

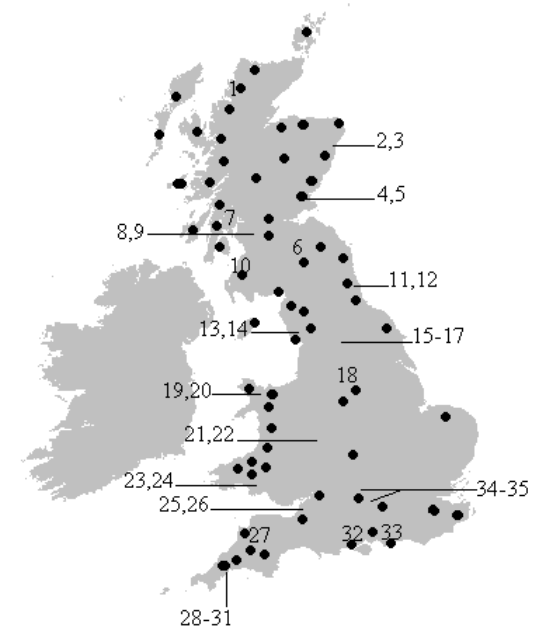
# *Platanthera bifolia* (L.) Rich.

Lesser Butterfly-orchid

Key:

**Dots** refer to the native sites of the species

**Numbers** refer to the nearby Botanical Collections



## Starting references

### Family

Orchidaceae

### IUCN category (2001)

Vulnerable

### Habit

Perennial herb.

### Habitat

Heathy pastures, grassland, open scrub, woodland edges and rides, and on moorland, often amongst *Pteridium*; it is found on a wide variety of acidic and calcareous soils overlying sands, gravels and clays. It is tolerant of considerable soil moisture, also being found in acidic bogs and calcareous fens. 0-365m (Glenfeshie, Easternness).

### Reasons for decline

Drainage, woodland disturbance and agricultural intensification, while upland populations have been lost to increased grazing.

### Distribution in wild

Country	Locality & Vice County	Sites (10km <sup>2</sup> occurrences)	Population (plants)
Scotland	Widespread		
Wales	South & North		
England	S England, especially Cornwall, Somerset, Wiltshire, Westmorland & Cumberland.		

**Note:** AOO trend an over-estimate due to lack of recording in 1987-99 (Cheffings & Farrell, 2005).

## Ex situ Collections

### Gardens close to the region of distribution of the species

- 1 Inverewe Garden (NTS)
- 2 Cruickshank Botanic Garden
- 3 Pitmedden Garden (NTS)
- 4 Dundee Botanic Garden
- 5 St Andrews Botanic Garden
- 6 Dawyck Botanic Garden
- 7 Younger Botanic Garden
- 8 Glasgow Botanic Gardens
- 9 Greenbank Garden (NTS)
- 10 Culzean Castle Country Park (NTS)
- 11 Moor Bank Garden
- 12 University of Durham Botanic Garden
- 13 Holehird Gardens
- 14 Sizergh Castle (NT)
- 15 RHS Harlow Carr
- 16 Harewood House Trust
- 17 Yorkshire Museum & Gardens
- 18 Sheffield Botanical Gardens
- 19 Treborth Botanic Garden
- 20 Bodnant Garden (NT)
- 21 University of B'ham Botanic Garden, Winterbourne

- 22 B'ham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses, Westbourne
- 23 The National Botanic Garden of Wales
- 24 Swansea Botanic Garden
- 25 Bristol Zoo Gardens
- 26 University of Bristol Botanic Garden
- 27 RHS Rosemoor
- 28 Trellisick (NT)
- 29 Tregothnan Botanic Garden
- 30 Eden Project
- 31 Tregrehan
- 32 Sir Harold Hillier Garden & Arboretum
- 33 West Dean Gardens
- 34 University of Oxford Botanic Garden
- 35 The Harris Garden

#### **Gardens with specialisation on family Orchidaceae**

Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Westbourne

Bristol Zoo Gardens

City of Liverpool Botanic Gardens

Glasgow Botanic Gardens

RHS Wisley

RBG Kew

University of Oxford Botanic Garden

#### **Potential to grow the species in *ex situ* Collections**

From Plants For A Future

- Propagation

Seed - surface sow, preferably as soon as it is ripe, in the greenhouse and do not allow the compost to dry out. The seed of this species is extremely simple, it has a minute embryo surrounded by a single layer of protective cells. It contains very little food reserves and depends upon a symbiotic relationship with a species of soil-dwelling fungus. The fungal hyphae invade the seed and enter the cells of the embryo. The orchid soon begins to digest the fungal tissue and this acts as a food supply for the plant until it is able to obtain nutrients from decaying material in the soil. It is best to use some of the soil that is growing around established plants in order to introduce the fungus, or to sow the seed around a plant of the same species and allow the seedlings to grow on until they are large enough to move.

Division in autumn. Make sure that you keep plenty of soil with each plant. It is also said to be possible to transplant orchids after they have flowered but whilst they are still in leaf.

- Cultivation

Easily grown in a sunny position in a moist loam enriched with leaf mould. Flourishes in almost any soil and situation. Prefers a moderately shady and well-drained though damp position. Orchids are, in general, shallow-rooting plants of well-drained low-fertility soils. Their symbiotic relationship with a fungus in the soil allows them to obtain sufficient nutrients and be able to compete successfully with other plants. They are very sensitive to the addition of fertilizers or fungicides since these can harm the symbiotic fungus and thus kill the orchid. The flowers diffuse a most seductive perfume at night and are pollinated by the night hawk moth. Hybridizes freely with several species of the genus *Orchis*.

#### ***Conservation information***

##### **Linkages to BAPs**

LBAP Areas are listed on <http://www.searchnbn.net>

##### **Habitat Management**

Protected sites with records for *Platanthera bifolia* are listed on <http://www.searchnbn.net>

#### **Conservation programmes**

Unknown

**Web References**

- NBN Gateway database: <http://www.searchnbn.net>
- Plants For A Future Database: [http://www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgi-bin/arr\\_html?Platanthera+bifolia](http://www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgi-bin/arr_html?Platanthera+bifolia)
- Images: <http://www.bioimages.org.uk/HTML/T30468.HTM>