

***Prunella x intermedia* Link**

(*P. vulgaris* x *P. laciniata*)

Native

GB Scarce

VC5 Rare; VC6 Rare

A rhizomatous perennial of short calcareous grassland, usually found wherever *P. laciniata* grows or has grown. In Somerset, first discovered at Cheddar by C.E. Salmon and reported to E.S. Marshall by C.E. Moss in a letter dated August 1913 (Marshall, 1914). This was soon after White (1906) had first described *P. laciniata* as a species new to Britain; White (1912) had dismissed purple-flowered plants found by Mrs Gregory as merely a colour variant of *P. laciniata*. In 1965, C.A. Howe found this hybrid at Green Down, Charlton Mackrell, where it is still to be found with *P. laciniata*. In 1966, he found the hybrid again, at Compton Pauncefoot, growing in the absence of *P. laciniata*. A few plants of *P. x intermedia* were re-found there in 1993, however none have been found in recent searches and the plant is feared lost due to under-grazing. In 2014, this hybrid was found by Somerset Rare Plants Group growing with both parents at Langridge. In VC5, vegetative plants were found by Ellen McDouall and Somerset Rare Plants Group at Cadbury Castle in 2014; they were later confirmed as this hybrid and further plants have been found nearby. No plants of *P. laciniata* have ever been recorded from that area. The persistence of this hybrid at a site after *P. laciniata* has disappeared has been observed elsewhere, indeed the hybrid is believed to contribute to the disappearance of *P. laciniata*, the species being “hybridised out of existence” (Bowen, 2000). At Cheddar and Green Down, however, the species has persisted alongside the hybrid, for around a century in the case of the Cheddar population. This hybrid has been lost from some former sites within its range. Somerset plants are at the western edge of its distribution, with the exception of sites in Ireland.



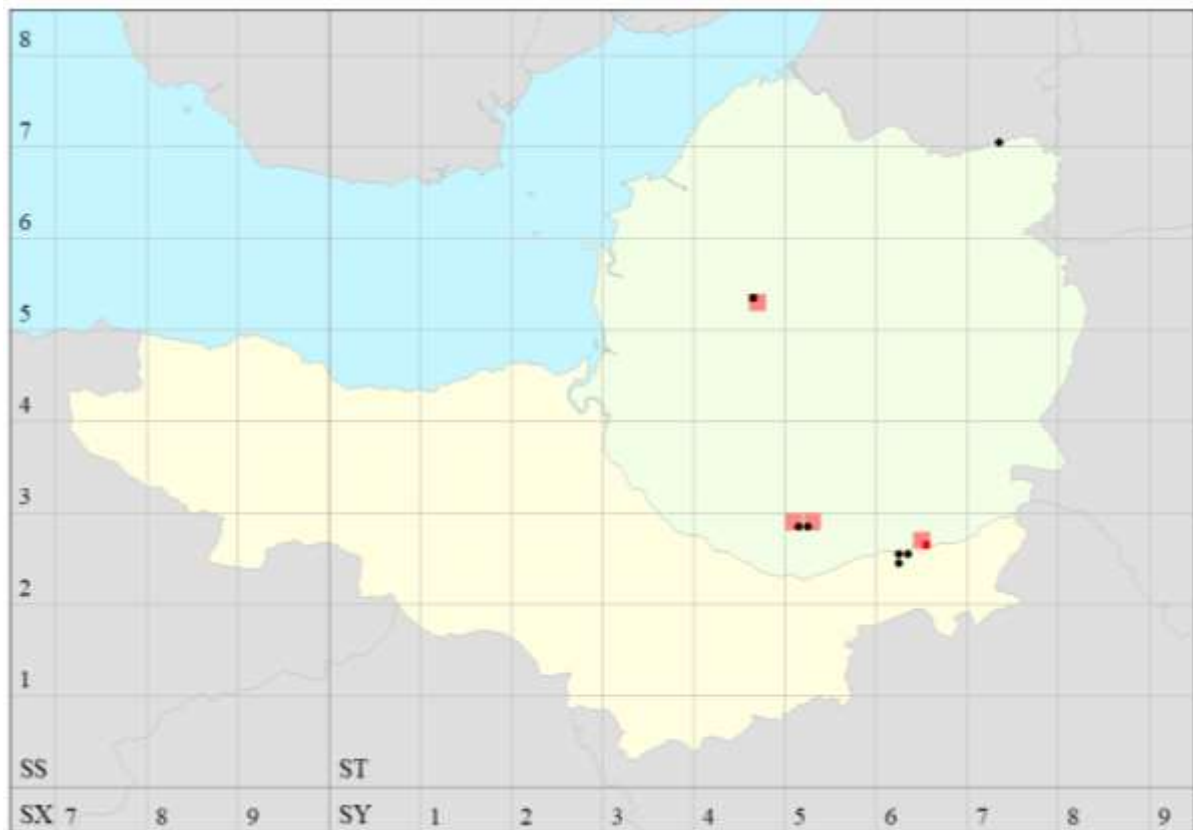
Prunella x intermedia at Cheddar (2009). Photo: HJC

VC5

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|----------------|--|------------|------|------|--|
| Sutton Montis | | ST62832496 | 2016 | JP | Spread over many square metres around a tree |
| Cadbury Castle | | ST62972506 | 2014 | SRPG | 6 plants on E-facing slope of 2nd rampart |
| Cadbury Castle | | ST62972507 | 2014 | SRPG | 6 plants on E-facing slope of 2nd rampart |
| Cadbury Castle | | ST629250 | 2014 | SRPG | 3 plants on W-facing first rampart |
| South Cadbury | | ST63592518 | 2014 | SRPG | A few plants |

VC6

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|--------------------|------|------------|------|----------|---|
| Cheddar | SSSI | ST46555379 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | With <i>P. laciniata</i> in grassland S of path |
| Cheddar | SSSI | ST465538 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | With <i>P. laciniata</i> by path and in grass S of path |
| Green Down | SSSI | ST51862884 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | Few patches, on upper S-facing slope |
| Green Down | SSSI | ST51992879 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | 1 plant on upper S-facing slope |
| Green Down | SSSI | ST519288 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | 3 plants on upper S-facing slope |
| Green Down | SSSI | ST52002878 | 2009 | HJC, FJR | 1 plant on upper S-facing slope |
| Compton Pauncefoot | | ST654268 | 1993 | PRG | Few plants on steep slope |
| Langridge | | ST73257003 | 2014 | SRPG | 3 plants in glorious grassland on S-facing slope |
| Langridge | | ST73277004 | 2014 | SRPG | 2 plants in glorious grassland on S-facing slope |



Distribution of *Prunella x intermedia* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999, monad or tetrad records