberis sempervirens (Perennial Candytuft); Bradford-on-Avon (ST86), garden escape, FS.

1st Wiltshire record

Inula helenium (Elecampane); Steeple Langford (SU042374), several plants growing on steep roadside verge, KN & FS.

Iris spuria (Blue Iris); Chisbury Wood, Bewley Pond (SU2665), WBS. **1st VC7 record**

Lactuca virosa (Great Lettuce); Froxfield (SU2967), RAI.

Leucojum aestivum (Summer Snowflake); Chapel Plaister (ST86), outside chapel wall, KAn.

Lycopus europaeus (Gypsywort); West Kington (ST77), Broadmead Brook, DG.

Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon-grape); Maisey Hampton (SU1399), growing in base of hedge, MBu.

Myriophyllum aquaticum (Parrot's-feather); Lydiard Tregoze, Park Farm (SU18), extensive patch in farmyard pond, RAI & SLi.

Nassella tenuissima (Argentine Needle-grass); Bradford-on-Avon (ST86), garden escape, FS.

Ophioglossum vulgatum (Adder's-tongue); Sells Green, Lapwing and Hundred Plantations (ST9463), two close populations of eighteen and seventeen plants, both MBu.

Ophrys apifera (Bee Orchid); Highworth Golf Course, south (SU19), scattered plants, WBS.

Papaver atlanticum (Atlas Poppy); Swindon, Commonhead Roundabout (SU18), road edge, RAi.

Plantago coronopus (Buck's-horn Plantain); Froxfield (SU26), kerb edge, RAi.

Poa angustifolia (Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass); Highworth Golf Course, south (SU19), WBS.

Poa humilis (Spreading Meadow-grass); Thickwood (ST87) DG.

Polypogon fugax (Perennial Beard-grass); Chippenham (ST920736) wall to pavement angle, FS. This represents only the 4th monad record in all-Wiltshire. * **see footnote** **1st VC7 record**

Polypogon fugax (Perennial Beard-grass); Chippenham (ST919735), wall to pavement angle, FS. This represents only the 5th monad record in all-Wiltshire. **2nd VC7 record**

Polypogon monspeliensis (Annual Beard-grass); M4 J17 roundabout (ST97), DG.

Potamogeton berchtoldii (Small Pondweed); Ravensroost Meadow (SU08), in a large pond, WBS.

Potentilla fruticosa (Shrubby Cinquefoil); Purton (SU0787), young plant, self-seeded into kerb crack, MBu, DG & FS. **1st VC7 record**

Potentilla indica (Yellow-flowered Strawberry); Box Hill (ST8369), edge of pub car park, PWN; Lacock Abbey (ST9168), large patch on bare ground near Great Tithe barn, DG.

Prunus cerasifera (Cherry Plum); Ashton Keynes (SU09), MBu.

Pseudofumaria alba (Pale Corydalis); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8260), self-set on pavement, FS.

Pyracantha rogersiana (Asian Firethorn); Melksham (ST9064), a well-grown bush growing out of river-bridge brickwork over River Avon, WBS.

Rhus typhina (Stag's-horn Sumach); Foxham, west (ST97), many suckers on roadside verge, MBu.

Ribes uva-crispa (Gooseberry); Maisey Hampton (SP10), MBu.

Rosa micrantha (Small-flowered Sweet-briar); Hungerford, Stonegrove Hill (SU3368), a mature bush at the roadside, GK.

Rubus armeniacus (Giant Blackberry); Etchilhampton, Wabi Farm (SU05), MBu.

Sagina filicaulis (Upright Pearlwort); Kington St. Michael (ST87), Leigh Delamere M4 services, FS.

Salix x smithiana (S.viminalis x caprea); Etchilhampton, Wabi Farm (SU05), MBu; Highworth Golf Course (SU19), WBS.

Salvia microphylla (Baby Sage); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8260), The variety 'Hot Lips' growing at wall to pavement angle outside Westbury Gardens, FS. **1st Wiltshire record**

Senecio viscosus (Sticky Groundsel) Melksham (ST9064), two close sites; many plants in an alley and also in a car park, both FS.

Stratiotes aloides (Water-soldier); Lacock Abbey (ST86), large numbers in pond, DG.

