

Flora News



Newsletter of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Flora Group

Spring 2001

Dear Flora Group Member

A number of spring and summer events have been organised by the Flora Group but clearly we will need to take into account the problems caused by the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease. At the time of writing, nature reserves are closed and we are all being urged not to use footpaths. If you are interested in attending any of the events mentioned in this newsletter please contact Catherine Chatters (Flora Group Secretary) beforehand to check whether the event is being held. Catherine's address and telephone number are given at the end of the newsletter.

If you have any suggestions for future events, practical conservation days or training days, please let Catherine know or bring your ideas along to the AGM on Sunday, 8 July (details below).



Green-winged orchid

Green-winged Orchid *Orchis morio*
[Illustration by Sarah Murphy]

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*****FOOT AND MOUTH*****

At the time of compiling the newsletter we are unsure what events may have to be cancelled due to foot and mouth precautions. We have therefore published all of our planned events but ask you that if you are planning to come along to an event then please check first whether it will be running. Please contact Kairen Smith on 023 8068 8906 or email: KairenS@hwt.org.uk (days only) or Catherine Chatters (evenings only) (Catherine's address & telephone number are given at the end of the newsletter).

Sunday, 10 June 2001 - 10.30 am Fern Identification Training Day Leader – Pete Selby

We look forward to welcoming members of the British Pteridological Society who joined us at the fern training last Autumn. Pete Selby has kindly agreed to lead a day looking at ferns and their allies. Meet at 10.30 am at the Forestry Commission car park on the A337 south of Cadnam (grid reference SU 295 129). We will have opportunities to see pillwort *Pilularia globulifera* which is an unusual aquatic fern and the horsetail *Equisetum x bowmanii* (*E. sylvaticum* x *E. telmateia*). Bring a packed lunch.

Sunday, 8 July 2001 - 10.30 am Sedge identification training day at Ashford Hill National Nature Reserve. Leaders – John Norton & Pete Selby

Following their training day on grasses last year, John Norton and Pete Selby have kindly offered to lead a day helping us to identify sedges. We have been given permission by Bob Lord, the reserve manager, to visit English Nature's National Nature Reserve at Ashford Hill which is a very rich and diverse site. Whether you are a complete beginner or simply feel you need a "refresher", Flora



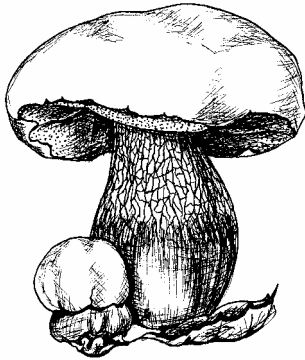
Dotted Sedge

Dotted Sedge *Carex punctata*
[Illustration by Sarah Murphy]

Group will be delighted to see you. As car parking adjacent to the reserve is limited, it is advised that you park at the Village Hall that is south of the petrol station on the main road through Ashford Hill at grid reference SU 556 617. Bring a picnic lunch. During the lunch break we will hold a brief and informal AGM.

Sunday, 19 August 2001 10.30 am Broad Marsh and Farlington Marshes Leader: Clive Chatters

A trip to look at some of the salt marsh and grazing marsh habitats. These are usually closed to the public and our visit is timed to avoid ground nesting birds and wintering birds. Depending on the season, and the grazing, we hope to see a good variety of special plants including beard grass *Polypogon monspeliensis*, slender hare's ear *Bupleurum tenuissimum* and tassell weeds *Ruppia* species. We will be entering the marsh from the west to avoid the terrible junction on the A27. Meet at the Broadmarsh car park just off the 'yellow' road at SU 701 055. This gives us a chance to look over to the RSPB nature reserve and the Binness Islands. If you would like to spend the day, then bring a packed lunch. The guided part of the day should be completed by lunchtime.



Devil's bolete
[Illustration by Sarah Murphy]

The Plants of Hungerford Marsh

Flora Group members may be interested in a recent publication titled "The Plants of Hungerford Marsh by Christine Knight. This site, just over the county boundary, is a registered Common and is, in part, a Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust nature reserve. The 40 hectare site includes flower-filled water meadows, streams and ditches, drier chalky grassland, reedbed, scrub and woodland; the Kennet and Avon Canal runs through its length. The book describes the various habitats, explaining how the flora has been influenced by historical use and discusses the conservation strategies and concerns of today's management. It is available from Knight Publications, 107 Teg Down Meads, Winchester SO22 5NG (price £6.75) or from the Hungerford Bookshop, 1 Church Street, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0JG.

