

***Equisetum ramosissimum* Desf.**

Branched Horsetail

Native/Alien

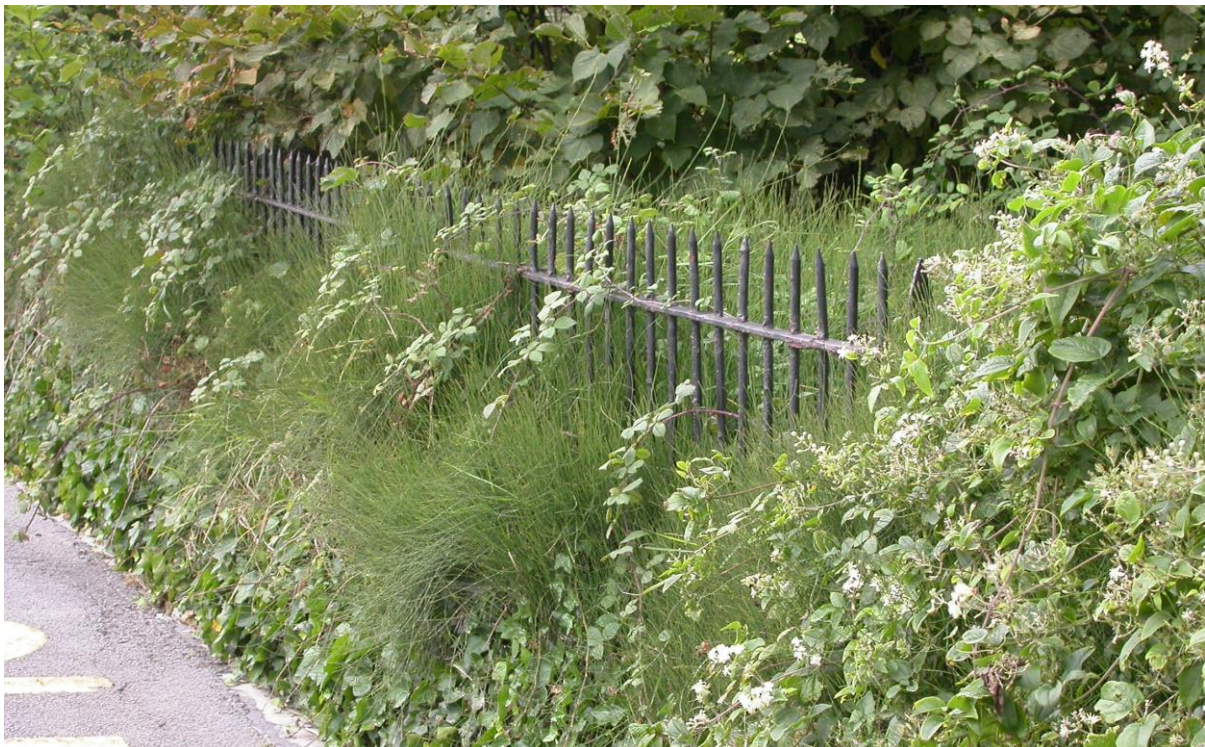
GB & England: Vulnerable

Schedule 8

GB Rare

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

An erect evergreen plant, with well-branched scabrous stems, this is the most frequent horsetail of ruderal areas in Southern Europe. In Somerset, an unusual horsetail was observed in 1963 growing on sand along the base of the railings around the west part of Ellenborough Park in Weston-super-Mare. It was finally identified as *E. ramosissimum* in 1986, by Clive Jermy and Alison Paul (FitzGerald & Jermy, 1987). The site, just inland from the sea front, is a remnant of dune grassland enclosed over a century ago. Associated thermophilous species, such as *Cynodon dactylon*, support a theory that, in Somerset at least, this species may be a natural colonist (Rumsey & Spencer, 2012), although FitzGerald & Jermy (1987) suggested that it may have arrived with American troops returning from Europe in 1945. A second site in Weston-super-Mare was discovered by Rupert Higgins in 2000, in the grounds of the Grand Atlantic Hotel. It thrives here, now in the private communal gardens of retirement flats. Until recently the first occurrence in Britain was believed to be at a site near Boston, Lincolnshire, where it was found in 1947 on an artificially created river bank and may have arrived there as a ballast alien (FitzGerald & Jermy, 1987). In 1971 it was recorded at Whiteford Burrows, Glamorganshire by Franklyn Perring. In 2005 it was found at a development site by the River Usk in Newport, Gwent (Evans, 2006), where it did not persist and its status was uncertain (Rumsey & Spencer, 2012). Research on hybrids involving *E. ramosissimum* in Great Britain and Ireland provides evidence for native status, as does the recent re-determination of two herbarium specimens as this species, one collected on Hounslow Heath in 1705, the other from near Liverpool in the nineteenth century (Rumsey & Spencer, 2012). The Somerset site is the most southerly of the two extant populations.



Equisetum ramosissimum at Ellenborough Park (2011). Photo: FJR

VC6

Ellenborough Park	SSSI	ST317607	2021	HJC, FJR	In SW corner of park
Ellenborough Park	SSSI	ST318607	2021	HJC, FJR	Frequent along S border of park
Ellenborough Park	SSSI	ST319607	2021	HJC, FJR	Frequent along S border of park
Ellenborough Park	SSSI	ST318608	2021	HJC, FJR	Along S edge of scrub on N edge of park
Ellenborough Park	SSSI	ST319608	2021	HJC, FJR	Along S edge of scrub on N edge of park
Weston-super-Mare		ST31926097	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31946096	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31946097	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31956097	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31956098	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31956099	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31946102	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31956102	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31966100	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31966101	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]
Weston-super-Mare		ST31966102	2021	HJC, FJR	In garden of retirement flats [PRIVATE]



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