

***Microthlaspi perfoliatum* (L.) F.K. Mey.**

Perfoliate Penny-cress

Native or Introduction?
GB & England: Vulnerable
Schedule 8
UKBAP/S41
GB Rare
VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

An annual of bare areas on limestone, including arable fields, scree slopes and stony banks, also found in quarries and on railway banks. In Somerset only known near Charlton Mackrell, where it was first discovered in 1965 by C.A. Howe, in great profusion for about half a mile along the railway line. It was later found in the nearby quarry, although has not been seen there since 2000, but occurs in abundance along the railway bank and on a bank beside the track alongside the railway, on a nearby roadside bank and on anthills at the edge of a playing field adjacent to the railway. As a native, *Microthlaspi perfoliatum* is largely restricted to sites on oolitic limestone of the Cotswolds in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, but in 1999 was discovered in Worcestershire on a shallow ridge of rhaetic limestone (Maskew, 2014), where it is considered native (Barnett & Rich, 2000). It has declined at many native sites due to loss of habitat through lack of grazing and consequent scrub invasion; however it has spread into quarries and along railway lines within the native range and beyond. Rich *et al.* (1989) suggested that this species has been dispersed in association with the railways, either as seed in transported ballast or in the slipstreams of travelling locomotives, yet it seems unlikely that ballast would be brought to Somerset. Although the late date of discovery suggests introduction, there is no evidence of this and the presumed native population found recently in Worcestershire supports a view that this species may also be native on the Lias of Somerset.

VC6

Charlton Mackrell	ST534290	2000	SRPG	37 plants on low rock outcrops, and on tarmac
Charlton Mackrell	ST53442901	2012	HJC, FJR	51 pl on anthills/grass, N edge of playing field
Charlton Mackrell	ST53582909	2012	HJC, FJR	58 pl on railway bank inside railings, N of track
Charlton Mackrell	ST535290	2012	HJC, FJR	Hundreds on S-facing bank beside track
Charlton Mackrell	ST536291	2012	HJC, FJR	Hundreds on S-facing bank beside track
Charlton Mackrell	ST537292	2012	HJC, FJR	1000+ pl on E-facing bank in Combe Lane



Microthlaspi perfoliatum at Charlton Mackrell (2012). Photo: HJC