

SOMERSET RARE PLANTS GROUP

Recording all plants growing wild in Somerset, not just the rarities



Meeting Report

**Sunday 13th August Urban Botany Meeting,
Yeovil (VC5)**

Leaders: Steve Parker & Simon Leach

Report: Steve Parker

Not everyone enjoys urban botany but for this recording session in Yeovil town centre a large group from the SRPG, including some new members gathered at the Ninesprings country park to walk in to the main shopping area of the town. As you would expect many of the plants recorded were non-natives, there is always the puzzle on if they are planted or self-seeded.

For once we didn't spend too long in the busy car park but crossed the road to Penn Hill, an area of rough grassland planted with non-native trees. While debating the identity of a grove of alien trees, Simon Leach was recording the plant galls helped by few members using phone plant apps. This area was mainly species-poor grassland. A local group have dug a small pond, the surface of which was covered by Fat Duckweed (*Lemna gibba*) with a small and obviously planted clump of Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*).



Community wildlife garden Photo © Steve Parker

From Penn Hill we headed into the main shopping area, recording common street weeds such as Guernsey Fleabane (*Conyza sumatrensis*) and Pineappleweed (*Matricaria discoidea*). Road works along South Street had protected a small colony of Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*), this was admired through the safety fencing, attracting some curious looks from local shoppers.



Shaggy Soldier in the main shopping street Photo © Steve Parker

Then came the discovery of an unusual plant, growing in the pavement cracks was Sussex Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis dillenii*). Initially identified by the leader as Procumbent Yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*). However, Helena Crouch suggested the plant's true identity. This identification was confirmed after the meeting by Simon Leach and was a new species for VC5. We suspect now that the plant is more common in VC5.



A botanist getting down to business in the street Photo © Steve Parker



Compact Brome at base of fence Photo © Steve Parker

Along the stream a range of native and alien trees and shrubs had been planted. As we re-entered the county park Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) dominated the banks of the small watercourse.



Sussex Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis dillenii*. © Steve Parker

Fencing around a car sales forecourt was home to a small population of Sticky Groundsel (*Senecio viscosus*). While at the back of this was a private car park with Small Teasel (*Dipsacus pilosus*) and growing nearby Compact Brome (*Anisantha madritensis*).



Indian Balsam Photo © Steve Parker

The day ended with much needed refreshments at the small café in the park. I think everyone enjoyed their urban plant safari.



Strange place for a rare plant Photo © Steve Parker