

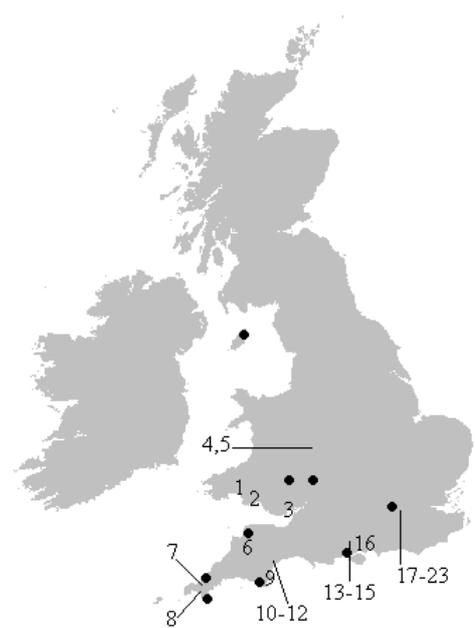
Mentha pulegium L.

Pennyroyal

Key:

Dots refer to the native sites of the species

Numbers refer to the nearby Botanical Collections



Starting references

Family

Lamiaceae

IUCN category (2001)

Endangered

Habit

Herb (short-lived perennial).

Habitat

Seasonally inundated grassland.

Reasons for decline

The loss of seasonally wet habitats, either through drainage or excavation to create permanently wet conditions.

Abandonment or infilling of disturbed habitats favoured by pennyroyal, such as unmade tracks and gateways.

Cessation of traditional grazing management and subsequent successional changes.

Habitat destruction by agricultural intensification (such as fertilising or ploughing) and by development.

Distribution in wild

Country	Locality & Vice County	Sites (10km ² occurrences)	Population (plants)
England	Cornwall, Devon, New Forest, S. Hampshire, E. Sussex, Berkshire, I of Man	18	Found in abundance only in the New Forest
Wales	Breconshire	1	

Ex situ Collections

Gardens close to the region of distribution of the species

- 1 National Botanic Garden of Wales
- 2 Swansea Botanic Garden
- 3 Dyffryn Gardens
- 4 B'ham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses, Westbourne
- 5 University of B'ham Botanic Garden, Winterbourne
- 6 RHS Rosemoor
- 7 Duchy College
- 8 St Michael's Mount
- 9 Paignton Zoological & Botanical Gardens
- 10 Exeter University
- 11 Bicton Park Botanical Gardens
- 12 Castle Drogo
- 13 Longstock Park Gardens
- 14 Mottisfont Abbey Rose Garden
- 15 Sir Harold Hillier Garden & Arboretum
- 16 Staunton Country Park
- 17 Buckingham Palace
- 18 Chelsea Physic Garden
- 19 Hyde Park
- 20 London & Whipsnade Zoos
- 21 Regent Park

- 22 RBG Kew
- 23 RHS Wisley

Gardens with specialisation on family Lamiaceae or genus *Mentha*

None

Potential to grow the species in *ex situ* Collections

From Plants For A Future

- Propagation

Seed - sow spring in a cold frame. Germination is usually fairly quick. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and plant them out in the summer. *Mentha* species are very prone to hybridisation and so the seed cannot be relied on to breed true. Even without hybridisation, seedlings will not be uniform and so the content of medicinal oils etc will vary. When growing plants with a particular aroma it is best to propagate them by division. Division can be easily carried out at almost any time of the year, though it is probably best done in the spring or autumn to allow the plant to establish more quickly. Virtually any part of the root is capable of growing into a new plant. Larger divisions can be planted out direct into their permanent positions. However, for maximum increase it is possible to divide the roots up into sections no more than 3cm long and pot these up in light shade in a cold frame. They will quickly become established and can be planted out in the summer.

- Cultivation

Succeeds in most soils and situations so long as the soil is not too dry. Plants are very quickly diminished by dry conditions. Prefers a stiff moist soil that is slightly acid. A sunny position is best for production of essential oils, but plants succeed in partial shade. Pennyroyal is often grown in the herb garden and is also cultivated commercially as a medicinal plant. There are two main forms of this species. One has weak prostrate stems and spreads by rooting where the stems touch the ground, it is only 10cm tall. The other is erect, does not spread so freely and grows about 30cm tall, thus making it easier to harvest. There is also at least one named form, called 'Dwarf' it is only a few centimetres tall. The whole plant has a strong spearmint smell. The flowers are very attractive to bees and butterflies. A good companion plant for cabbages and tomatoes, helping to repel cabbage root fly and other burrowing insects. Members of this genus are rarely if ever troubled by browsing deer.

Conservation information

Mentha pulegium is listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981

Linkages to BAPs

A Species Action Plan has been produced for *Mentha pulegium*, - lead partner is Ron Porley, English Nature

The following BAPs working on the species are:

A local Biodiversity Action Plan for Swansea

Cornwall's Biodiversity vol 1, 2 and 3

Teignbridge BAP

Torfaen LBAP

Habitat Management

Some lands owned or managed by conservation agencies.

A more robust and erect variety introduced with N. American seed mixtures to a number of sites, appear to increase as an alien.

Conservation programmes

Unknown

Web References

- UK Species Action Plan: <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=447>
- NBN Gateway database: <http://www.searchnbn.net>
- Plants For A Future Database: http://www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgi-bin/find_lat?LAT=mentha+pulegium