

PLANT ALERT



August 2020 update

Since our first article in the last issue of *BSBI News* (spring 2020) an array of developments have taken place in the world of PlantAlert, despite the impact of Covid-19. With more people than ever out in gardens we have made it our mission to reach as many gardeners of varying abilities across the UK. We have received a significant amount of media coverage, featuring on BBC Radio 4 Gardener's Question Time at Home (Episode 11) and the 6pm regional ITV News programmes (in late July) to name just two. You can now explore these articles and digital media featuring Plant Alert via our media page on www.plantalert.org.

The result of this coverage has been an increase in records. The most frequently reported species are displayed on our constantly updated results page (see links below). Currently top of the list is Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria [Fallopia] japonica*) followed by Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Both species were featured and pictured as examples of escaped ornamentals in the media coverage, probably encouraging people to report them. Perhaps more unexpected is Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*) in third place. This species has spread considerably over the last twenty years outside gardens, so to know it is regarded as a species difficult to control in gardens provides valuable evidence for a potential risk assessment.

Apart from records of already well-known invasive plants, we have also received records of native species, e.g. *Potentilla reptans* (Creeping Cinquefoil) and *Equisetum arvense* (Field Horsetail) and well-known garden weeds, such as *Oxalis corniculata* (Procumbent Yellow-sorrel). Despite this, we have had a steady flow of ornamental garden plant records, including some species which are yet to appear 'en masse' on the BSBI distribution maps, such as *Tropaeolum tuberosum* (Mashua) and *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian Sage). This is promising as it indicates we are receiving records of species potentially at the early stages of their journey out of gardens and into the countryside.

Plant Alert is a long term BSBI and Coventry University recording project for ornamental plants spreading in gardens. If you have such plants in your garden, please go to our website. We would be grateful for you to recommend the project to

your friends and neighbours. To get in touch with us please use the email address below and follow us on Twitter: @Plant_Alert.

April Webb

support@plantalert.org

www.plantalert.org

1	24	<i>Fallopia japonica</i> "Japanese Knotweed"
2	19	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> "Himalayan Balsam"
3	12	<i>Leycesteria formosa</i> "Himalayan Honeysuckle"
4	10	<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i> "Green Alkanet"
	10	<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i> subsp. <i>argentatum</i> "Felen Arianddail Marddanhadlen"
6	8	<i>Allium triquetrum</i> "Three-cornered Garlic"
7	6	<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i> "Fox-and-cubs"
	6	<i>Houttuynia cordata</i> "Fish-plant"
9	5	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> "Snowberry"
	5	<i>Equisetum arvense</i> "Field Horsetail"
11	4	<i>Crassula helmsii</i> "New Zealand Pigmyweed"
	4	<i>Erigeron karvinskianus</i> "Mexican Fleabane"
	4	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i> "Salmonberry"
	4	<i>Anemone x hybrida</i> "Japanese Anemone"
	4	<i>Lysichiton americanus</i> "American Skunk-cabbage"
	4	<i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i> "Rock Crane's-bill"
	4	<i>Acanthus mollis</i> "Bear's-breech"
	4	<i>Calystegia</i> "Bindweed"
19	3	<i>Akebia quinata</i> "Five-leaf Akebia"
	3	<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i> "Wood Spurge"

Top 20 species reported on the Plant Alert website at August 2020. The middle column shows the number of reports.



Leycesteria formosa (Himalayan Honeysuckle).
April Webb