

***Equisetum hyemale* L.**

Rough Horsetail

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

An erect evergreen plant with simple scabrous stems, arising from rhizomes, growing in damp clay or sandy soil, particularly along shaded stream banks, but also on sand dunes. The native plant, *Equisetum hyemale* subsp. *hyemale*, was found in Somerset (VC6) in 1900, by Mr H. Corder of Taunton, on damp sandy ground near the railway station at Weston-super-Mare. Although described by White (1912) as “abundant in a sandy field”, Miller (1933) reported that the site was being rapidly overwhelmed by rubbish tips and poultry pens and predicted that the species could not last more than a year or two longer. The exact date of its disappearance is not known but the site was subsequently built upon. A record made by Dr Davis in 1802 on the canal bank at Bath was listed by Babington (1834) but was never confirmed (White, 1912). In 2017, *Equisetum hyemale* was found beside a footpath in Wincanton, growing outside a garden fence. There was no sign of it within the garden and a specimen was identified by Patrick Acock as the native *Equisetum hyemale* subsp. *hyemale*. A week later, Graham Lavender and Ian Salmon found three clumps of *E. hyemale* in a field in Stogumber (VC5); however this was determined by Patrick Acock as subsp. *affine*, a North American plant sold as a marginal plant for garden ponds and it was confirmed that it had been planted there. In 2019 the Wincanton site had been sprayed with herbicide and only one shoot was seen. *Equisetum hyemale* subsp. *hyemale* has a scattered distribution in Britain and Ireland, with a greater concentration of sites in the north: the site at Wincanton is the only recent record for southwest England.

VC6

Wincanton

ST70742845

2017

HJC, FJR

11 shoots on N verge of footpath beside cemetery



Equisetum hyemale in Wincanton (2017). Photo: HJC