

***Dryopteris cambrensis* (Fraser-Jenk.) Beitel & W.R. Buck Narrow Male-fern**

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Scarce

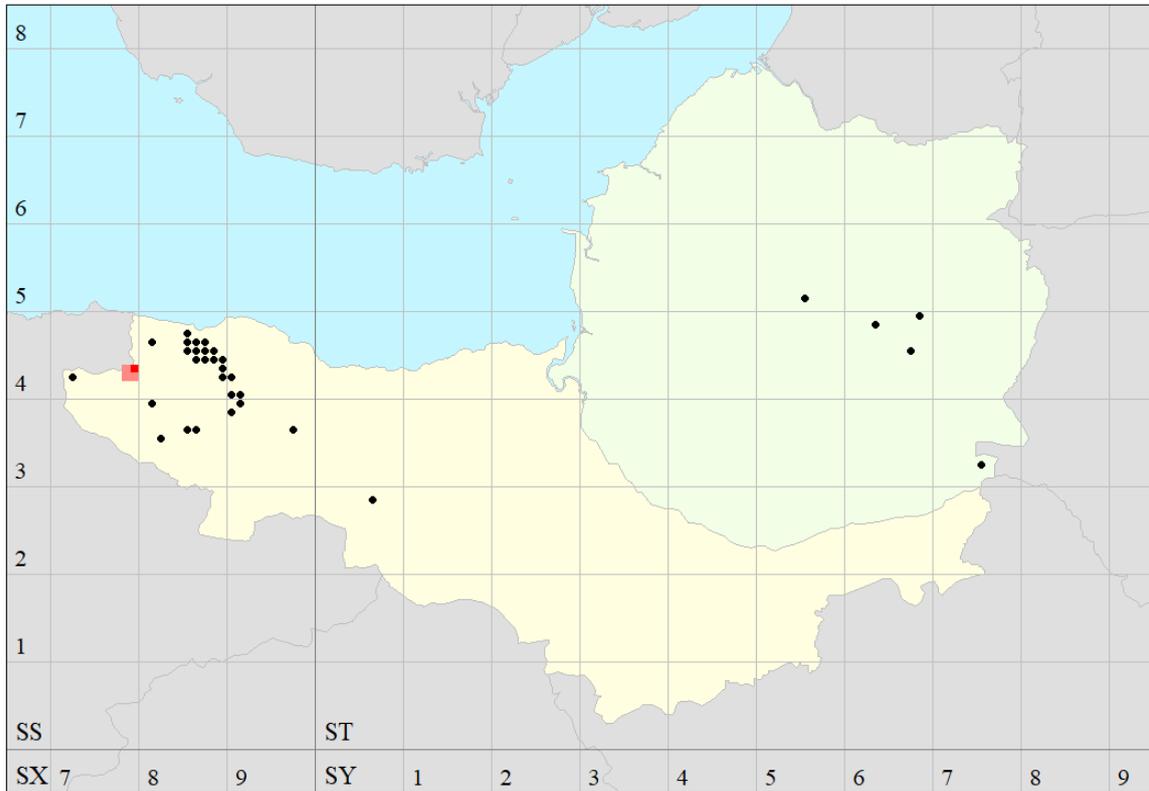
A perennial semi-evergreen fern of acidic substrates on shady banks and in woodland. This species is part of the *Dryopteris affinis* complex, which was historically very poorly understood; *Dryopteris cambrensis* was not recognised as a separate taxon until the late twentieth century, when it was first described as *D. affinis* subsp. *stilluppensis* by Fraser-Jenkins (1980). It was later elevated to species level (Fraser-Jenkins, 2007). There are thus no historical records of *Dryopteris cambrensis* in Somerset, although there may be specimens in herbaria not yet determined as this species. In VC5, first found by Matt Stribley in 2007 on Maundown Hill near Wiveliscombe, the identification confirmed by Ken Trewren. In 2008 it was found again by Matt Stribley by Pinkery Pond, during a meeting of Somerset Rare Plants Group and the Wild Flower Society. Since then, this species has been recorded by Graham Lavender at numerous sites on Exmoor and also at Charget Woods on the Brendons and is no longer scarce in VC5. In VC9, but administrative Somerset, this species was recorded at Bickham Wood (ST2608) and Worthal (ST2708) by members of SRPG in 2015. In VC6 *Dryopteris cambrensis* was first found by Helena Crouch and Fred Rumsey on a bank at Pen Ridge, on the Greensand in the east of the county. It has since been found at Great Gains Wood and at Stockhill (initially by Alison Paul on a British Pteridological Society meeting in 2016): both are sites where Old Red Sandstone outcrops on the Mendips. Plants have also been found at Highbury and Ashwick, both on the Pennant Sandstones of the Coal Measures. It is likely that further sites for *Dryopteris cambrensis* will be discovered in areas of suitably acidic soils in Somerset. Although frequent in Scotland and Wales, this is an uncommon fern in England, with most sites in the north and west.



Dryopteris cambrensis at Highbury (2016). Photo: HJC

VC6

Pen Ridge	ST75033279	2011	HJC, FJR	1 large plant on S side of old hedgerow
Great Gains Wood	ST67324579	2013	HJC, FJR	1 plant on W side of track in wood
Highbury	ST68924997	2016	HJC, FJR	1 plant on bank of stream in wooded valley
Stockhill	ST55695164	2016	HJC, BPS	1 large plant on N side of track in wood
Stockhill	ST55685169	2017	HJC, FJR	5 plants under trees N of track in wood
Stockhill	ST55695169	2017	HJC, FJR	1 plant under trees N of track in wood
Ashwick	ST63854866	2017	HJC, FJR	3 crowns in Brown's Wood, just S of stream



Distribution of *Dryopteris cambrensis* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.
Black dots are post-2000 records



Dark scales and channelled pinnae of *D. cambrensis* at Pen Ridge (2011). Photo: HJC