Symphytum caucasicum (Caucasian Comfrey); Foxham, west (ST9677), 60 sqm, dense population on wide verge, MBu.

Torilis nodosa (Knotted Hedge-parsley); Etchilhampton, Wabi Farm (SU0459) single at roadside, MBu.

Trachystemon orientalis (Abraham-Isaac-Jacob); Lacock Abbey (ST86), abundant in grounds, DG.

Utricularia australis (Bladderwort); Grittenham, Great Wood (SU0282), dominant over the whole pond, RAi & SPI. [see article in WBS Newsletter no.58 for full details on this find – Ed.] **1st Wiltshire record**

Verbascum speciosum (Hungarian Mullein); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8361), self-set plant, FS. **1st Wiltshire record**

Verbena bonariensis (Argentinian Vervain); Malmesbury, south (ST98), DG & FS.

Vulpia myuros (Rat's-tail Fescue); Winsley (ST76), Ten plants in gravelled area, DG.

VC8 South Wiltshire

Aconitum napellus s.l. (Monk's-hood); Stratford Tony (SU0296), large patch by the River Ebbles, AA, SFi & PMW.

Ailanthus altissima (Tree-of-heaven); East Winterslow, north (SU23), JRM.

Amaranthus retroflexus (Common Amaranth); Scot's Poor, east (SU25), field margins, JRM.

Anisantha diandra (Great Brome); Gore Cross, The Warren (SU05), MBu.

Anthriscus caucalis (Bur Chervil); Lower Pertwood (ST8736) several plants in a grassed edge of track; Lower Pertwood (ST8837), several plants in grassed edge to the side of an arable field, both MBu & FS.

Arabidopsis thaliana (Thale Cress); Norton Bavant (ST94), SPi.

Artemisia dracunculus (Tarragon); Devizes (SU0061), small plant at wall to pavement angle outside hotel, MBu.

Barbarea intermedia (Medium-flowered Winter-cress); Stoke Farthing, Stoke Farm (SU02), MNew.

Bidens frondosa (Beggarticks); Devizes (SU0061) two close sites, three plants in canal lock walls, both FS.

Bromus secalinus (Rye-brome); Upper Chicksgrove (ST9629), in corner of wheat field; Dinton, west of (SU0030), wheat field margins, both SPi; Scot's Poor, east (SU2956), thousands in a field of barley, JRM.

Callitriche stagnalis s.l. (Common Water-starwort); Tytherington (ST94), Upton Lovell (ST94), Fisherton de la Mere (SU03), all SPi; RSPB Franchises (SU21), WBS.

Calystegia pulchra (Hairy Bindweed); Burbage, south (SU2258), in A338 layby, RAI.

Carex acuta (Slender Tufted-sedge) Broken Bridges, West Field (SU12), WBS.

Carex comans (New Zealand Hair-sedge); Westbury (ST85), garden escape, FS. **1st Wiltshire record**

Carex disticha (Brown Sedge); Stockton (ST9838), 3m squared patch in corner of floodplain meadow, Heytesbury (ST9242) along a fence line, both SPi.

Carex nigra (Common Sedge); Charlton (ST91), SJJ.

Carex otrubae (False Fox-sedge); Heytesbury (ST94), Norton Bavant (ST94), two sites, all SPi.

Carex sylvatica (Wood-sedge); Salisbury Plain (SU04), SPi.

Catabrosa aquatica (Whorl-grass); Heytesbury (ST9242), plentiful in poached wet ground of cattle, river crossing, between meadows, SPi.

Catapodium maritimum (Sea Fern-grass); Westbury (ST8750), a few patches in pavement crack on east side of A350, Heytesbury (ST9142), A36, in salt-spray zone, numerous plants over many metres, both SPi; A303 Wylde Interchange (SU0138), A36, kerb-edge, A36 Steeple Langford CP (SU0238), A36, kerb-edge, both MBu.

Centaurea debeauxii (Chalk Knapweed); North of A30 and Firsdown (SU23), JRM.

Centaurea montana (Perennial Cornflower); Upavon (SU15) single self-sown into pavement crack, MBu.

Chrysosplenium alternifolium (Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage); Stib Acre Copse (ST879258), two small clumps at the edge of a stream, HCr & DG. This is a re-find of a David Soden record from 1985 and also the first record in the vice-county since 1994.