The Wiltshire Botanical Society is organising a visit to Hungerford Marsh on Sunday, 24 June 2001 led by Christine Knight. Hampshire Flora Group members are very welcome to attend. Meet at 10.30 am at grid reference SU

337 686. There is space for a few cars by the Church but most should park in a car park (fee payable) 5 minutes walk from the Church, where the path to the Marsh begins. Directions as follows – turn west off Hungerford High Street, just south of the railway bridge, down Church Road, with car park sign. Car park is on the right. Walk west and take second turning right for the Church. It is advisable to wear boots and bring your own lunch (but come just for the morning if you wish).

Wiltshire Botanical Society

The Wiltshire Botanical Society is very pleased to welcome Hampshire Flora Group members to their events. If you would like details of the programme for Summer 2001, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Red Data Book

Jonathon Cox (English Nature, Dorset) has compiled a useful set of errata, addenda and corrigenda to the third edition of the British Red Data Book on Vascular Plants. If anyone would like a copy of this, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Plant Talk

Plant Talk is an international quarterly magazine that aims to provide a forum for all who are interested in plant conservation. It is intended to be as enjoyable as it is informative and "reports from the front line of conservation with the latest news, views, activities, developments and techniques". Its reviews of Floras, field guides and other publications provide useful references. For further information and sample articles, you can visit the web site at www.plant-talk.org. Alternatively, Plant Talk can be contacted at Plant Talk, PO Box 5000, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5XB.

Flora English Nature

The Winter 2000 edition of Flora English Nature provides an update on botanical conservation work being undertaken by English Nature. Topics of articles include arable plants, the future of fungus conservation, *ex situ* conservation of bryophytes and the West Sussex Vegetated Shingle Project. If you would like to receive a copy send an A4 stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Leaflet: Managing your land for Ground Pine

You may recall that the Flora Group has been actively involved in the conservation and management of ground pine *Ajuga chamaepitys*. During August 1992 we studied this plant at one of its Hampshire locations and Flora Group member, Dr John Moon, has been influential in achieving positive management of this site. The conservation organisation Plantlife has produced a leaflet titled "Managing your land for Ground Pine". If you would like a copy, please contact Plantlife at 21 Elizabeth Street, London, SW1W 9RP; telephone 020 7808 0100; fax 020 7730 8377; or by email: enquiries@plantlife.org.uk.

Marsh Clubmoss in Southern England and Scotland

Pete Selby has been in contact with a student who has undertaken research on marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*, a plant that many of us saw growing at Woolmer Forest during the Flora Group visit in September last year. If you would like a summary of her research, which aimed to compare the vegetation in which the clubmoss grows (in terms of associated species and habitat characteristics) in England and Scotland, please send an A4 stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters.

Crassula helmsii **(Australian Swamp Stonecrop)**

As you may recall, we carried out a survey of the alien invasive aquatic plant *Crassula helmsii* in the spring of 2000 to assess its distribution in the New Forest. The results have now been analysed and presented in a report to English Nature which identifies a management strategy aimed at controlling and eventually eradicating this invasive plant. Several key points have emerged from the report.

- Over one third of the wetland waterbodies of the New Forest have now been colonised by *Crassula helmsii* (76 out of 194 sites surveyed).
- *Crassula helmsii* is likely to be reasonably well established in the open water of most invaded sites (on average covering over 40% of the waterbody).
- Other invasive plant species, *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, *Azolla filiculoides* and *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* were only found at seven sites in the survey. The appearance of *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* is of great concern as this fast growing plant has only recently been introduced into Britain.
- The survey indicated that *Crassula helmsii* had colonised a wide range of habitats showing little preference for particular types, sizes or depths of waterbody, surrounding habitat, substrate or geology. *Crassula helmsii* has the ability to tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions and has various mechanisms of dispersal facilitated by human activities and wildlife. This means that predicting introductions to new areas and even local spread of the plant is difficult.

- By looking at the historical records, it can be seen that there has been a rapid expansion in the number of sites containing *Crassula helmsii* in the last few years. If no action is taken to prevent the spread, the vast majority of waterbodies in the New Forest could contain *Crassula helmsii* within the next ten years.

The report recommends that the following work programmes be implemented:

1. **Control programme:**
Several methods of controlling *Crassula helmsii* have been investigated, however, for the vast majority of sites the selective use of herbicides was judged to be the most effective. It is estimated that each site will need one or two herbicide applications each year over a period of three years. We are currently waiting to hear whether our bid for funds to implement the control programme has been successful.
2. **Monitoring programme:**
Surveying sites to record the presence of invasive aquatics, changes to the waterbody, and the presence of any other notable species at the site. Affected sites will need to be monitored every six months after the control programme has been carried out. Unaffected sites will also need to be monitored, once every six months (for high priority sites) or once a year (for low priority sites). High priority sites are sites that are connected to invaded sites, close to invaded sites or contain notable native species.

