

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*)

Vulnerable

Formerly a serious weed in Victorian times, populations have declined markedly since 1930s

Still fairly widespread throughout the UK and occasionally seen in arable field edges, particularly in stubbles after harvest

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

Herbicides; shift to autumn cultivation

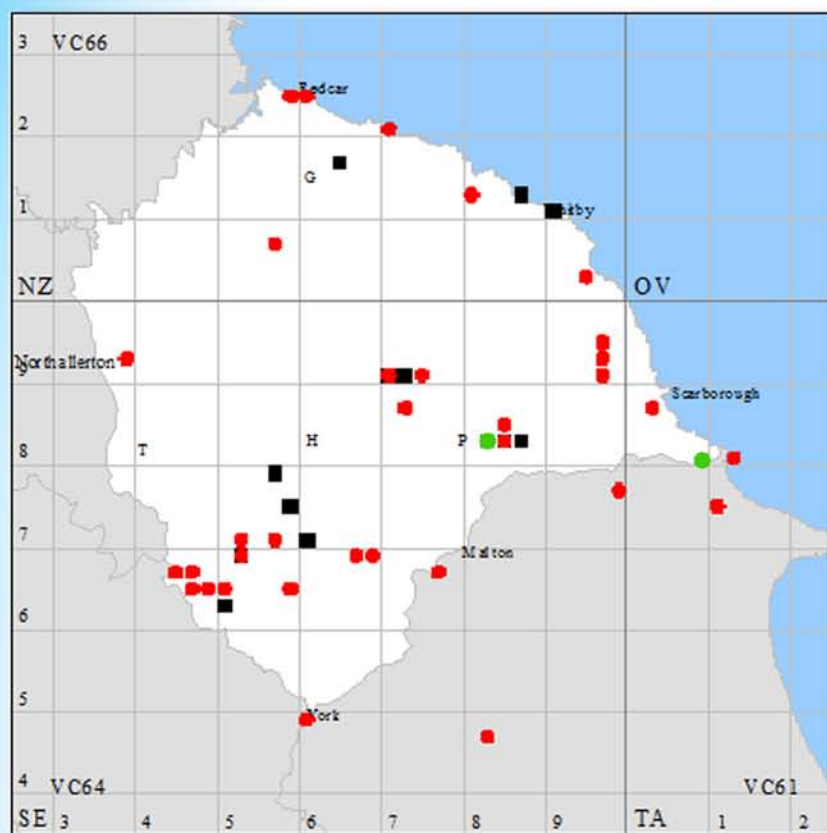
Our Corn marigold experience...

Corn marigold is classed as widespread but said to have declined rapidly since the 1970s. It avoids the calcareous soils – limestone and chalk – and is at its best on sands, which have a tendency to be acidic. Scarborough Field Naturalists Society stated it was: ‘plentiful on roadside verges between Snainton and Thornton-le-Dale in 1946 – entirely absent in 1947’. This tells us that these roadside verges must have been disturbed in 1945, causing a bloom of plants the following year, but as soon as the disturbance ceased the flowers stopped germinating. This is precisely the nature of arable annuals.

Corn marigold has always done well at the Ryedale Folk Museum, where the soil is basically sand but has benefitted from years of agricultural use. The seed we use was gathered from Thornton-le-Dale, where it still grows today to the north of the village where the sands and gravels overlay the limestone. Some seed was also obtained from Philip Winter, our volunteer farmer at West End Farm, Muston, where it grows on a dry bank at the east-end of the Vale of Pickering in good numbers.

Today over thirty sites are known in our area, but many of them are introductions that come in ‘wildflower mixes’. Corn marigolds are justifiably a great favourite in these, and sometimes even rival poppies in their colour displays in margins and cornfields.

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*)



Key

● Post-2000 records
(inc. CFP introductions)

■ Pre-2000 records

● Original known site

G: Guisborough T: Thirsk

H: Helmsley P: Pickering

Data: BSBI, 2014 Maps produced by MapMate®

Key Facts - Corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*)

- Avoids calcareous soils, preferring acidic sands
- Found in the UK since the Iron Age, becoming a problem weed of arable fields in Victorian times
- Autumn and spring germinating, but susceptible to frost and slug damage
- A very attractive plant for pollinating insects - flowers are frequently covered in them on sunny days

UK Conservation Designations

The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (2006) designates all UK wildflowers by their rarity, and hence conservation importance, in the following order:

Extinct → Extinct in the wild → Critically Endangered → Endangered
Vulnerable → Near Threatened → Least Concern

The Cornfield Flowers Project is spearheaded by the Carstairs Countryside Trust, Ryedale Folk Museum, North Yorkshire Moors Association and North York Moors National Park Authority. It has a demonstration field and nursery at Ryedale Folk Museum and a working arable field at Silpho, near Scarborough. It is supported by the North York Moors National Park Sustainable Development Fund, North York Moors Coast & Hills LEADER Programme and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

