

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Common fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

Least concern

Common and widespread throughout the UK, though has declined in recent years

A difficult family to identify between species; flower and mature seed structure are key

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

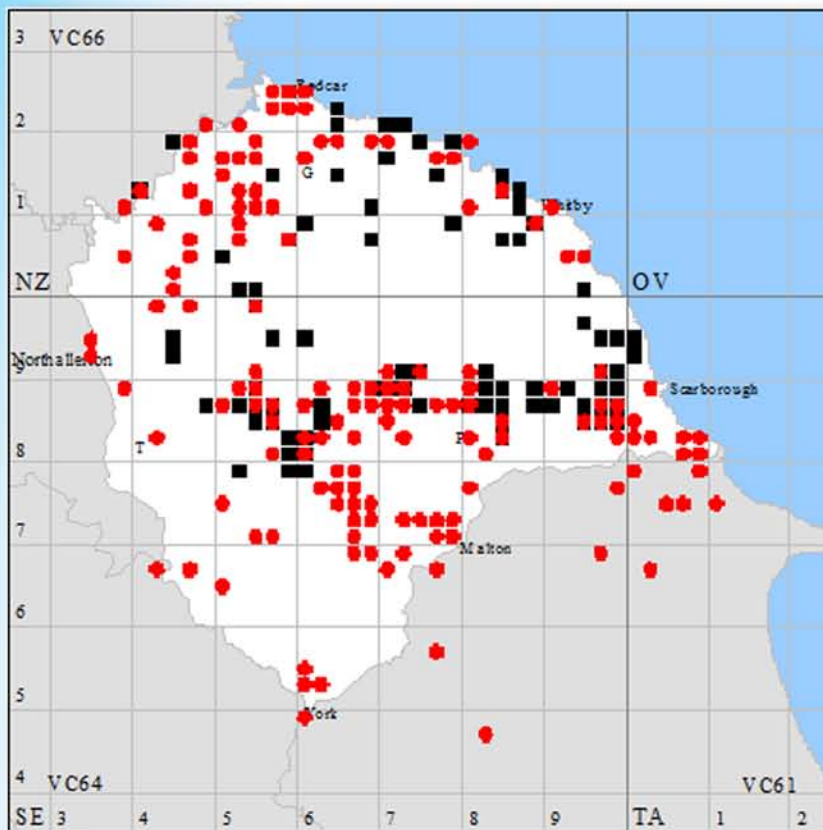
Herbicides; increased nitrogen application

Our Common fumitory experience...

Common fumitory is, as its name suggests, a very common plant. It grows in arable fields and is widespread from the south of England to the north of Scotland, avoiding only the high moors and grass fields, though even here it has been seen growing on mole hills. It seems to favour spring cultivations, such as potato fields. In late summer of 2010, it turned the whole of the Project's 'Mushroom Field' a deep red, completely dominating all other plants.

In 2009 Chris Wilson discussed the apparent dominance of Common fumitory in our area with local botanist Cedric Gillings, coming to the conclusion that we were missing some of the other species of Fumitory because we did not have enough information about them. Cedric took the irrevocable step of acquiring the BSBI publication on Fumitories by Rose Murphy - and very good it is too - but we are now no longer allowed to walk by a field full of Fumitory and dismiss it all as *Fumaria officinalis*. Thus our surveys take much longer than they used to! However, the up-side to all this extra searching is that we are now able to find a few sites for the rarer species that pretend to be Common fumitory.

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Common fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)



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 - Common fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)

- Most commonly found fumitory
- Germinates mainly in spring - can be very common in amongst spring-sown crops
- Grows in most soil conditions, except very free-draining and acidic
- Highly variable in appearance, but flowers usually purplish-pink, with darker blackish-red tips

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.

