

***Adiantum capillus-veneris* L.**

Maidenhair Fern

Introduction

GB & England: Least Concern

GB Scarce

VC5 Scarce; VC6 Scarce

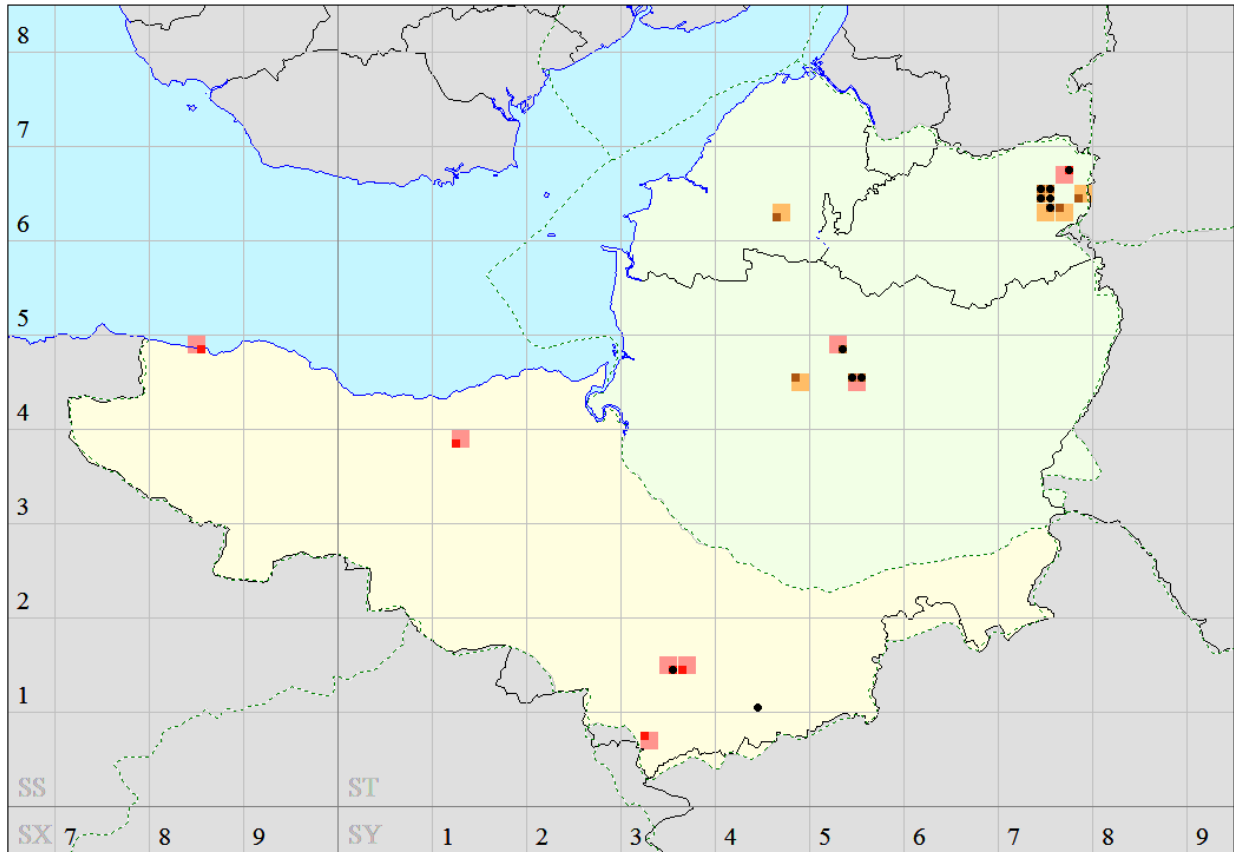
A wintergreen fern found as a native on wet calcareous cliffs in some western coastal sites. Only present as an introduction in Somerset growing in sheltered basements and on walls in urban situations, probably arising from spores from cultivated plants, which may not be of native origin. The first record for Somerset was made in 1853, when E.J. Lowe (*Phytologist* 4: 1100) reported finding three plants in the air shaft of a stone quarry at Combe Down, some thirty feet below ground; in response, W.H. Hawker (*Phytologist* 5: 82) stated that he had found a plant or two on moist rocks in the neighbourhood of Cheddar in 1851. This species has since been discovered at scattered sites in Somerset, with mixed survival rates: only casual at some sites, but persisting for decades at others. Now lost from Wrington (ST468625), where it was found by Miss E. Rawlins on the platform masonry of the disused railway station in 1952 and last recorded in 1985; the area has since been redeveloped. Also no longer to be found at Henton (ST489454) where it persisted on a roadside wall for 11 years, first found in 1963 by Miss J. Lorraine. There are no recent records for Claverton Manor, Bath (ST785640), where it was found on a wall in the grounds in 1978 by Dave Green. In Bath, however, it is still to be found at other long-known locations, including Batheaston churchyard (first found by C.D. Heginbotham and E.H. Stevenson in 1930), the Roman Baths (first found by Mrs M.J. Oldaker in 1950) and Lyncombe Vale Road (first found by Capt. R.G.B. and Mrs I.G. Roe in 1961). Perhaps at its most splendid at the Bishop's Palace in Wells, where it can be seen festooning the southeast outer walls of the palace gardens and in abundance on the wall surrounding the moat. In Somerset, this fern is growing at inland sites outside its native distribution, which is strictly coastal and western.

