

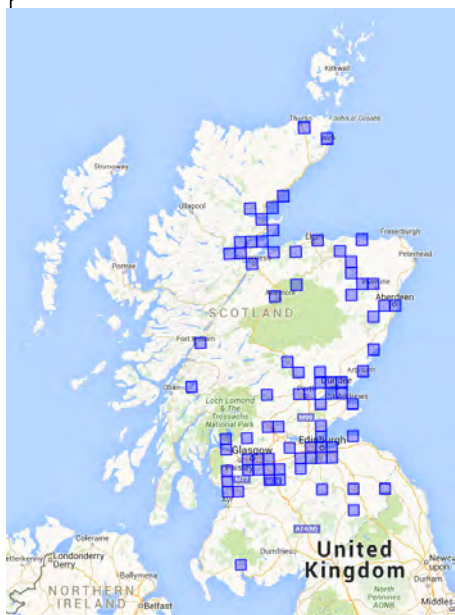


Urban Flora Of Scotland

-an update from our convener John Grace, May 2018

We are recording the urban flora of Scottish towns and cities, creating a data base that will be made available to everyone. Later, we'll publish a handbook and interactive web site so that people of all ages will be able to identify the wild plants they find around them. It is not a trivial undertaking - we think it will take ten years. We are doing this because we believe there is a need to bring the knowledge of plants and their ecology to ordinary people, and because we want to demonstrate the botanical changes brought about by climate warming, urban development and the inevitable escape of garden species. The data base will be important for researchers and may provide early warning of the spread of invasive species.

So far, our 22 registered recorders have made 21,000 records, found 1497 species (including, algae, ferns, lichens and mosses) but we need more records and more recorders. Recording plants has never been easier. Grid references are easily available free from mobile phone apps. There are books and on-line tools to help with identification, and we can help new recorders to hone their skills and enter data.



Map of records so far...



Woodland by the River Clyde

We have a programme of field visits that you can find at our web site and we often make spontaneous evening excursions. We frequently associate with other groups, including local natural history societies and sometimes just friendly neighbors. You are most welcome to join us. If you prefer to work alone you may wish to collect data around where you live or when you are traveling or taking holidays. Perhaps you'd like to adopt a town or a set of streets and work as an independent recorder.

All urban data sets from Scotland are interesting for us. Cities and towns have a variety of microclimates and soil types. Remarkably, a square kilometer of city usually contains far more species than the same area of woodland or open moorland. We make new discoveries in unexpected places. We have found that city streets, coastal habitats and brown field sites are especially fruitful. However, it isn't just *new* discoveries we want. Simply recording the plants around you, or the 'weeds' you find on your garden path will be most welcome.

We are recording *all* plants, and for this project we regard fungi as 'honorary plants'. We do have experts for these plant groups, and we welcome any records of them. We do have ways of verifying your records, including photographic records, and it is always a good idea to snap your uncertain specimens with your phone or camera.

There are many places we still haven't been (see the map) and there are major gaps even in Edinburgh that we'd like to fill. Small towns too: any settlement exceeding 1000 people counts as a town. We cannot hope to visit *all* of them, but we do want a good sample, including the extremes of latitude, longitude and elevation. Notable missing towns are: Tongue, Bettyhill, Portree, Mallaig, Tobermoray, Oban, Brodick, Campbeltown, Kirkwall, Lochgilphead, Tarbert, Wigtown, Dumfries.



Edinburgh's New Town

Top 10 species found:

Bellis perennis
Ranunculus repens,
Senecio vulgaris,
Epilobium nontanus
Trifolium repens
Gallium aparine
Chamerion angustifolium
Urtica dioica
Poa annua

1. **Join us.** Make contact by joining one of our organized visits this summer (see the programme on the web site). We'll introduce you to the methods, and you'll meet some of our group.
2. **Be an independent recorder.** Adopt a town, a square or a set of streets and work as an independent recorder. See our web site about how to collect data; upload it yourself to our project area on i-record or simply send us your completed recording forms. The protocols are explained on the web site.
3. **Specialize.** Become a recorder of a particular type of habitat where you have a familiarity or special interest: eg allotments, river/canal banks, cemeteries, school grounds, wild areas within cities, walls, old industrial sites, coastlines.

To register go to http://www.botanical-society-scotland.org.uk/Urban_Flora_of_Scotland and click on the left-hand tab 'Urban Flora Registration'. If you have any doubts or queries, please contact me at jgrace@ed.ac.uk.



Midmar Allotments

Bryophyte records: an update from David Chamberlain

In Edinburgh three projects are now complete:

- Water of Leith walkway (from Pentland Hills to the sea)
- Coastal Survey (from The Queensferry Crossing to Seafield)
- The Seven Hills of Edinburgh

Bryologists searching in 'unpromising' sites have uncovered several new vice-county records, and some national rarities. Bryophytes are excellent indicator plants, so an analysis of the results is allowing interesting conclusions to be made about pollution and climate change effects.

Even the most brutal anthropogenic concrete sea defences at Western Harbour, Leith Docks support a healthy moss Community.



• ***Orthotrichum cupulatum*** — Hooded Bristle- moss

Found on the concrete sea defences in Leith Harbour (left)



• ***Tortula freibergii***

Freiberg's Screw moss ((above right))

This is the fourth Scottish Record – 26 April 2018, from crumbling coastal sandstone on the Dalmeny Estate

David Chamberlain and Liz Kungu lead parties of novice bryologists on urban walks around the country. If you would like to join them please contact D.Chamberlain@rbge.ac.uk

Aviemore and Kingussie weekend, September 2017

The aim of this weekend meeting was to survey the urban conurbations of Aviemore (pop. 2840) and Kingussie (pop. 1470). A cottage in Insh provided cosy accommodation for about half of the 14 participants, some of whom were local. About 400 species were recorded in all. Like most urban places most of the sites we visited were relatively rich in species but were in essence ephemeral, reflecting plant successions from open ground and inevitable human disturbance due to site development.

Hypericum x desetangsii →

