

***Stachys arvensis* (L.) L.**

Field Woundwort

Archaeophyte

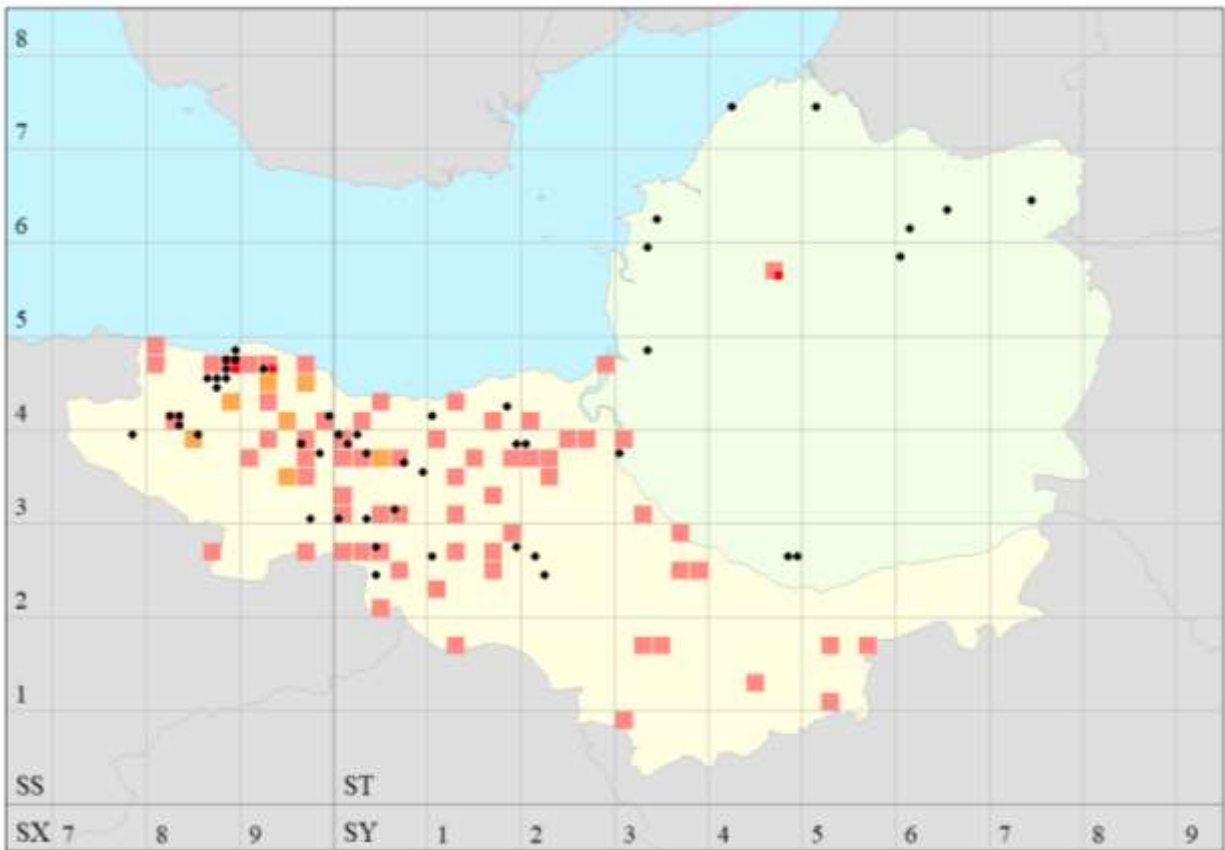
GB & England: Near Threatened

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Not Scarce

An annual of cultivated land, disturbed road verges and waste ground, usually on non-calcareous soils. Murray (1896) and White (1912) regarded this species as common; however, *Stachys arvensis* clearly declined in Somerset during the twentieth century as Roe (1981) stated that it was “Frequent in the west and formerly elsewhere but now rare in the rest of the county”. Green *et al.* (1997) reported it “Scattered over most of VC5, with only one recent record in VC6 from arable fields above Tynning’s Farm”. Green *et al.* (2000) mapped eight sites in the north of VC6, however most of these were pre-1987 records and it was described as an “uncommon and declining weed of cultivated and disturbed ground”. In VC5 there have been scattered recent records, particularly across Exmoor and the Brendons: this species has been known around Porlock for over a century and still has many sites in that area, with recent records made by Graham Lavender in arable fields and allotments. It is also a plant of disturbed ground and has been found on the shores of Clatworthy Reservoir and Wimbleball Lake. In 2011, Simon Leach found a single plant on bare soil associated with roadworks in Taunton; there have been other records on tracks and disturbed soil. In the east of VC5, however, there have been no post-2000 records. In VC6, *Stachys arvensis* has been recorded at twelve sites since 2000, with several new sites found in the last couple of years. In Bath, Walton-in-Gordano, Weston-super-Mare and Bridgwater, it has been found on bare disturbed soil on road verges or development sites. At Lower Failand, Somerton, Compton Dando, Stanton Wick and Cameley large populations have been found in arable fields. Although still widespread in Britain and frequent over parts of its range, this species has declined in some areas, probably due to the increased use of broad-spectrum herbicides and fertilisers, together with an increase in winter cropping. It has certainly declined in Somerset, but now appears to be increasing slightly, in arable fields as well as on waste ground and road verges.



Stachys arvensis at Clatworthy Reservoir (2012). Photo: HJC



Distribution of *Stachys arvensis* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999 records; sepia squares are pre-1987 records



Stachys arvensis near Cameley (2019). Photo: HJC

