



Spotted Medick (*Medicago arabica*)



Biodiversity Action Plan | Cummey Yannoo Beiyen-Feie

Background

Spotted Medick is a protected plant that only appears in one site on the Island.

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



This plant has distinctive dark, marked leaves with small yellow flowers.

British Isles Distribution

This is a species that is abundant and widespread in southeast Britain, where it is often regarded as a lawn weed. In Wales, northern England, Ireland and Scotland the species is largely coastal.

Isle of Man Distribution

On the Isle of Man, Spotted Medick has historically only been found in three locations around Castletown - Derbyhaven, Ronaldsway and Knockrushen. It is now only found at Knockrushen, where it can grow in profusion in the road edge. However, it is much less common here as a lawn-weed than it was a decade ago. A 2009 unlocalised/unverified record for SC48M could either be an error, part of a sown UK wildflower mix or a grass seed contaminant.

It is regarded as probably native by Allen, and native by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland.

Habitat and Ecology

Spotted Medick is a winter annual of dry mesotrophic or calcareous soils. It is one of the few rare winter annuals that shows positive response to additional fertility. It can become quite a large sprawling plant if given room and fertility. It is able to tolerate more competition than many winter annuals and is able to grow in mown lawns.

Its main restricting feature on the Isle of Man is the need for free-draining, warm conditions. Thus, like most populations outside its core southeast British range, it grows near the coast.

Unlike most winter annuals, Spotted Medick will keep flowering and growing through to late summer, if there is adequate moisture. This is especially the case in lawns, where regular clipping delays senescence.



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| Legal protection | | |
| Not listed on Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Act 1990 and amber-listed under <i>Plants of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man 2022</i> . | | |
| Threats | | |
| Spotted Medick's reputation as a weed, hides the fact that this species is now critically endangered. A simple resurfacing of Queen Street in Castletown could, quite rapidly, tip the species towards Island extinction. Why the species has struggled as a lawn-weed in Castletown is unknown, but its requirements for warmth may be rather critical - it could be the tarmac of Queen Street that allows such vigour here. | | |
| Reason for BAP | | |
| Risk of Island extinction. | | |
| Aims | | |
| Attempt to reduce chance of extinction on the Island by introducing Spotted Medick to MWT Billown Nature Reserve. | | |
| Linked BAPS | | |
| Shaking Grass Action for Wildlife BAPs. | | |
| Delivery Options | Active | Challenges |
| Introduction at MWT Billown Nature Reserve. | | In the first two years, as plenty of bare soil is available, the species should have a window to initially thrive. The somewhat heavy soils, low nutrient status and ecological stability may create conditions too unfavourable in the long-term. However, a keen rabbit population, and some localised topsoil deposits, may create the exact conditions needed. |
| Delivery Plan | | |
| Strategy | | Lead |
| Seed from Queen Street is plentifully available, thus testing Spotted Medick in a variety of situations is easy. | | Manx Wildlife Trust |
| Action | Timing | Responsibility |
| Collect seed from Queen Street Castletown. | 2022/23/24 | Manx Wildlife Trust |
| Direct sow into MWT Billown Nature Reserve. | 2022/23/24 | Manx Wildlife Trust |
| Evaluate success/failures at MWT Billown Nature Reserve and adjust management where possible. | 2023-25 | Manx Wildlife Trust |



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| Investigate opportunities to expand species into Castletown municipal lawns. | 2022-2027 | Manx Wildlife Trust |
| Assess and review plan. | 2027 | Manx Wildlife Trust |
| Annual Updates | | |
| Year | | |
| 2022 | Lots of seed sown at MWT Billown Nature Reserve extension site. | |
| 2023 | No seedlings seen. | |

