# Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*)

## Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyn-Feie

## Background

Burnet Saxifrage is a species with an extremely small distribution on the Isle of Man.

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been reformatted from a Rare Species Action Plan, produced by Wildflowers of Mann in 2004, and approved by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in same year.

## Description

This member of the carrot family, has a 'hogweed' like appearance, although smaller, slimmer and more graceful.

## British Isles Distribution

Burnet Saxifrage is a European native, still common where semi-natural grassland is found. In the UK, it is also still considered common.

## Isle of Man Distribution

Manx populations are centred around a few road verge sites which are near St Jude's and Bride, on sandy soils.

## Habitat and Ecology

A perennial herb of dry, sunny, (normally) lime rich grasslands, the Burnet Saxifrage becomes choosier as to site, and scarcer in the north and west of the British Isles.

It grows up to 70 cm on grassland or poorer soils with sharp drainage (normally over limestone), but it is also known to grow on damper neutral brown earths. It is normally somewhat taller than surrounding vegetation.

Typical habitat includes flowering hay meadows, road verges, extensively grazed downland and woodland rides. The white flowers in early summer are followed by seeds that tend to disperse within a few meters of the parent. Burnet Saxifrage is known to be the food plant of many insect larvae, and the flowers, typical of most umbellifers, are most commonly visited by flies and beetles.

As a plant that prefers limestone sites, this species has probably always been somewhat restricted on the Island. But the loss of flowering hay meadows around the southeast, may have wiped out sizeable populations before proper botanical records began.

Global warming may benefit this species, making its less choosy as to site.

## Legal protection

Listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and black-listed under *Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man 2022*.

## Threats

Road verge eutrophication and invasive Alexanders.

## Reason for BAP

Species in critical decline.

## Aims

Introduce Burnet Saxifrage to new sites.

## Linked BAPS

Limestone grassland BAPs and Shaking Grass Action for Wildlife project.

| Delivery Options | Active | Challenges |
|---|---|---|
| The restoration of the limestone quarry at Billown could provide an opportunity to create a suitable grassland habitat for this species. | | |
| Plants will be maintained in cultivation to build a seed crop should a suitable meadow site be created. | | The species should be easy to locate and collect/propagate viable seeds. Finding suitable receptor sites will be more difficult, and ease of establishment could also be difficult for this species that is known to be somewhat tricky to establish. |

## Delivery Plan

| Strategy | Lead |
|---|---|
| The creation of just one good flowering hay meadow on a calcareous brown earth, would give this species the habitat it would need to form a large population. In the absence of (or as well as) this desirable outcome, the species can be introduced to other potential road verge sites, both to bolster its northern populations and to create a southern group. | Manx Wildlife Trust |

| Action | Timing | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Find source plants | Summer 2007 | Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry |
| Collect seed | Summer 2007 | Wildflowers of Mann |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sow/grow seed | Spring 2008-09 | Wildflowers of Mann |
| Identify receptor sites | Summer 2010 | Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry |
| Plant out | Autumn 2010/11 | Wildflowers of Mann |
| Monitor | Summer >2011 | Wildflowers of Mann |
| Review | Summer 2012 | Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry |

| **Annual Updates** | |
|---|---|
| **Year** | |
| 2015-2011 | Looked for annually not found. |
| 2012 | Found by Jessie Tregale on road-verge opposite entrance to Kimmeragh Motorcross site (Bride), unable to be relocated a few months later. |
| 2012-2021 | Looked for most years including winter searches but not found. |
| 2022 | Included as extinct in PoCCIoM 2022 publication. |