

***Leersia oryzoides* (L.) Sw.**

**Cut-grass**

Native

GB & England: Endangered

Schedule 8

Section 41

GB Rare

VC5 Lost; VC6 Absent

A rhizomatous perennial grass of the margins of lakes and ponds, ditches, canal banks and riversides. In Somerset first recorded in 1959 by R.B.G. and I.G. Roe in the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal near North Newton, at intervals over four miles. It was recorded in that year at Coxhill Bridge (ST303309 to ST307301), Fordgate (ST319330, ST322324, ST319320), Creech St Michael (ST296270) and Durston (ST308298 to ST308295, ST307292, ST307288 to ST304280). Roe (1981) stated that this species still grew in many of the spots where first seen, but perhaps not in such quantity as in 1959. During a survey in 1988, FitzGerald (1990) found a single clump *Leersia oryzoides* at only one of the former sites, between North Newton and Coxhill Bridge (ST304307). The decline was attributed to unsympathetic management of the canal bank. In 1989 two clumps were found at that site (ST303308) by Paul Green and Di Maxwell, but Green *et al.* (1997) reported that it had since died out, possibly due to the encroachment of coarser species. In 1989 Di Maxwell recorded a very good clump just south of the bridge at Durston (ST304281). She refound it at that site in 1992, but the site was destroyed when a short stretch of handrail was erected in 1993 (Green *et al.*, 1997). There have been no subsequent records for this grass in Somerset. *Leersia oryzoides* is restricted to southern England and has declined since the 1960s, with further losses in the last twenty years. Plants in Somerset were at the westernmost edge of its range. As a native, it is now restricted to a few sites in W. Sussex and Surrey.