VC5

Worthy	SS857481	1995	GAC	Clump planted on side of track. Did not survive
Lower Halsway	ST124382	1993	IPG	Few plants on brickwork in nursery greenhouse
Chard, Ashfield Terrace	ST326079	1997	IPG	On 3 brick walls of front gardens walls
Ilminster	ST35591477	2010	SJP	On high wall opposite Shrubbery Hotel
Ilminster	ST362147	1999	IPG	In storm drain in Blackdown View
Broadshard	ST442109	2000	IPG	4 clumps on garden wall, E side of road

VC6

Wookey Hole	ST5348	2004	IPG	1 plant in Wookey Hole Cave
Wells, Market Place	ST54994577	2013	HJC, FJR	1 clump on drinking fountain in the market place
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST550457	2013	SRPG	Abundant on wall of Bishop's Palace garden
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST551456	2008	HJC, FJR	Many plants on wall of moat
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST551457	2009	ATC	On roadside wall of moat
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST551457	2013	IPG	Growing in grounds of Bishop's Palace
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST552456	2008	HJC, FJR	On outer walls of Bishop's Palace gardens
Bath, Nelson Place West	ST74316504	2008	HJC, JMC	Basement of 12 Nelson Place West
Bath, Roman Baths	ST7464	2004	IPG	Well established on walls, stonework and rocks
Bath, Monmouth Street	ST74726488	2007	HJC, FJR	Basement of 26-27 Monmouth Street
Bath, Beaufort Square	ST74816488	2009	HJC, FJR	Several plants in basement
Bath, St James' Parade	ST75006454	2009	HJC, FJR	In basement
Bath, Lyncombe Vale Rd	ST75436360	2008	HJC, JMC	On walls either side of road
Bath, nr Raby Villas	ST75796511	2008	HJC, FJR	30 clumps on W-facing wall of railway cutting
Bath, Widcombe	ST758639	2011	RDR	1 plant in retaining wall near 12 Church Street
Bath, Widcombe	ST75926393	2008	HJC, FJR	3 plants at base of wall in Church Street
Batheaston churchyard	ST77746790	2008	HJC, FJR	10 plants on retaining wall at W end of church



Distribution of *Adiantum capillus-veneris* in Somerset mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; pink squares are 1987-1999, either 1km or tetrad records; sepia squares are pre-1987 records



Adiantum capillus-veneris at Batheaston (2008). Photo: HJC