

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Corn mint (*Mentha arvensis*)

Least Concern

A unique member of the mint species, specially adapted to life in cornfields

Unusual for a cornfield specialist, Corn mint is a perennial, not an annual. Known from only four sites by the CFP

REASONS FOR DECLINE:
Herbicides; annual cultivations

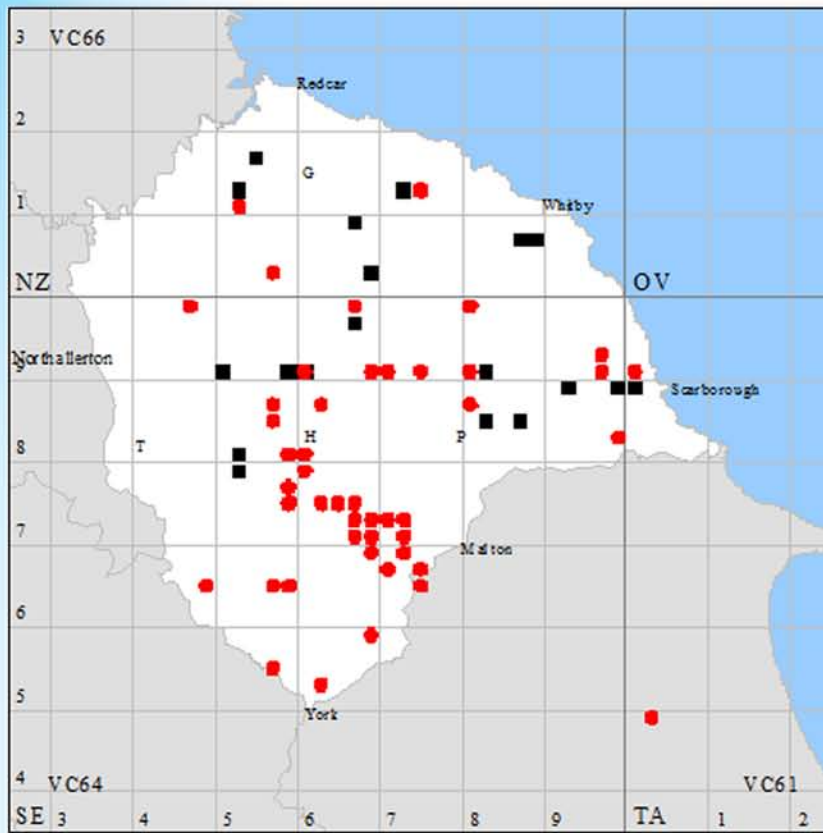
Our Corn mint experience...

Corn mint was said by the Scarborough Naturalists to be 'abundant in cornfields', referring to its pre-1950 status. Nan Sykes in *Wild Plants and their Habitats on the North York Moors* shows it growing on fifteen widely scattered sites. Eva Crackles also showed it widely scattered in the north of the East Riding, but common in the south, especially Lower Derwent Dale.

We find it uncommon, almost rare, in arable fields today but still present in damp grassland and ditch-sides. Corn mint suffers badly from autumn applications of glyphosate herbicide, used by farmers to control grass weeds in stubbles. We used glyphosate to control Creeping bent, Black grass and Couch on our Silpho arable headlands, and after applying it two consecutive years almost knocked out our Corn mint and Marsh woundwort, another perennial. In future when we use glyphosate we need to give protection to the susceptible species. One easy way of doing this is to cover the plants to be protected with a bucket or plastic sheet.

Corn mint is a valuable plant in arable headlands because it flowers quite late in summer and is very attractive to insects. However like most of the mint family it is very invasive and can sometimes end up where it is not wanted, as was found at the Ryedale Folk Museum...

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Corn mint (*Mentha arvensis*)



Key

● Post-2000 records
(inc. CFP introductions)

■ Pre-2000 records

G: Guisborough T: Thirsk

H: Helmsley P: Pickering

Data: BSBI, 2014 Maps produced by MapMate®

Key Facts - Corn mint (*Mentha arvensis*)

- Found on a range of fertile, heavier soils
- Spring germinating
- Perennial habit means can easily be lost due to herbicide spraying and annual soil cultivation
- Small plant with rounded leaves and pale-pink whorls of flowers; reveals presence from the mint aroma when trodden on

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.

