



## Common Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*)



### Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

#### Background

Common Agrimony is a species of base-rich dry grassland, that became extinct in the wild on the Isle of Man in 2011, following the development of its last site at Ronaldsway.

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

#### Description

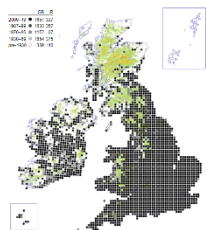


Agrimony is a perennial of neglected grasslands, scrub, and disturbed areas, mostly on a base-rich (often over limestone) soil.

In the north of its range, agrimony becomes less common and is confined to coastal and limestone grasslands. Elsewhere, it will pop up under hedges and on road verges, often in large numbers.

In the core of its area, it is one of the few species of wildflower that can tolerate competition within rank, unmanaged grassland.

#### British Isles Distribution



Agrimony is predominantly a species of lowlands and upland calcareous conditions. In the north and west of its range, it is uncommon, and restricted to coastal and base-rich areas.

#### Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, it is described by Allen (1984) as 'very rare', with sightings only around Port Mooar and Maughold. Recent sightings are confined to one clump of plants at the coast, near to Ronaldsway Airport.

The species is held in cultivation, at MWT's Mullen e Cloie Nature Reserve in St John's.

#### Habitat and Ecology

Its bright yellow flowers appear in mid to late summer on spikes up to 1 m tall. These are followed by seeds, lined with barbs, to hook on animal coats for effective dispersal.

Agrimony has a long history of use as a medicinal and dye herb, along with the closely related Fragrant Agrimony (*Agrimonia odorata*). It is still widely grown for its herbal properties.



Many moth species use Common Agrimony as a food source for larvae. Though owing to its rarity on the Island, it is unlikely that any species, which is solely dependent on the plant, will occur.

The likely global warming event may benefit this species, both by improving the range of sites on which the plant is able to grow, and by increasing the base richness of the Island's soils (as leaching effects are diminished). This will only benefit the plant, if it is in a position to spread to suitable habitats. This would occur chiefly in the southeast of the Island.

## 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

The species is extinct in the wild.

## Reason for BAP

The species is extinct in the wild (but held in cultivation) and should be reintroduced.

## Aims

To reintroduce and create viable populations in the wild (from stock cultivated from seed, collected prior to the Isle of Man extinction).

## Linked BAPS

All Action for Wildlife Shaking Grass BAPs.

## Delivery Options

### Active

### Challenges

## Delivery Plan

### Strategy

This aim of this plan is to create two population centres for this plant. One will be around the coastal Maughold area, and one on the limestone soils around Castletown (coastal and inland).

This will be done by identifying native plants and collecting some seeds from each plant found. The seed should easily germinate and bulk up to a large plant stock. They can then be introduced and monitored on suitable receptor sites.

### Lead

Manx Wildlife Trust

### Action

### Timing

### Responsibility

Find source plants

Summer 2005

Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Collect seed

Summer 2005

Wildflowers of Mann

Sow/grow seed

Spring 2006-08

Wildflowers of Mann



Identify receptor sites	Summer 2008	Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Plant out	Autumn 2008/09	Wildflowers of Mann
Monitor	Summer >2009	Wildflowers of Mann
Review	Summer 2010	Wildflowers of Mann, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
<b>Year</b>		
2005	The Ronaldsway site was visited repeatedly during spring and summer. Seven plants were seen by A. Dubbeldam on 12 <sup>th</sup> July, but more were certain to be on the site. Sadly, due to cattle grazing, no plants were able to flower this year, thus no seed was collected.	
2006	<p>The agrimony population was enclosed in a rabbit/cow proof fence, early in the season. One plant was accidentally dug up, so was potted and moved to the greenhouse. Its survival and flowering in the same year, goes some way to reassure us that this plant can be translocated.</p> <p>The enclosed plants flowered well, and some 30 seeds were collected. Examination of the seed confirms that this is the common agrimony, not fragrant. A raised nursery bed has been prepared at Knockaloe, for the young plants to grow during the summer.</p>	
2007	Over 45 agrimony seedlings, germinated in nursery conditions. They are now established in a specially prepared seedbed at Knockaloe. The single mature plant in the bed flowered well, and yielded many hundreds of seeds, which have been harvested and stored.	
2008	<p>The plants at Knockaloe Nursery all flowered and yielded large quantities of harvested seed.</p> <p>The population at the Ronaldsway Runway Extension Site, has been removed by the Wildflowers of Man Project, on behalf of Department of Transport. This effectively makes the species extinct in the wild, on the Island.</p> <p>Work is due to start on the promontory in early 2009. The population is now growing on a raised bed at Mullen-e-Cloie nursery.</p>	
2011	<p>The medium-term goal is to set up a receptor site for the Action Plan species. This is being created at Turkeyland Quarry, where nearly 1 acre has been set aside by Colas Ltd, to allow for the creation of species-rich calcareous grassland. This was sown and planted in Autumn 2009, with additional planting in Autumn 2010.</p> <p>A program of weed control, to combat invasive brambles, thistles, docks and ragwort, is being maintained. This is until the site is completely established, fenced and a grazing regime is in place, hopefully in 2012.</p>	
2013	<p>Plans at Turkeyland Quarry, to create a receptor site for rare calcareous grassland species, have been set back somewhat, as the site is not yet fenced, nor grazed (except by rabbits). This failure to fence and graze the site leaves further work to develop the site ecologically redundant, as bramble will soon take over the area. The problems with fencing and grazing may well stem from the withdrawal of stock from the adjacent field. This was to maintain a stock-free zone alongside the airfield.</p> <p>Works to open up, and clear scrub, out of Colas's Rosehill Quarry ASSI, has progressed on an annual basis. A core of open grassland habitat is being maintained.</p>	



2016	This plan is still stalled and hopes for the use of Turkeyland Quarry have been abandoned. It is hoped that in time, the condition of Rosehill Quarry will improve sufficiently. This can be done by clearing scrubbed areas, ready for re-introduction schemes to progress.
2018	<p>This plan is still stalled. However, a ray of hope exists for Rosehill Quarry, and some further scrub clearance took place in April.</p> <p>The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture are in negotiations with Colas to introduce sheep to the site. However, by August 2018, this has still not occurred. Colas are also hoping to infill a neighbouring quarry with overburden, and then to restore the site to calcareous grassland, within the grazed unit. Should both of these things happen, the Rosehill site will be suitable for full investment as a receptor site, for a large range of calcareous, and for species of the base-rich marshes.</p>
2019	<p>The proposal by Colas to infill their Broomhouse Quarry pool, has come with an opportunity to create a significant extension to the Rosehill Quarry ASSI calcareous grassland site. This has also been a driver to restore a significant amount of calcareous habitat in Rosehill Quarry, back to open habitat. It has also initiated a grazing scheme /monitoring program, and created another focused, rare species, action plan site.</p> <p>The details are contained within the Billown Quarries Management Plan 2020-2026.</p>
2020	The Billown Management plan has now been finalised. However, it still needs final consent from the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.
2022	Stock plants at Mullen e Cloie and University College Isle of Man are in good health and spreading. Planting and sowing of agrimony at Billown Quarry Nature Reserve has been ongoing in 2022, with over 20 plants translocated, and large amounts of seed sown.
2023	Many seeds have germinated, but survival of seedlings has been limited by low fertility. Planted plants have responded variably to translocation. There has been a high survival rate, but only a few plants have flowered well. The shadier damper parts of the site seem to favour the plant.

