

Lathyrus hirsutus L.

Hairy Vetchling

Alien

GB: Vulnerable

England: Waiting List

GB: Rare

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

A scrambling annual of grassy and rough ground; also found as a garden escape or bird-seed contaminant. No basis can be found for a record for VC5 (ST21) on the BSBI Distribution Database and this species is not listed in the Vice-county Census Catalogue for VC5. In VC6, the first record, which appeared in Withering (1796) and many subsequent floras, was a case of mistaken identity by Rev. G. Swayne, who recorded this species in error for *Vicia bithynica* on hills between Pensford and Bristol (Jenyns, 1867; White, 1905). A specimen collected by St Brody was labelled "Reported from Bristol, 1854" (White, 1912), however this may not have referred to Somerset. White (1912) recorded that in 1902 and 1903 Miss Martin of Bath collected specimens of this species from a field (old quarry ground) near Englishcombe, but that a small colony which existed for several years between Bath and Limpley Stoke had been destroyed. White himself collected a specimen (**BM**) on a rubbish tip near Brislington in 1910 and another (**TTN**) from made ground by the Avon at Arnos Vale, Brislington in 1912. White (1922) reported a record by A.E. Stephens of a casual in a garden at Webbington; a specimen (**BM**) was collected by Miss Ida M. Roper on waste ground at Webbington in 1920. The next record was in 1971, when J.G. Keylock found it on a rubbish tip at Street (Roe, 1981). *Lathyrus hirsutus* was then considered lost in Somerset, until 2020, when Daphne Osmond discovered five plants growing on the bank of a wildlife pond at Alhampton. This species was first recorded at Hadleigh Castle in Essex in 1666 and is considered native in the Thames Estuary; elsewhere it is a casual alien.

VC6

Alhampton

ST630343

2020

DO

5 pl on bank of wildlife pond at Haddon Wood



Lathyrus hirsutus at Haddon Wood, Alhampton (2020). Photo: DO