This is where your help is needed. Hampshire Wildlife Trust is looking for volunteers to survey sites for the monitoring programme. The data that is

recorded will then be fed into a database held at the Wildlife Trust. This will allow us to keep track of the success of the control programme and implement early control measures at newly invaded sites.



Crassula helmsii

If you are interested in participating in the monitoring programme, please contact Debbie Wicks at Hampshire Wildlife Trust on 023 8068 8931 for further information and a list will be sent to you of the relevant sites in your area and their priority for monitoring, together with a survey form. Alternatively, if you come across any newly affected ponds (containing any of the alien invasive aquatic plants) that were not included in the recent survey then please let Debbie Wicks know.

The monitoring programme is a crucial part of the management strategy if the problem of *Crassula helmsii* in the New Forest is to be effectively tackled. Any help that you are able to give will be very gratefully received.

Sue Crutchley
and Debbie Wicks

(Sue is currently volunteering at Hampshire Wildlife Trust and is involved in species project work with Debbie Wicks).

Conservation Work

A short while back, over the Trust's tea table, we undertook a quick review of work underway this winter that is being organised by the Trust to benefit rare plants. A large area of scrub clearance has been carried out to help chiding pink on Hayling Island (thank you to the Reserves team). The wood calamint site on the Isle of Wight has seen major extensions of glades and open ground (thanks to friends in Wight Wildlife partnership and the Forestry Authority), and the annual red tipped cudweed work has once again been completed. Our long term monitoring of brown galingale in the Avon Valley is now leading to our help being sought by the Estates, English Nature and the Environmentally Sensitive Area scheme to undertake substantial habitat improvements.

Good results are still coming in on sites we have worked in the past including the heath lobelia site (now fenced and grazed thanks to the estate and English Nature); marsh gentian has been rediscovered on Emer Bog/ Baddesley Common, now that our grazing regime is getting on top of the rough grass; Mike Edwards has been looking at what pollinated sword-leaved helleborine at Chappetts; large areas of scrub have gone from the cliffs at St Lawrence to benefit field cow-wheat; red hemp-nettles are responding very positively to management at Burghclere and Micheldever and narrow-leaved lungwort is responding to coppicing at Swanpond. The transition mire restoration work on the New Forest is spectacularly good with a positive change happening on a landscape scale thanks to the funding of the Environment Agency and the organisation of the Forestry Commission.

Each of these projects deserves a big article and a coloured picture. Others have made much bigger media stories of much less success. We seem to find ourselves busy doing the next job rather than singing our own praises.

Clive Chatters

Rhododendron ponticum

The Forestry Commission has recently committed themselves to the eradication of rhododendron from the New Forest Crown lands. We are being encouraged to report specimens that need controlling. The plant is being mapped and the major populations are known. If you know of odd plants that may have been overlooked, please let us know.

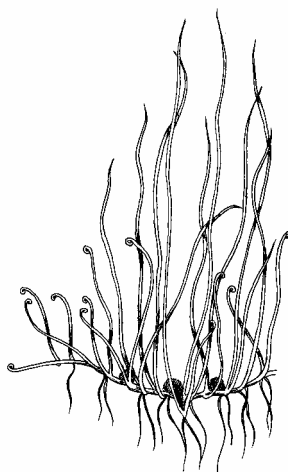
Clive Chatters

Pillwort

We are having preliminary chats with Plantlife about the possibility of joining together to undertake a detailed baseline survey of pillwort. The survey is being looked at for 2002. If you are interested in helping then please let us know.

Clive Chatters

Pillwort



Pillwort *Pillularia globulifera*
(Illustration by Sarah Murphy)

Dr Francis Rose

Very many congratulations to Francis who has been awarded the MBE, the Christopher Cadbury medal and the Dutton prize. Our thanks to Francis for all of the assistance that he has given to the Flora Group and the Trust over the years.

News from the Vice-County Recorders

See inserts.

Recent Records from North East Hampshire

Flora Group member, Chris Hall, has compiled a list of interesting botanical records that he has made in East Hampshire over the last couple of years. Please refer to the enclosed insert.

And finally ...

A monster stinging plant is said to be thriving in the countryside, following hard on the heels of Japanese Knotweed. The new giant *Urtica dioica*, a large nettle, is said to be growing in some Wiltshire river valleys and can reach a height of 11 foot – posing a problem for Ramblers.

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