

Cornfield Flowers Project



Species Cards



Sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*)

Least Concern

An annual *Euphorbia* with bright, yellowish-green colouring to the rounded bracts and flowers

Commonly found in arable, waste ground, roadsides and gardens in sunny locations - recorded in 60% of CFP arable surveys

REASONS FOR DECLINE:

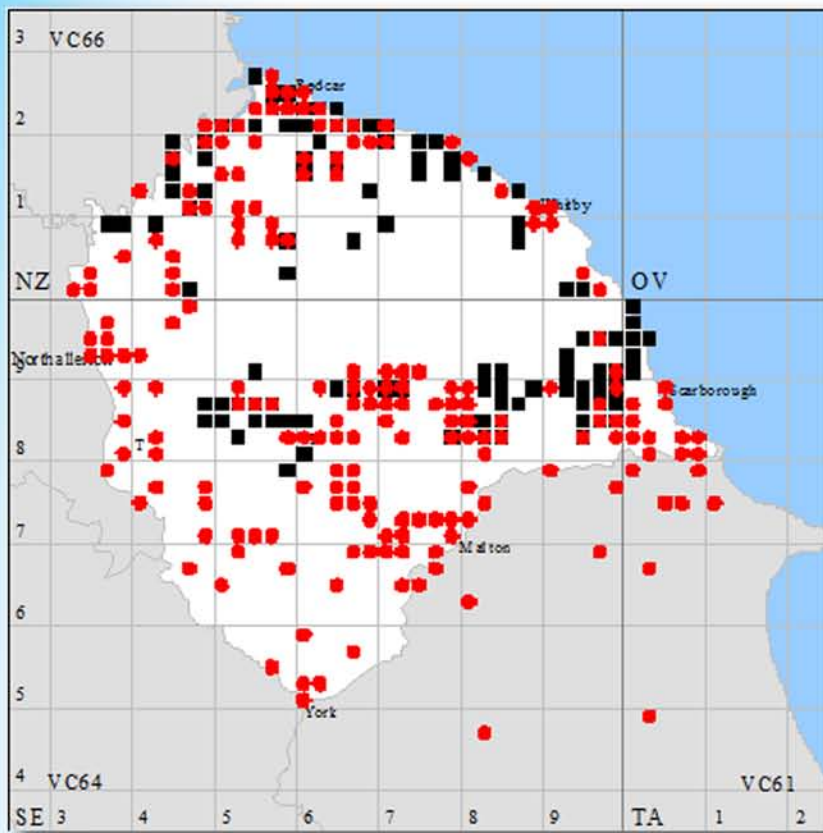
Herbicides; shift to autumn cultivation

Our Sun spurge experience...

Since Sun spurge is a common plant variously described as widespread, abundant, frequent and 'common in waste places', Chris Wilson thought he would look to see if it had any historical uses of interest.

Most of its old names refer to its irritant milky sap in derogatory terms: Cat's milk, Devil's milk and Mouse milk; yet one local name for it was Wartwort or Wartweed. John Gerard, renowned 16th century herbalist, tells us the sap 'cureth all roughness of the skin, mangines, leprie, scurffe and running scabs - and taketh away all manner of warts, knobs and the hard callouses of fistulaes, hot swellings and carbuncles'. It's probably worth a try if you suffer from any of the above, but don't say the Cornfield Flowers Project recommended it.....

Distribution in north-east Yorkshire: Sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*)



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 - Sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*)

- Found in a variety of soils on disturbed ground
- The largest and most obvious *Euphorbia* in an arable habitat
- Summer germinating
- Can sometimes be picked out from a distance due to its bright, yellow-green flowerheads and relatively tall growing habit

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.

