

***Lolium temulentum* L.**

Darnel

Archaeophyte

GB & England: Critically Endangered

Section 41

GB Rare

VC5 Lost; VC6 Lost

An annual grass, formerly a persistent weed of arable land. Now probably extinct as an archaeophyte but occasionally found as a rare casual in waste places, originating from grain, bird seed or wool shoddy. A record made by W. Galpin near Wincanton (Murray, 1896) could have been in VC5 or VC6. There were later records for VC5 on the canal side at Durston by H. Harvey in 1922 and at Martock by H. Downes in 1923. In VC6, *Lolium temulentum* was first recorded in cornfields near Bath (Babington, 1939). T.B. Flower found it in cornfields at Monkton Farleigh, probably introduced with seed (Jenyms, 1867) and at Philip's Norton (Murray, 1896). It was found in a barley field near Nailsea in 1880, on a roadside at Kenn in 1881 and in the hedge of a meadow at Stanton Drew in 1887 (White, 1912). It was recorded in a list of aliens from a maltster's waste dumped in a quarry at Twerton (Dunn, 1897) and found by Miss Livett at Portishead station-yard (White, 1912). In 1924 H.S. Thompson found this species frequent about railway sidings between Highbridge and the mouth of the River Brue (<http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/283589/>). Mrs E.M.E. Bell found it on a roadside in Farmborough in 1954 and R.G.B. Roe recorded it on waste ground at Holloway [Bath] in 1965. There were more recent records from tips: in 1972 C.A. Howe and Rev. C.E. Shaw found this species on Windsor Hill Tip (Green *et al.*, 1997), whilst Grenfell (1980) listed it amongst many other species found on visits to Brislington Tip in 1978. The last record for Somerset was made by Rupert Higgins and Dawn Lawrence at Royal Portbury Docks in 1988 (Green *et al.*, 2000). *Lolium temulentum* has declined dramatically across its range and is now rarely seen; it may yet turn up again as a casual.