

***Prunella x intermedia* Link**

(*P. vulgaris* x *P. laciniata*)

Native

GB Scarce

VC5 Rare; VC6 Rare

A rhizomatous perennial of short calcareous grassland, usually found wherever *P. laciniata* grows or has grown. In Somerset, first discovered at Cheddar by C.E. Salmon and reported to E.S. Marshall by C.E. Moss in a letter dated August 1913 (Marshall, 1914). This was soon after White (1906) had first described *P. laciniata* as a species new to Britain; White (1912) had dismissed purple-flowered plants found by Mrs Gregory as merely a colour variant of *P. laciniata*. In 1965, C.A. Howe found this hybrid at Green Down, Charlton Mackrell, where it is still to be found with *P. laciniata*. In 1966, he found the hybrid again, at Compton Pauncefoot, growing in the absence of *P. laciniata*. A few plants of *P. x intermedia* were re-found there in 1993; however none have been found in recent searches and the plant is feared lost due to under-grazing. In 2014, this hybrid was found by Somerset Rare Plants Group growing with both parents at Langridge. In VC5, vegetative plants were found by Ellen McDouall and Somerset Rare Plants Group at Cadbury Castle in 2014; they were later confirmed as this hybrid. No plants of *P. laciniata* have ever been recorded from that area. The persistence of this hybrid at a site after *P. laciniata* has disappeared has been observed elsewhere, indeed the hybrid is believed to contribute to the disappearance of *P. laciniata*, the species being “hybridised out of existence” (Bowen, 2000). At Cheddar and Green Down, however, the species has persisted alongside the hybrid, for around a century in the case of the Cheddar population. This hybrid has been lost from some former sites within its range. Somerset plants are at the western edge of its distribution, with the exception of sites in Ireland.



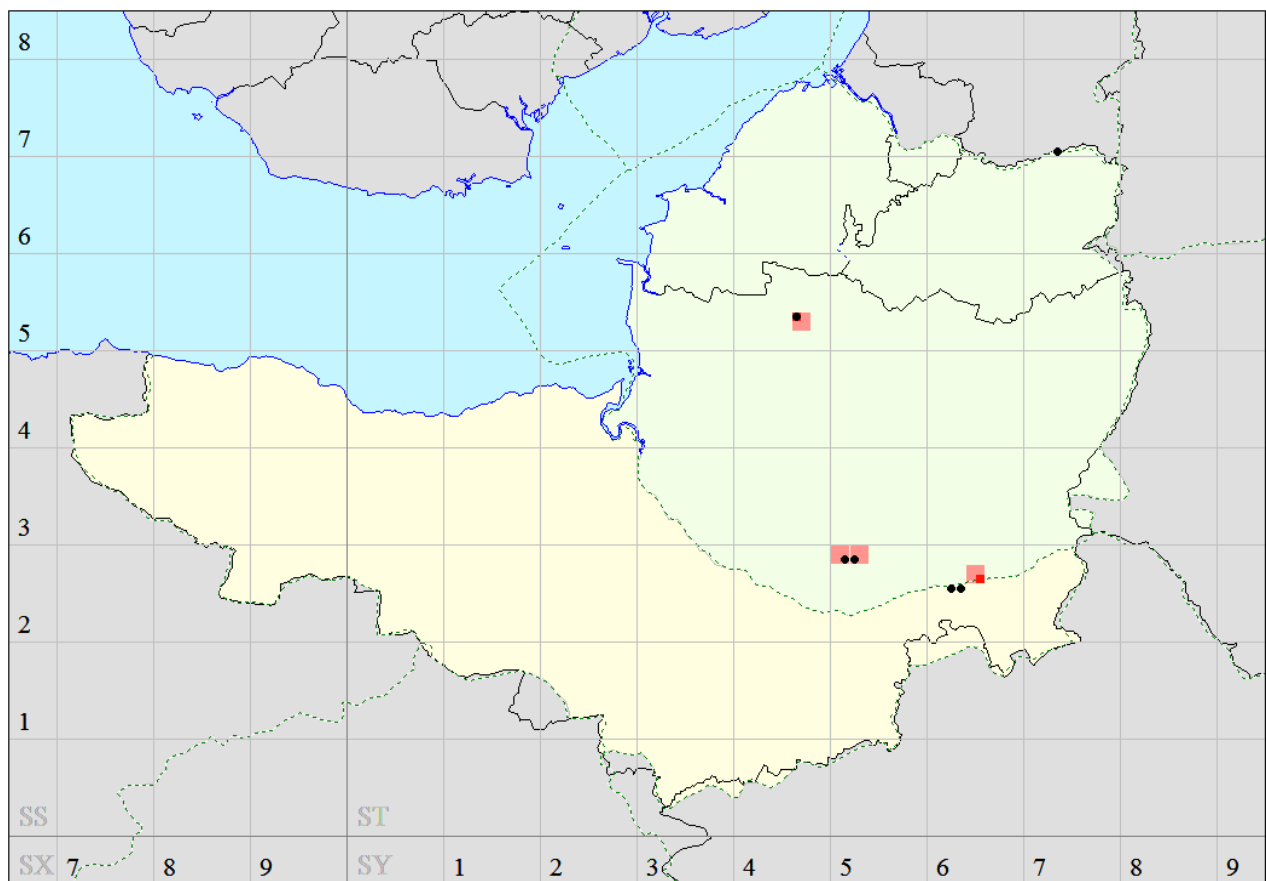
Prunella x intermedia at Cheddar (2009). Photo: HJC

VC5

Cadbury Castle		ST62972506	2014	SRPG	6 plants on E-facing slope of 2nd rampart
Cadbury Castle		ST62972507	2014	SRPG	6 plants on E-facing slope of 2nd rampart
Cadbury Castle		ST629250	2014	SRPG	3 plants on W-facing first rampart
South Cadbury		ST63592518	2014	SRPG	A few plants

VC6

Cheddar	SSSI	ST46555379	2009	HJC, FJR	With <i>P. laciniata</i> in grassland S of path
Cheddar	SSSI	ST465538	2009	HJC, FJR	With <i>P. laciniata</i> by path and in grass S of path
Green Down	SSSI	ST51862884	2009	HJC, FJR	Few patches, on upper S-facing slope
Green Down	SSSI	ST51992879	2009	HJC, FJR	1 plant on upper S-facing slope
Green Down	SSSI	ST519288	2009	HJC, FJR	3 plants on upper S-facing slope
Green Down	SSSI	ST52002878	2009	HJC, FJR	1 plant on upper S-facing slope
Compton Pauncefoot		ST654268	1993	PRG	Few plants on steep slope
Langridge		ST73257003	2014	SRPG	3 plants in glorious grassland on S-facing slope
Langridge		ST73277004	2014	SRPG	2 plants in glorious grassland on S-facing slope



Distribution of *Prunella x intermedia* in Somerset, mapped using MapMate. Black dots are post-2000 records; red squares are 1987-1999, monad or tetrad records