



Juniper (*Juniperis communis*)



Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

Background

Once locally extinct, the Juniper is now being reintroduced to suitable habitats.

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 the same year.

Description



A small tree or large moorland shrub, with male and female individuals. Females produce berries.

British Isles Distribution

Pollen analysis shows that Juniper was very common across the British Isles after the last ice age, including on the Isle of Man. Over the following few thousand years, the species was pushed into the niche habitats where it now occurs, although it is still widespread across the British Isles.

In the past 150 years, Juniper has undergone another phase of decline, with hill burning, overgrazing and other factors implicated.

Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, the last native plant was dug up from upper Glen Auldyn in 1947 (to save it), but it died soon after being transplanted onto Ramsey Golf Course. A survey of upper Glen Auldyn in 2013, did not reveal any more Juniper bushes, but the area is large with many small ravines and chasms.

A small Juniper appeared near Spanish Head in the 1990s and is now becoming a large shrub. The plant is most likely bird-sown, but it is unknown if the seed was collected by the bird from a garden or wild plant. It is unknown at the moment, if the tree is male or female, but being a single tree means it is essentially sterile.

Habitat and Ecology

Juniper is a small tree or large shrub, that grows in a number of native habitats, including lowland chalk downland, tree-line forest, upland scrub, native pine woods and coastal cliffs. The species has several forms and sub-species, such as the prostrate form (*J. communis* ssp. *nana*). However, sub-species *communis* is the common type, and the type is assumed to have been common on the Isle of Man.



Juniper has male and female individuals, and only female trees produce the berries which are famous as an ingredient of gin. Juniper has a rather small range of specialist dependent invertebrate species, although many of these remain common, even in the absence of native Juniper, as they can be hosted by garden Junipers and close relatives.

Legal protection

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

Threats

Phytophthora austrocedrae is a South American disease of Juniper and some other conifer species, that was recently discovered in the UK. Where it occurs, it has led to mortality of many individuals and may destroy whole populations. It appears to be spreading, especially in the Pennines and Lake District.

Reason for BAP

Re-introducing large populations of Juniper to the Island, will re-introduce the ecologically important Juniper upland scrub habitat. Therefore, we will be able to create woodland areas that grade from lowland mixed woodland (0-100m) to upland oak woodland (100-200m); to upland birch and mixed scrub (200-250m to Juniper-dominated scrub (250-350m).

Aims

Reintroduce this lost species to the Isle of Man to re-create a viable population.

Linked BAPS

Delivery Options

Active

Challenges

Delivery Plan

Strategy

A large, initial population is required to ensure that enough individual specimens survive to form a viable population. Glen Ayldyn is a logical, and available, choice of location for this re-introduction program.

It is expected that over the coming decades, several thousand Juniper bushes will be planted. Some of these will be in dryer, open areas of upland oak woodland, some will be in the mixed upland scrub areas. But most will be planted in groves above 250m, with some rowan and eared willow. The groves will have temporary fencing to allow the Juniper bushes to grow above the sheep browse. It is hoped that once established, the Juniper populations will be self-sustaining. Careful grazing management will be needed to ensure that this is possible.

Juniper transplants will be obtained from the UK from native upland British provenance stock. The plants will also need to be certified as disease free to avoid introducing *Phytophthora austrocedrae*.

Lead

Manx Wildlife Trust



Action	Timing	Responsibility
Plant Juniper groves in the Glen Audyn and Guthries' area (100-200 trees per year).	2014-2024	Wildflowers of Mann
Review.	2015 onwards	Wildflowers of Mann /Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.

Annual Updates

Year	
2016	50 plants introduced to Glen Audyn and Guthries' Memorial area.
2018	Plants reported as being yellow and in poor health.
2020	Survey showed very high survival and good health.
2021	Further 100 trees planted into Guthries' Memorial area.
2022	Trees not available in UK.
2023	<p>2021 planting trees establishing slowly, 2016 trees nearly 1m high and creating good habitat structure.</p> <p>Plans for further planting at MWT Creg y Cowin Nature Reserve (East Baldwin), MWT Glion Darragh Nature Reserve (West Baldwin) and on the Glen Auldyn estate (Mountain Mile area) overwinter.</p>