Longleat Estate (ST805446), in Alder carr woodland, adjacent to a pond and covering several square metres, DG. [Since this record, it has been realised that unbeknown to Dave, this species was found on the Somerset side of the same estate in 2023.]

Diploxys tenuifolia (Perennial Wall-rocket); Bromham, allotments (ST9664), MBu, DG & FS.

Dipsacus pilosus (Small Teasel); Teffont Evias (ST9930), a few flowering plants in damp woodland near the River Nadder, SPi.

Echinops bannaticus (Blue Globe-thistle); Seend Cleeve (ST9461), a mature plant in hedgerow beside footpath, FS.

Eleogiton fluitans (Floating Club-rush); Langley Wood: Bishop's Wood south pond (SU2220), large mats in centre of pond, AA, SFi & PMW.

Epilobium obscurum (Short-fruited Willowherb); Rivar (SU3160), RAi.

Erigeron acris (Blue Fleabane); Shalbourne (SU3163), A338 road verge, RAi.

Erodium moschatum (Musk Stork's-bill); Westbury Station (ST8651) four plants at kerb, HCr & DG.

Erysimum cheiri (Wallflower); Westbury (ST85), HCr & DG.

Euphorbia lathyris (Caper Spurge); Salisbury Plain, Norton Down (ST94), single, SPi.

Galium murale (Small Cleavers); Trowbridge (ST8358) at wall to kerb and pavement angles in residential area and locally abundant, Trowbridge (ST8458), an enormous and extensive population in pavement cracks and road, kerb, and wall angles along Broadmead and adjoining roads, both SPi. [Are we all walking past this species, ignoring it because it is so diminutive? – Ed] **2nd Wiltshire record**

Gaudinia fragilis (French Oat-grass); Upper Chicks Grove (ST9629), scattered in species rich neutral grassland (hay meadow), SPi.

Geranium rotundifolium (Round-leaved Crane's-bill); East Clyffe (SU03), SPi.

Helianthus tuberosus (Jerusalem Artichoke); Ablington Farm (SU1647), small clump growing in a fence line, at least 500m from nearest house, JRM.

Helleborus foetidus (Stinking Hellebore); Semley (ST8926), single plant on track of common, DG.

Heracleum mantegazzianum (Giant Hogweed); Ham (SU3263), single at woodland edge, near stream, RAi.

Hieracium scotostictum (Dappled Hawkweed); Easterton, Parsonage Lane (SU05), a few clumps on cobbles on west side of lane, AMcV & TCGR.

Hieracium spilophaeum (Common Hawkweed); Warminster (ST8545), large population on drainage ditch bank, DG.

Lactuca virosa (Great Lettuce); Knook (ST9342), single; B3086 Airman's Corner (SU0943), several plants on road verge, both SPi.

Leucojum aestivum (Summer Snowflake); Redlynch, Harthill Drove to Tinney Firs (SU2020), garden escape over 234m linear feature, PMW.

Lonicera japonica (Japanese Honeysuckle); Keevil, south-east (ST95), in field hedge (probably bird-sown), FS.

Ludwigia hexapetala (Uruguayan Primrose-willow); New Forest, Sturtmoor Pond and area (SU21).

This species is more commonly known as Water-primrose. It was once available for sale at garden centres as an attractive flowering pond-plant. However, this introduced species has proved itself to be a most invasive and pernicious plant, covering ponds, lakes canals and other waterways at the expense of all other vegetation. Sale of this plant is now banned, and attempts are being made around the country to destroy this threat. Martin Rand, Tristan Norton, and Pete Flood of the Hampshire Flora Group have undertaken a detailed study at Sturtmoor Pond and have accrued 55 records in ST2717 and ST2718 of all stages of this plant. **1st VC8 record**

Lycium barbarum (Duke of Argyll's Teaplant); Ham (SU36), by roadside pumping station, RAi.

Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon-grape); Coombe Bissett, Rockbourne Road, seedling on verge, AA, SFi & PMW.

Malva arborea (Tree-mallow); Devizes (SU0660), single flowering plant at base of footpath barrier, MBu.

