

## *Isatis tinctoria* L.

## Woad

### Introduction

GB & England: Least Concern

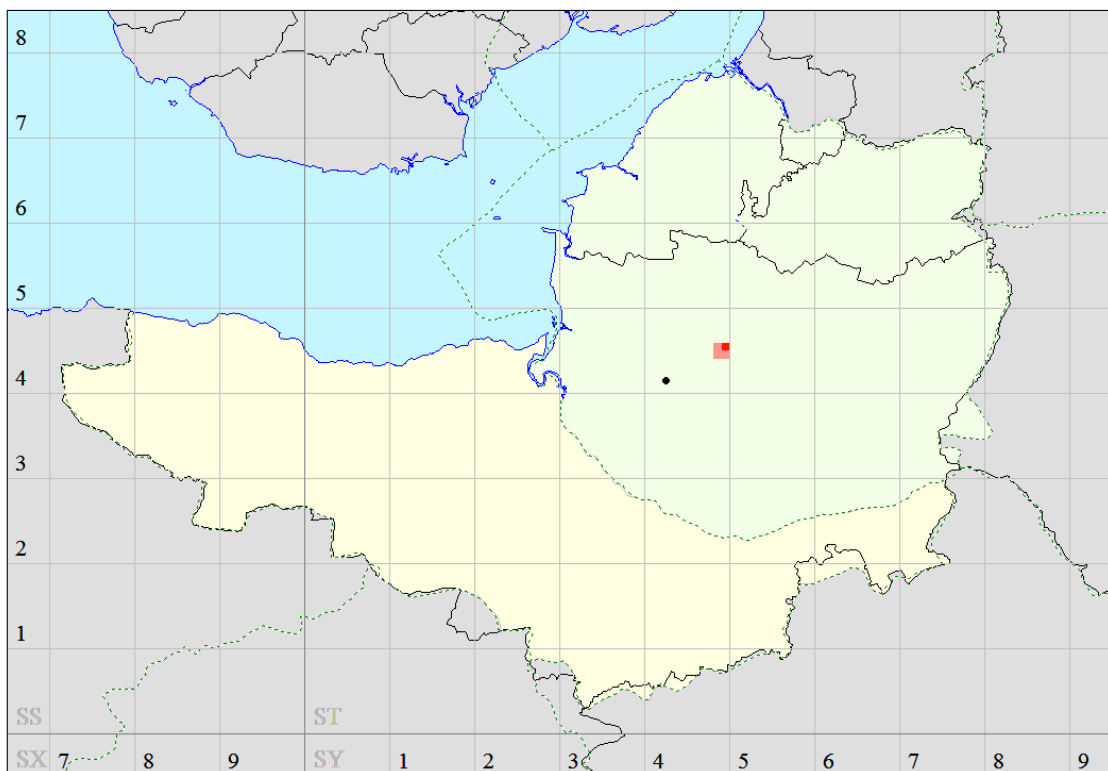
GB Scarce

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

A biennial or perennial herb of waste places, quarries and cliffs, found as a relic of cultivation, usually only casually. As a dye plant, Woad was cultivated widely from the Iron Age onwards. Glastonbury, in Somerset, is thought to mean “place where woad grows”; it was also grown at Mells, Keynsham and Salford, occasionally occurring as a casual near Keynsham over a century ago (White, 1912). Found once as a casual in Weston-super-Mare in 1906 by Rev. S. Laing (White, 1912). In 1989 Mrs J. Appleyard found this species on a roadside in Henton, as an escape from an adjoining garden, where it was cultivated as a dye plant. The most recent site in Somerset has been the Peat Moors Centre, near Westhay. Although originally planted as an exhibit, self-sown plants have been seen here for more than ten years. The future of the Peat Moors Centre is uncertain, so this heritage species has tenuous prospects of survival in Somerset. This species has been found at scattered sites in Britain and Ireland, usually only as a casual, although it has persisted in Guildford and Tewkesbury for around 200 years (Marren, 1999). The Somerset site is the most south-westerly.

### VC6

Henton	ST496453	1989	JA	Roadside, escaped from adjoining garden
Peat Moors Centre	ST42554142	2009	HJC, SJL, EJMcd	6 plants self-sown in gravel near entrance



Distribution of *Isatis tinctoria* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999, monad or tetrad records