

# SOMERSET WILD FLOWERS

## A Guide to their Identification

It may seem that with so many of our surroundings dominated by man-made structures there are few places left where wild things can grow. However, wild plants can be found everywhere – and in the varied and attractive landscape of Somerset as much as anywhere.

This book is for those who have a general interest in plants, want to know a bit more about them and want to be able to name them. As children we learned what daisies, dandelions, bluebells and foxgloves all looked like because we had seen them or illustrations of them, and learnt their names from teachers or parents. What this book aims to do is to return to the simple, basic way of identifying plants by seeing what they look like. The photographs – what you see – are the key guides: the expert text is there to tell the reader exactly what to look for in the photographs without getting involved in botanical terminology. Many people when walking or gardening will come across plants that arouse their curiosity. This book will help them name those plants.

With more than 2000 photographs, virtually every wild plant that can be found growing in Somerset is illustrated and described. This comprehensive and profusely illustrated book will be an essential companion to anyone with an interest in wild flowers, in the British countryside and in the county of Somerset in particular.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

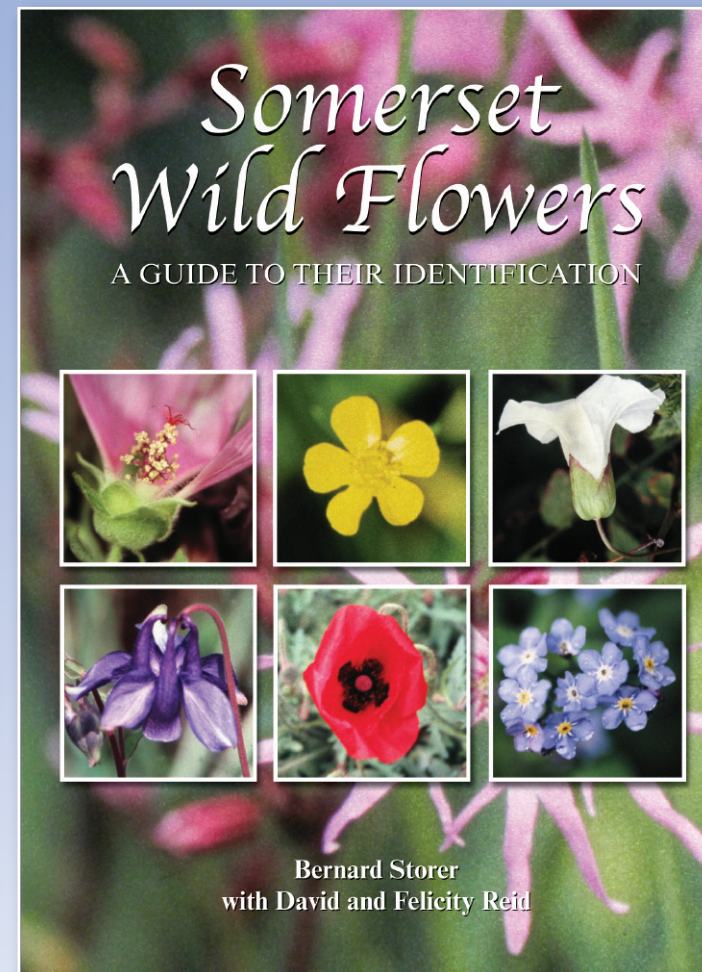
After wartime service with the Indian Army, Bernard Storer went up to Cambridge where he read natural Sciences. From there he went into teaching and spent much of his career as a biology teacher at Bridgwater Grammar School. When, later, the school became a comprehensive one, he was appointed as a Deputy Head. During his time teaching, and even more so in retirement, he became deeply involved in wildlife conservation. He is the author of *The Natural History of the Somerset Levels*, as well as numerous articles and work on TV programmes. He was also Vice-Chairman of the Somerset Wildlife Trust. In this book he has been able to put together his skill as a teacher and his expert knowledge of wildlife.

David Reid has an ecological background, whilst his wife Felicity is an expert gardener and plantswoman. They have worked with Bernard Storer to help find and photograph the plants. They have also been extremely active in preparing this material for publication in a modern format.

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# SOMERSET WILD FLOWERS – A Guide to their Identification

Some double-page spreads.

## THE BARBERRY FAMILY Cont'd

### Chinese Barberry



Leaves leathery, shiny and oval with about eight or more spines on each side; leaves about 10 cms long. Has three long stem spines. Fruits oval, turning black when ripe. Height - 2 metres

### Berberis julianae (AP 20)



### Gagepain's Barberry



Leaves are thin, oval with spiny edges, and up to 10 cms long. Three long stem spines. Fruit oval. Red at first, then turning purple/black. Height - 2 metres

### Berberis gagepainii (AP 19)



### Mrs Wilson's Barberry



Leaves about 2cms long, oval and broadest to the tip. Leaves about 2cms long. Long spines in threes. Fruit is green ripening to pink. Height - 3 metres

### Berberis wilsoniae (AP 19)



## THE BARBERRY FAMILY Cont'd

### Great Barberry

This is only recorded as an introduced species and occurs chiefly around Porlock. The leaves are broadish and toothed and the flowers are pale yellow. Height 3 metres

### Berberis glaucocarpa (AP 19)

## THE POPPY FAMILY

Typically, the members of this family have four papery petals. The best known examples are red but some species show a range of colours. Outside the petals they have two sepals but these rarely persist. Most of them have a single flower at the end of an un-branched stem. When damaged they secrete a white or yellow juice. The seed pods also have features which help in identification.