Medicago arabica (Spotted Medick); Porton Down DSTL (SU23) in lawns, AA & PMW.

Minuartia hybrida ssp. tenuifolia (Fine-leaved Sandwort); Salisbury Plain: Bowls Barrow (ST9446), SPi.

Nassella tenuissima (Argentine Needle-grass); Westbury (ST8651), single, kerbside, HCr & DG.

Nicotiana alata (Sweet Tobacco); Trowbridge (ST8558), growing out of spoil heap, FS. **1st Wiltshire record**

Oenothera glazioviana (Large-flowered Evening-primrose); Longleat Estate (ST84), DG; Thorny Down PRV, MDA.

Oenothera stricta (Fragrant Evening-primrose); Westbury (ST8651), HCr & DG. **1st Wiltshire record**

Papaver atlanticum (Atlas Poppy); Devizes (SU0061), small clump at wall to pavement angle, MBu; Ham (SU3263), field entrance, RAi.

Parthenocissus inserta (False Virginia-creeper); Westbury Station (ST85), masses along footpath, through scrub, HCr & DG.

Plantago coronopus (Buck's-horn Plantain); Upavon, Trenchard Lines (SU15), occasional plants along road edge outside army camp, MBu.

Poa angustifolia (Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass); Steeple Langford: East Clyffe (SU0437), meadow, SPi.

Polypodium interjectum (Intermediate Polypody); East Winterslow: Roche Court (SU23), AA & PMW.

Polypogon monspeliensis (Annual Beard-grass); Ham (SU33362), roadside verge, RAi.

Potamogeton natans (Broad-leaved Pondweed); East Winterslow: Roche Court (SU23), AA & PMW.

Potamogeton pectinatus (Fennel Pondweed); Tisbury (ST92), in River Nadder, SPi.

Pseudosasa japonica (Arrow Bamboo); Westbury (ST85), garden escape, FS.

Pyrus pyraster (Wild Pear); Hungerford, south (SU3267), in hedgerow, RAi.

Rorippa palustris (Marsh Yellow-cress); Fisherton de la Mere (ST93); Codford St.Mary (ST93); Stockton (ST93); Teffont Evias (ST93); Fisherton de la Mere (SU03), all SPi.

Rosa tomentosa (Harsh Downy-rose) Coldridge (SU2952), in hedge beside the road, JRM.

Rubus armeniacus (Giant Blackberry); Southbrook (ST83); Gore Cross, Brazen Bottom Farm (SU05), both MBu.

Rubus pruinosis ((Gore Cross, Highland Farm (SU05); High Post, Fourmile Hill (SU13), both MBu.

Sagina filicaulis (Upright Pearlwort); Tisbury (ST92); Fisherton de la Mere (ST93), both SPi.

Salix triandra (Almond Willow); Norton Bavant (ST94), SPi.

Salix reichardtii (S. caprea x cinerea); Teffont Evias (ST93), SPi.

Salix x smithiana (S.viminalis x caprea); West Swainsford (ST83); Gore Cross, Brazen Bottom Farm (SU05), both MBu; Eastcott east, (SU05) MBu & FS.

Salvia verbenaca (Wild Clary); Bulford Camp (SU1943), 2 sqm. flowering patch, grass verge, MBu & FS.

Scirpus sylvaticus (Wood Club-rush); Teffont Evias (ST9930), large flowering patch on the bank of the River Nadder, SPi.

Setaria pumila (Yellow Bristle-grass); A303 Wyllye interchange (SU03), MBu.

Sison amomum (Stone Parsley); Rushall, Rushall Hill (SU15), MBu & FS.

Spergularia marina (Lesser Sea-spurrey); Heytesbury (ST9142), SPi.

Sutera cordata (Bacopa); Upavon (SU1355), two plants at foot of The Ship pub wall, probably self-sown from previous hanging baskets, JRM. **1st Wiltshire record**

Trowbridge (ST8557), single at wall to pavement angle, FS. **2nd Wiltshire record**

Taraxacum insigne (A dandelion); Codford St. Mary (ST965399), single at pavement edge, DLe.

1st Wiltshire record

Thalictrum delavayi (Chinese Meadow-rue); Green Lane Wood Nature Park (ST8757), garden escape, near new pond adjacent to housing estate, RAi.

