

***Potentilla argentea* L.**

Hoary Cinquefoil

Native/Introduction

GB & England: Near Threatened

VC5 Rare; VC6 Rare

A perennial herb of free-draining sandy or gravelly soils, found in short turf, on tracks or waste ground. In Somerset, regarded as a casual introduction at most former sites and rarely persisting. In his list for Watson's Supplement to the New Botanist's Guide (1837), J.C. Collins recorded this species as frequent around Bridgwater (Murray, 1896). The first record definitely ascribed to VC5 was made by Paul Green in 1990 on waste ground by a chicken run at Perry Green, where it was not seen again. In 2013, it was found by James McGill on newly sown grassland at Longrun Meadow in Taunton. Still present in 2008, when it was keyed to *Potentilla demissa* Jord., an apomictic segregate of *P. argentea* recognised by Sell & Murell (2014). In VC6, recorded as a casual near Englishcombe by Miss Roper (White, 1912) and found on a grassy place by railway sidings at Portishead in 1912 by J.W. White (Marshall, 1914). In 1915, Rev. E. Ellman recorded several small patches on a rocky limestone slope near Tickenham; Mrs C.I. and N.Y. Sandwith found it about a mile away from that site in 1920, considering it possibly native there. It persisted at that site until 1941 (Roe, 1981). Found by C.J. Cornell and Miss V. Copp in 1994 on a newly made woodland ride in Postlebury Wood, Trudoxhill, but not seen again at this site. In 1927 this species was discovered by F. Langford at Charterhouse. It was recorded here periodically on an ancient slag heap, the legacy of the former lead-mining industry; this site is mapped by Preston *et al.* (2002) as native. In 2007, members of Somerset Rare Plants Group counted 48 plants on a 2m² turf island on the slag, however no plants could be found in subsequent years, the turf island having become densely mossy. In 2019 Jo Parmenter found 3 plants thriving at the edge of the turf island, but its future here is precarious. In 2018 Liz McDonnell found a single large plant on a gravelly slope at Westbury Quarry on the south-facing scarp of the Mendips; it was still present in 2019. In Britain this species has declined due to habitat loss.



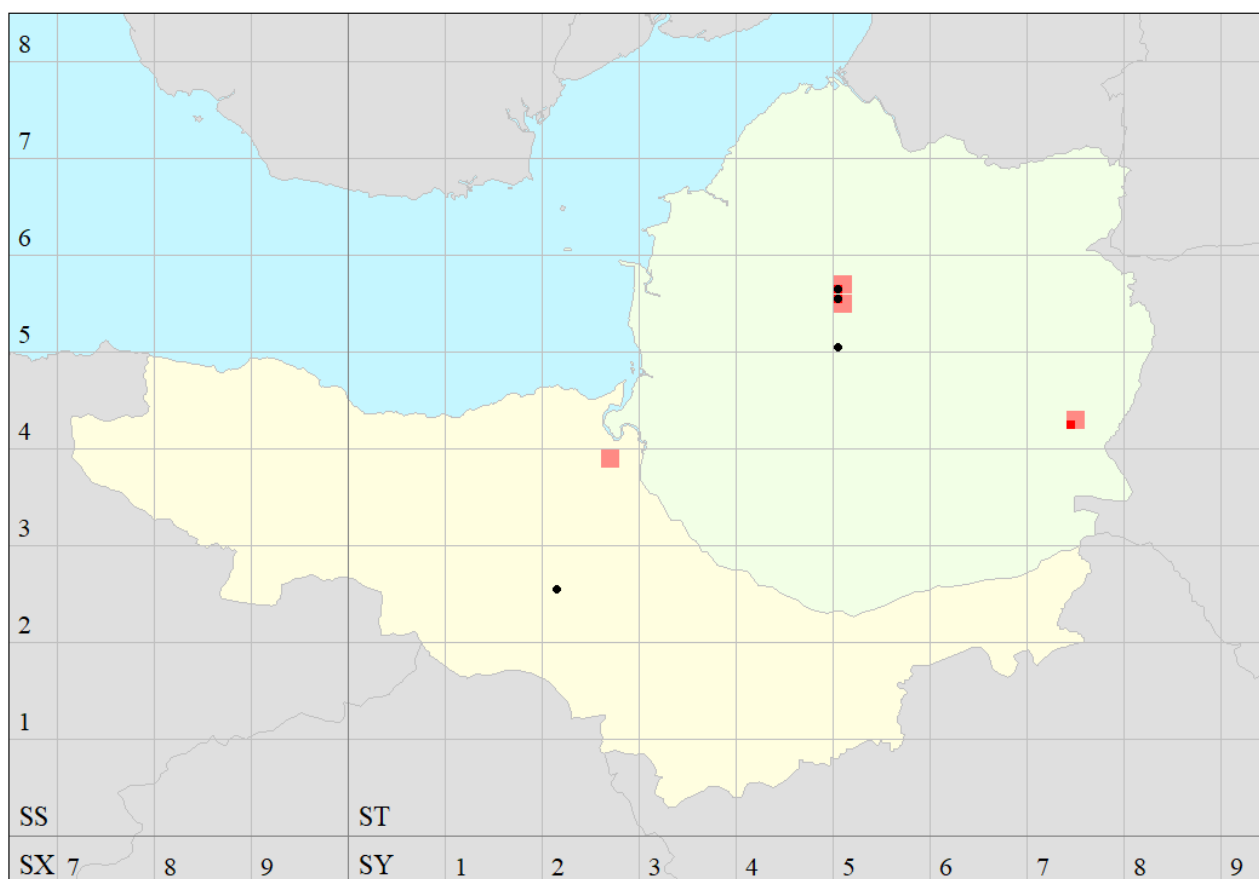
Potentilla argentea at Blackmoor Reserve, Charterhouse (2007). Photo: FJR

VC5

Longrun Meadow		ST21222521	2013	SJL, SJP	9 plants on recently sown grassy bank
Longrun Meadow		ST212251	2013	SJL, SJP	85 plants on recently sown flood relief area
Longrun Meadow		ST21202510	2018	SRPG	
Perry Green		ST23U	1989	PRG	On waste ground by a chicken farm

VC6

Westbury Quarry		ST50565036	2019	EJMcD	1 large plant still present on gravelly slope
Charterhouse	SSSI	ST506559	1991	PP	
Blackmoor Reserve	SSSI	ST504559	2006	IPG	Growing in one small area of grass
Blackmoor Reserve	SSSI	ST50585603	2007	SRPG	48 plants on turf island on mining waste
Blackmoor Reserve	SSSI	ST50585603	2019	HJC, DPL, JMP	3 pl at edge of turf island on mining waste
Postlebury Wood	SSSI	ST747423	1994	VC, CJC	On newly made woodland ride



Distribution of *Potentilla argentea* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.
Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999