

***Asplenium obovatum* Viv. subsp. *lanceolatum* (Fiori) P. Silva**

Lanceolate Spleenwort

Native

GB & England: Near Threatened

GB Scarce

VC5 Rare; VC6 Absent

A perennial evergreen fern of acidic rock crevices and stone walls, found mostly near the sea. In Somerset this fern has an exciting history, having been considered extinct for about 150 years before being refound recently. It appeared in Colman's 1849 list of plants seen within ten miles of Minehead and Dunster (Watson, 1874), and there is a specimen in **TTN** collected from Selworthy by Miss I. Gifford in about 1850 (Roe, 1981). Miller (1933) considered Colman's record to be "almost certainly an error" and Roe (1981, 1986) and Green *et al.* (1997) listed the species as extinct. In 1999, Paul and Ian Green found this species growing on an old wall on Porlock Hill. 109 clumps were counted in that year, 112 in 2003, 120 in 2005 and several hundred in 2009. This is the only known site in Somerset. White (1912) noted that there had been several reports of this Spleenwort from North Somerset; however he had never seen a Somerset specimen. It is unlikely to occur in VC6 due to lack of suitable substrate. This species is mostly distributed around the coast of southern Ireland and western Britain, where it is found particularly in the southwest peninsula. The Somerset site is one of the more easterly locations in Britain.

VC5

Porlock Hill SS879463 2009 SRPG 200-500 plants on stone wall on W side of road



Asplenium obovatum at Porlock Hill (2009). Photo: FJR