

***Anagallis arvensis* L. subsp. *foemina* (Mill.) Schinz & Thell.  
Blue Pimpernel**

Archaeophyte

GB: Least Concern

England: Data Deficient

GB Scarce

VC5 Rare; VC6 Scarce

An annual usually found in species-rich arable plant communities, easily confused with the blue form of Scarlet Pimpernel, *Anagallis arvensis* subsp. *arvensis* forma *azurea*: some early records of “Blue Pimpernel” may have been this form. In VC5 Murray (1896) listed records for Bridgwater, as a weed in a garden recorded by J.C. Collins, and about Cucklington and Stoke Trister, recorded by W. Galpin. Marshall (1914) added records from Staplegrove, recorded by W. Watson, and Martock, found by G.W. Moody. There have been further scattered records in VC5; however recent records have all been from a small area between Thurlbear and Fivehead, within the Mid-Somerset Hills Important Arable Plant Area defined by Plantlife and Natural England. In VC6 Babington (1834) listed four sites around Bath, but considered the taxon to be probably a variety of *Anagallis arvensis*. White (1883) listed records for Berrow, Clevedon, a cornfield between Abbot’s Leigh and Failand, Knowle and Wells. Murray (1896) added records from a garden in Baltonsborough, waste ground at Burnham, Weston-super-Mare, Keynsham, Queen Charton, but like Babington, he was “strongly inclined to consider the ‘blue pimpernel’ of English botanists as merely a variety of *A. arvensis*”. It is thus difficult to understand the former distribution of Blue Pimpernel. Recent records for VC6 have all been for a discreet area in the south of the VC, between Aller Hill and Barton St David, all within the Mid-Somerset Hills Important Arable Plant Area. It was first collected in this area at Charlton Mackrell in 1822 by Gapper (Roe, 1981). Green *et al.* (1997) noted that this was a ‘decreasing species in the county’; however since 2000 it has been found at several new sites within the core area of distribution, for example a field margin at Lytes Cary National Trust estate, and has also been re-found at Aller Hill and Hatch Hill. There are no post-2000 records for Dundon Beacon. *Anagallis arvensis* subsp. *foemina* is Nationally Scarce and its past distribution is poorly known; however it is likely to have declined due to the application of high levels of fertilisers to modern crop varieties, the use of broad-spectrum herbicides and an increase in the proportion of winter-sown cereals.



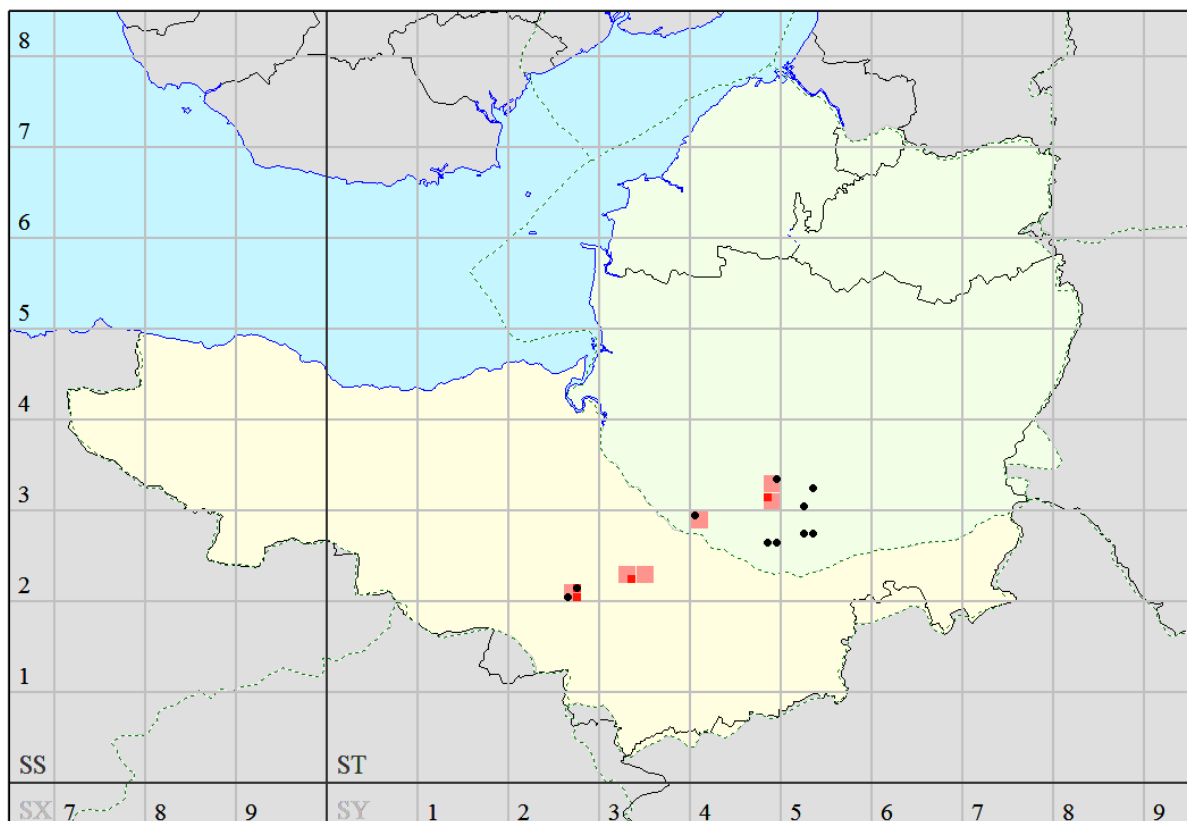
*Anagallis arvensis* subsp. *foemina* at Lytes Cary (2011). Photo: HJC

## VC5

Stoford Plantation		ST26532026	2011	SJL & WFS	30 plants, edge of arable field (wheat)
Stoford Plantation		ST26542027	2011	SJL	15-20 plants on edge of arable field
[Thurlbear, NE of]		ST27192182	2011	SJL	5 plants in N corner of arable field
Thurlbear Quarrylands	SSSI	ST272208	1998	MJG	Lots
Stoke St Mary		ST272218	1999	PRG	Scattered about in field
ST32L		ST32L	[1997]	AFSP	
Fivehead Arable Fields	SSSI	ST337223	1993	PJW	

## VC6

Aller Hill	SSSI	ST40632908	2006	AS	
ST43V		ST43V	1991	IPG & PRG	In very good numbers on bare areas
Watt's Quarry Lane		ST484265	2010	JP	2 plants in SW corner of arable field
Black's Moor Hill		ST489265	2011	JP	1 plant in headland E of road
Somerton, S of		ST49272686	2011	JP	Edge of stony wheat field
Somerton, S of		ST49592662	2011	JP	At edge of weedy bean field
Dundon Beacon		ST483319	1991	PRG & IPG	In very good numbers on bare areas
Hatch Hill	SSSI	ST49823344	2011	ATC	Just a small patch
Kingweston		ST52213070	2016	JP	Several in barish scrape along headland
Hally Hill		ST52752702	2013	JP	20 plants along strip between arable fields
Lytes Cary (NT)		ST53472739	2011	SRPG	1 plant on W edge of wheat field
Lytes Cary (NT)		ST53482737	2012	SRPG	5 plants at W edge of bean field
Lytes Cary (NT)		ST53502749	2011	SRPG	4 plants in barish N margin of wheat field
Barton St David		ST53753230	2015	JP	1 plant in flower



Distribution of *Anagallis arvensis* subsp. *foemina* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999 records.