

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Red hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*)

Critically Endangered

Spring germinating specialist of calcareous soils and disturbed stony ground

Formerly common in some areas, has experienced a dramatic decline since 1960

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

Herbicides; nitrogen application; shift to autumn cultivations

Our Red hemp-nettle experience...

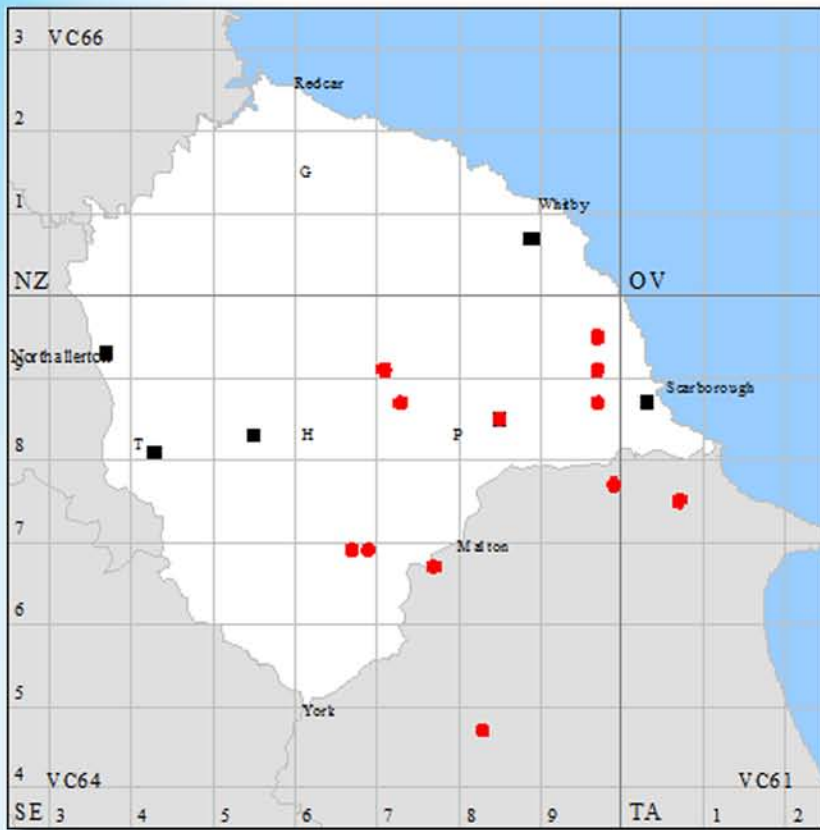
Galeopsis angustifolia has a decidedly southern distribution in Britain, with its most northerly present-day sites in our immediate area. In 1953, it was described as 'common in cornfield and waste places' in *The Natural History of the Scarborough District*. Said to be locally frequent on the Wolds by Eva Crackles, it was found only once during Nan Sykes' survey of the North York Moors in 1991, where a few tiny plants were growing on an unprotected site very close to the Ellerburn Bank Nature Reserve, near Thornton-le-Dale.

In 2002, Red hemp-nettle was found growing in Tire Ewe Quarry, just south of Langtoft. There were several strong plants, which were 'persuaded' to part with thirteen seeds, from which Nan Sykes grew fourteen plants - a feat not achieved before or since! These plants were used to produce more seed, enabling introductions to the Project's own fields, Ryedale Folk Museum, and with three of our participating farmers at Potter Brompton, West Ayton and Terrington. All now produce spontaneous plants.

In 2003, it was found on the edge of a quarry up Staxton Hill. In 2004, a large number were discovered growing on chalk scree just off the road from Thixendale to Birkdale - some years this has in excess of 2,000 plants on it. In 2005 the CFP was granted permission to establish this species on the scree slopes in Wharram Quarry. For three years plants and seed were introduced and by the end as many as 108 spontaneous plants were counted. By this time, Stephen Gibson's vegetable plot at Birkdale Farm, Terrington, had become so infested with Red hemp-nettle that he was able to gather large quantities of seed, which helped the Project to deposit 2000 seeds at Kew's Millennium Seed Bank in 2007.

In 2008, it was introduced to Spaunton Quarry - spontaneous plants were found in 2009/10 but were very few and very small - lack of soil nitrogen may be a factor. Also in 2008 it was introduced at Martin Stringer's Rectory Farm, Nunburnholm, and several spontaneous plants were successfully recorded here in 2010.

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Red hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*)



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 - Red hemp-nettle (*Galeopsis angustifolia*)

- Prefers lime-rich soils. Will also succeed on basic scree.
- Very variable growth - can be extremely stunted in nutrient-poor conditions
- Late-spring germinating
- Distinctive dark-green, spear-shaped leaves with four serrated points along margin

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.