## PAPAVERACEAE

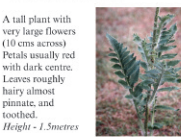


### Large (tall) plants

### Oriental Poppy



### Papaver orientale (AP 20)



A tall plant with very large flowers (10 cms across). Petals usually red with dark centre. Leaves roughly hairy almost pinnate, and toothed. Height - 1.5 metres

## THE HEATH FAMILY

The members of this family are bushes or low-growing shrubs. They are associated with acid soils.

## ERICACEAE

### Rhododendron



An evergreen shrub. Flowers large, pink-purple. On maturity the anthers and stigma protrude in front of the five petals. Leaves shiny dark green and oval. Height - 5 metres

### Rhododendron ponticum (AP 73)



### Yellow Azalea



Similar to the Rhododendron but smaller with yellow flowers. Leaves oval but toothed. Height - 2 metres

### Rhododendron luteum (AP 73)



### Heather (Ling)



Has spikes of small, purple flowers. Leaves small and narrow, incurled, almost conifer-like. Plant of open moors. Height - 60 cms

### Calluna vulgaris (AP 74)



## THE HEATH FAMILY Cont'd...

### Bell Heather



Flowers larger and brighter purple than Heather, easily seen as bell-shaped. Height - 60 cms

### Erica cinerea (AP 74)



Leaves greener and longer and usually in threes.

### Cross-leaved Heath



Leaves in fours, forming distinct series of crosses along the stem. Flowers pale pink/purple in clusters at the top of the stem. Usually in very wet ground. Height - 60 cms

### Erica tetralix (AP 74)



### Bog-rosemary



Usually in or near wet acid bog, often with Sphagnum moss. Flowers pink on long stalks in a loose truss.

### Andromeda polifolia (AP 73)



Leaves narrow elliptical, green above and white below. Height - 30 cms

## THE PINK FAMILY Cont'd...

### Stitchworts

The leaves are without stalks, narrower and less bright green than those of the Chickweeds.

### Greater Stitchwort



### Stellaria holostea (AP 36)

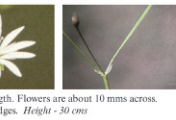


Flowers are white and about 20 mm across. Petals are divided to about halfway down their length; they are twice as long as the sepals. Has square stem and the leaf edges are rough when stroked downwards. Height - 60 cms

### Lesser Stitchwort



### Stellaria graminea (AP 36)



White petals are divided for most of their length. Flowers are about 10 mm across. Has a smooth stem and leaves with smooth edges. Height - 30 cms

### Marsh Stitchwort



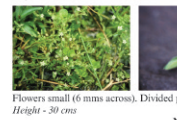
### Stellaria palustris (AP 36)



White petals are divided for most of their length. Flowers are about 10 mm across. Sepals have a white edge. Height - 30 cms

## THE PINK FAMILY Cont'd...

### Bog Stitchwort



Flowers small (6 mm across). Divided petals are shorter than the sepals. Leaves oval. Height - 30 cms

### Stellaria uliginosa (AP 36)



### Mouse-ears

Similar to Chickweeds but hairier and often sticky. Flowers white with five (except Sea Mouse-ear) deeply notched petals.

### Sea Mouse-ear



### Cerastium diffusum (AP 37)



White petals shorter than the sepals. Flower parts usually in fours (not fives). Densely glandular. Height - 20 cms

### Snow-in-snow



### Cerastium tomentosum (AP 36)



Usually a garden escape. The entire plant is a silvery white. Height - 20 cms

### Common Mouse-ear



### Cerastium fontanum (AP 37)



White flowers; sepals and petals about the same length. Sepals do not have a pale border. Height - 40 cms

## THE FIGWORT FAMILY Cont'd...

### Grey Field-speedwell

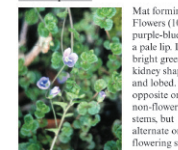


Similar to Green Field-speedwell but flowers (6mm) dark blue. Sprawling growth. Leaves grey-green. Seed pod oblong with small notch and hooked hairs. Sepals pointed and largely covering the seed pods. Height - 20 cms

### Veronica polita (AP 170)



### Slender Speedwell



Mat forming. Flowers (10 mm) purple-blue with a pale lip. Leaves bright green, kidney shaped and lobed. Leaves opposite on non-flowering stems, but alternate on flowering stems.

### Veronica filiformis (AP 170)



Height - sprawls to 30 cms

### Germander Speedwell



Sprawling growth with opposite, oval, toothed leaves. Flowers large (10 mm) clear blue with white centre and close together on the stem. Stem has two lines of white hairs, one on each side. Height - 30 cms

### Veronica chamaedrys (AP 168)



## THE FIGWORT FAMILY Cont'd...

### Wood Speedwell



Similar to Germander Speedwell but stems hairy all round. Petals have pink tinge. Leaves have distinct stalks. Height - 25 cms

### Veronica montana (AP 169)



### Wall Speedwell



Often found on walls or in poor thin soil. Lower leaves with stalks, upper leaves close to stem. Flowers very small (2 mm), bright blue and on short (7 cms) upright stems. Height - 15 cms

### Veronica arcuata (AP 170)



### Thyme-leaved Speedwell



Low creeping growth. Leaves narrow-oval and growing close to upright stem. Petals pale blue almost white with dark stripes. Height - 20 cms

### Veronica serpyllifolia (AP 168)

