

***Trichomanes speciosum* Willd.**

**Killarney Fern (gametophyte)**

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

VC5 Scarce; VC6 Absent

Perennial felt-like mat of branching filaments, unique amongst European ferns in its ability to exist forever as a gametophyte. Restricted to dark, humid recesses, crevices and caves in a range of acidic to neutral rocks. The independent gametophytic generation of this species was only discovered in Britain in 1989, by Don Farrar; however by 1997 it had been recorded in 38 vice-counties (Rumsey *et al.*, 1998). Found in Somerset for the first time in 2008, by Matt Stribley, at two locations on Exmoor, both in dark, humid rock crevices beside the River Barle. In 2009, a third site was discovered by Fred Rumsey at Holford Glen, in Alfoxton Wood, in the Quantocks, where again the species grows in rock crevices above a stream. This is one of two sites for *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* in Somerset. In 2011, Matt Stribley discovered gametophytes of *Trichomanes speciosum* in rock crevices at Hawk Combe, the other site for *H. tunbrigense*. Somerset sites are within the area of the British and Irish distribution of *T. speciosum*, which is mainly northern and western, with some sites in Sussex.

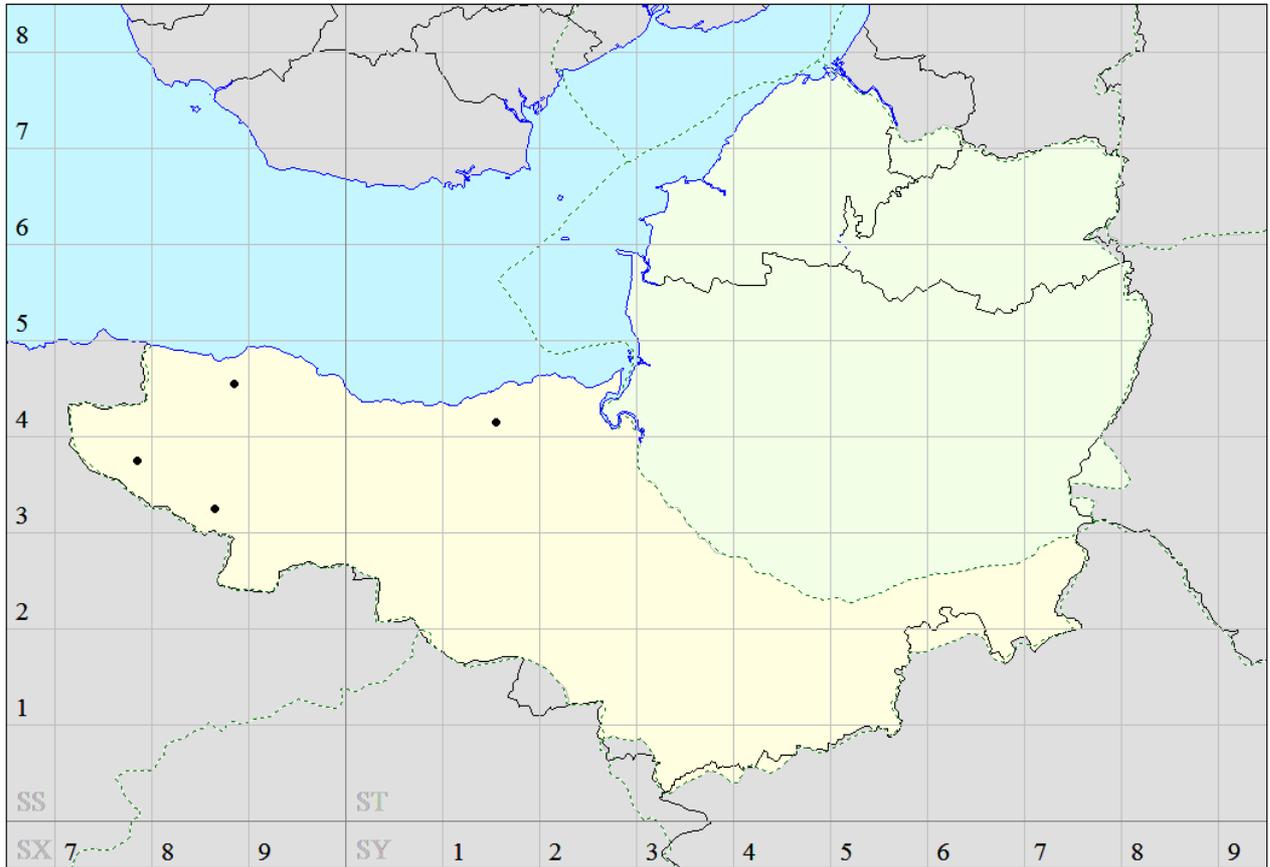
(Note that continental authors regard this species to be better placed in *Vandenboschia* following molecular studies.)



*Trichomanes speciosum* at Alfoxton Wood, Holford (April 2009). Photo: FJR

**VC5**

River Barle	SSSI	SS78833773	2008	MJS	Tiny amount in crevice in low cliff by River Barle
Tarr Steps	SSSI	SS86693221	2008	MJS	In rock crevice on W side of river, N of the steps
Hawk Combe	SSSI	SS88034573	2011	MJS	Small patch in crevice of rock outcrop
Alfoxton Wood	SSSI	ST15504121	2009	HJC, FJR	In rock crevices above stream, below footbridge



Distribution of *Trichomanes speciosum* in South Somerset (VC5), mapped using MapMate.  
 Black dots are post-2000 records