1st Wiltshire record

Torilis arvensis (Spreading Hedge-parsley); Farley: Parsonage Farm (SU217301), several plants, AA, SFi & PMW.

Torilis nodosa (Knotted Hedge-parsley); Upavon, Trenchard Lines (SU15), in several spots along verge outside army camp, MBu.

Trifolium micranthum (Slender Trefoil); Rushall, Charlton Clumps (SU1054), small clump, MBu & FS.

Verbascum densiflorum (Dense-flowered Mullein); Bradford-on-Avon (ST8259), single in shrubbery, DG.

Verbascum nigrum (Dark Mullein); Westbury (ST85) two sites, both HCr & DG.

Verbena officinalis (Vervain); Shrewton Stud (SU04), JRM.

Viola canina (Heath Dog-violet); Upton Cow Down (ST999362), KN & FS.

Viscum album (Mistletoe); Iford (ST75) two clumps on hybrid Lime, DG.

Vulpia myuros (Rat's-tail Fescue); RSPB Franchises (SU21), WBS; Shalbourne (SU36), RAi.

Recorder initials: AA Anne Appleyard, AMcV Andy McVeigh, DG Dave Green, DLe David Leadbetter, EGr Emma Glover, FB Fran Brooks, FS Fran Sinclair, HCr Helena Crouch, JRM John Moon, KAn Karen Andrews, KN Kat Newbert, MBu Martin Buckland, MDA Mike D'Apice, MNew Michael New, RAi Richard Aisbitt, SBr Sam Braine, SFi Sue Fitzpatrick, SJJ Steve Jackson, SLi S.Litchfield, SPi Sharon Pilkington, TCGR Tim Rich; also, Pete Flood, Tristan Norton and Martin Rand.

Compiled by Martin Buckland

VC8 addendum



Polypogon fugax (Perennial Beard-grass). This grass is native to Central Asia, Tropical Africa, and Japan.

Further to the relatively recent discovery of this grass in Gloucester Road, Trowbridge (ST8557) in 2006 and its re-find in 2015 by Sharon Pilkington; Kat Newbert found plants growing in Summerleaze, Trowbridge in 2022 and 2023. As a follow-up, and to determine the extent of the population near Gloucester Road, Dave Green and Kat Newbert inspected the local streets on the 19th June 2024 to find that the community of Perennial Beard-grass was thriving with many plants found in Waterworks Road, Bond Street, Park Street, West Street, Gloucester Road, Newtown and Wesley Road. Together with Fran Sinclair's discovery in Chippenham the entire Wiltshire *AND Great Britain's* populace survives in just five individual monads, ST8456, ST8457, ST8557, ST9173 and ST9273.

Photo left: © Martin Buckland

Obituary – Barbara Last

It is with sadness that the Society has to report the passing of Barbara Last. Barbara died on the 5th of March 2025, at the age of 96.



She was an extremely good, all-round naturalist and an excellent botanist. Indeed, she was a founder member of the Wiltshire Botanical Society and a committee member between 1993 and 2005. In addition, between 1999 and 2005 Barbara was the second, and only female Chairman of the Society.

Barbara was also a very early member of the Wiltshire Flora mapping group 1984-1992 and took on many tasks in the pursuit of the compilation of the 1993 Wiltshire Flora publication. She acted as a square coordinator as well as surveying many areas herself with the national database at the BSBI containing 9500 of her records covering 191 pages of text.

Barbara was also very generous and helped financially towards the compilation and publication of that book. She also supported Plantlife and, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

With her husband Dick, they were avid travellers and with Barbara being an excellent photographer, many of us will remember winter meetings of her giving talks and slides on fascinating places such as Greenland.

Sorbus or Aria? (An update - Edited note from Tim Rich)

A new combination? On Tim Rich's advice, Dave Green published his new species *Aria wyensis* following the generic split of *Sorbus* by Sennikov & Kurtto (2017); whilst its longer-term position is still likely to be in *Aria*, we require it combined under *Sorbus* to enable us to use it in the Handbook where *Sorbus sensu lato* is still being used until a comprehensive phylogeny of the Malinae is available and a consensus agreed on genera. [i.e. *Aria wyensis* is now referred to as *Sorbus wyensis* – Ed.]