

***Dryopteris cambrensis* (Fraser-Jenk.) Beitel & W.R. Buck Narrow Male-fern**

Native

GB & England: Least Concern

VC5 Not Scarce; VC6 Rare

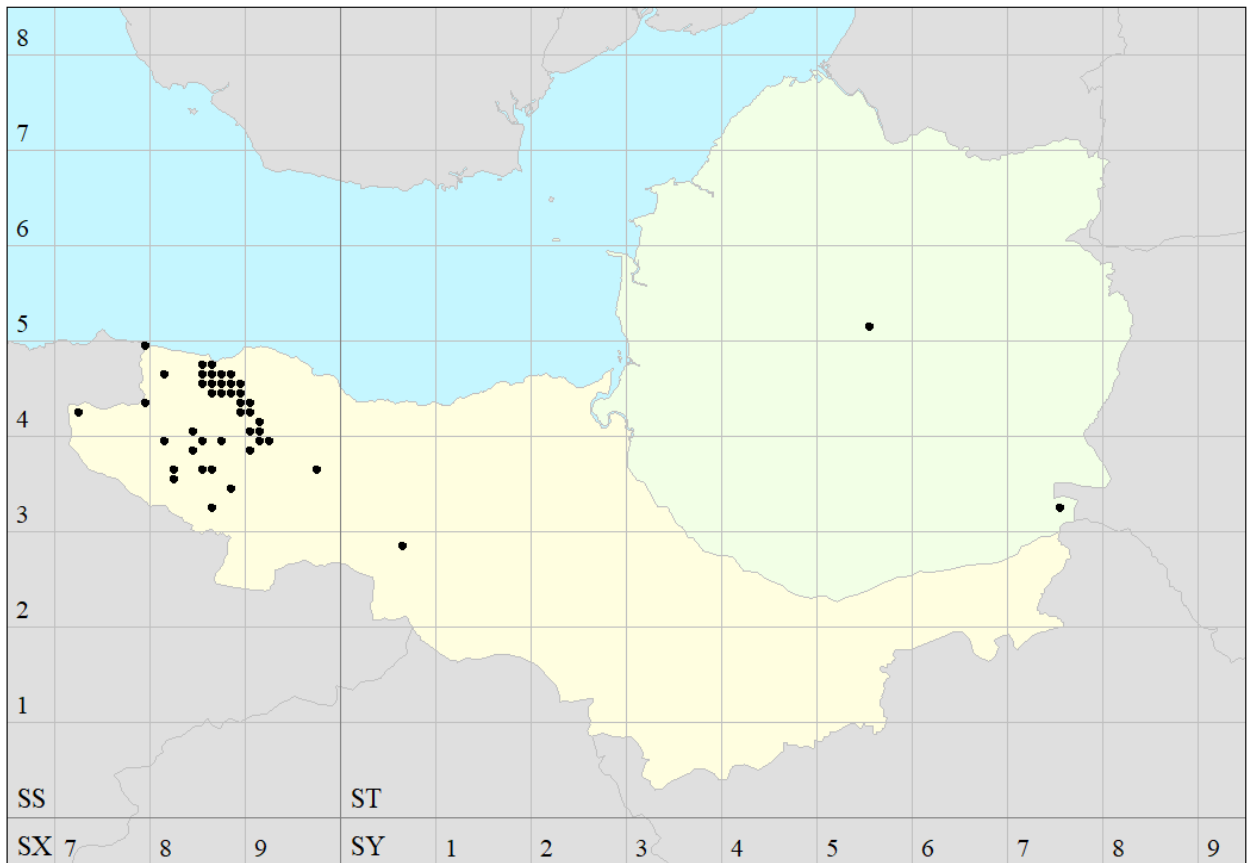
A perennial semi-evergreen fern of acidic substrates on shady banks and in woodland. This species is part of the *Dryopteris affinis* complex, which was historically very poorly understood; *Dryopteris cambrensis* was not recognised as a separate taxon until the late twentieth century, when it was first described as *D. affinis* subsp. *stilluppensis* by Fraser-Jenkins (1980). It was later elevated to species level (Fraser-Jenkins, 2007). There are thus no historical records of *Dryopteris cambrensis* in Somerset, although there may be specimens in herbaria not yet determined as this species. In VC5, first found by Matt Stribley in 2007 on Maundown Hill near Wiveliscombe, the identification confirmed by Ken Trewren. In 2008 it was found again by Matt Stribley by Pinkery Pond, during a meeting of Somerset Rare Plants Group and the Wild Flower Society. Since then, this species has been recorded by Graham Lavender at numerous sites on Exmoor and also at Charget Woods on the Brendons and is no longer scarce in VC5. In VC9, but administrative Somerset, this species was recorded at Bickham Wood (ST2608) and Wortheal (ST2708) by members of SRPG in 2015. In VC6 *Dryopteris cambrensis* was first found by Helena Crouch and Fred Rumsey on a bank at Pen Ridge, on the Lower Greensand in the east of the county although the plant has now been lost. It has since been found at Stockhill, a site where Old Red Sandstone outcrops on the Mendips: this is now the only known site in VC6. It is likely that further sites for *Dryopteris cambrensis* will be discovered in areas of suitably acidic soils in Somerset. Although frequent in Scotland and Wales, this is an uncommon fern in England, with most sites in the north and west.

VC6

Pen Ridge	ST75033279	2011	HJC, FJR	1 large plant on S side of old hedgerow
Stockhill	ST55195160	2022	HJC, AJE, RG	1 clump of 6 crowns by path through wood



Dryopteris cambrensis at Stockhill (2022). Photo: FJR



Distribution of *Dryopteris cambrensis* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate.
Black dots are post-2000 records



Dark scales and channelled pinnae of *D. cambrensis* at Stockhill (2022). Photo: FJR