Plant Crib

VERONICA

1. *Veronica serpyllifolia*

Subsp. *humifusa* (Dicks.) Syme

Subsp. *serpyllifolia*

Illustrations reproduced, with permission, from M. McC. Webster (1978). *Flora of Moray, Nairn & East Inverness*. Aberdeen.

Veronica serpyllifolia L. subsp. *humifusa* occurs on wet rock ledges and the high flushes of the highest British mountains. It looks different from subsp. *serpyllifolia* in its more procumbent habit, more orbicular leaves, shorter, fewer-flowered racemes and pedicels which are considerably longer than the calyx. The flowers are larger and usually whitish-blue (the description of flowers as blue in some Floras is misleading). The blue corolla lobe with its dark lines encloses the rest of the corolla in the immature flower and gives the impression that the open flowers will be the same colour. When the corolla expands however the remaining lobes are white or pale blue with slatey-blue lines giving a generalised paler appearance to the flowers.

Montane forms of subsp. *serpyllifolia* tend to be more procumbent than lowland forms, with shorter racemes and bluer flowers and also have a glandular pubescence of the racemes more characteristic of subsp. *humifusa*. However, the other characters are those of subsp. *serpyllifolia*, and the plants do not really resemble true subsp. *humifusa*. Many of the records for subsp. *humifusa* outside the Scottish Highlands (e.g. Cheviots, Pennines, Lake District, South Wales) probably refer to the montane forms of subsp. *serpyllifolia* rather than subsp. *humifusa*. Material of difficult plants from outside the Highlands is required (provided conservation considerations allow).

Author R. W. M. Corner, November 1997.

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2. *Veronica ´ lackschewitzii*

Veronica × *lackschewitzii* (*V. anagallis-aquatica* × *V. catenata*) is probably quite widespread but very over-looked. Its distinguishing features are set out in the Table below. When collecting or recording always record flower colour (preferably collecting and pressing a few corollas), and noting sizes and shapes of the pedicels, their bracts, calyx lobes and capsules.

	Veronica anagallis-aquatica L.	*V.* × *lackschewitzii* J. B. Keller	*V. catenata* Pennell
Stem base	Often with short, leafy, stolon-like shoots, sometimes densely pubescent	As for *V. anagallis-aquatica*	Basal shoots usually absent and only rarely slightly pubescent
Leaves	Narrowly ovate to lanceolate, basal leaves often shortly petiolate	Like *V. anagallis-aquatica* but petiolate leaves uncommon	Always sessile, narrow
Racemes	Mean *c.* (15-)25(-40) flowers (Fig. a)	Mean *c.*(30-)60(-90) flowers (Fig. c)	Mean *c.*(10-)20(-30) flowers (Fig. d)
Flower pedicel and bracts	Slender; linear bracts ± equal length to stalk at flowering time; subtended in fruit at 45°, if less, turned up terminally (Fig. b)	Slender; bracts linear to variable in length; angle variable	More robust; bracts more than or equal to stalk at flowering time; in fruit subtended at about 90° (Fig. e)
Calyx	Lobes ovate-lanceolate, acute (Fig. b)	Variable	Lobes elliptic to oblong, usually blunt (Fig e)
Corolla	Predominantly lilac-blue, but pale blue and pinkish - lilac occur, rarely white; strongly marked veins extend almost to edge of petals; 3-3.5 mm wide	Pale blue to lilac; veins intermediate; size variable	Predominantly suffused pink, rarely pink-lilac or white; veins finer and much shorter; 4.8-5.1 mm wide
Capsule	Orbicular, just longer than broad; 3-3.5 mm width	None, or exceedingly rarely one, or partly formed; may occasionally be swollen by an insect larva	Usually broader than long, ± orbicular often with deep apical notch; 3-3.5 mm long × 3-4 mm wide

Reference Burnett, J. H. (1950). *Watsonia* **1**: 349-353.
Burnett, J. H. (1997). *BSBI News* **75**: 15-17.

Author J. H. Burnett, January 1998.

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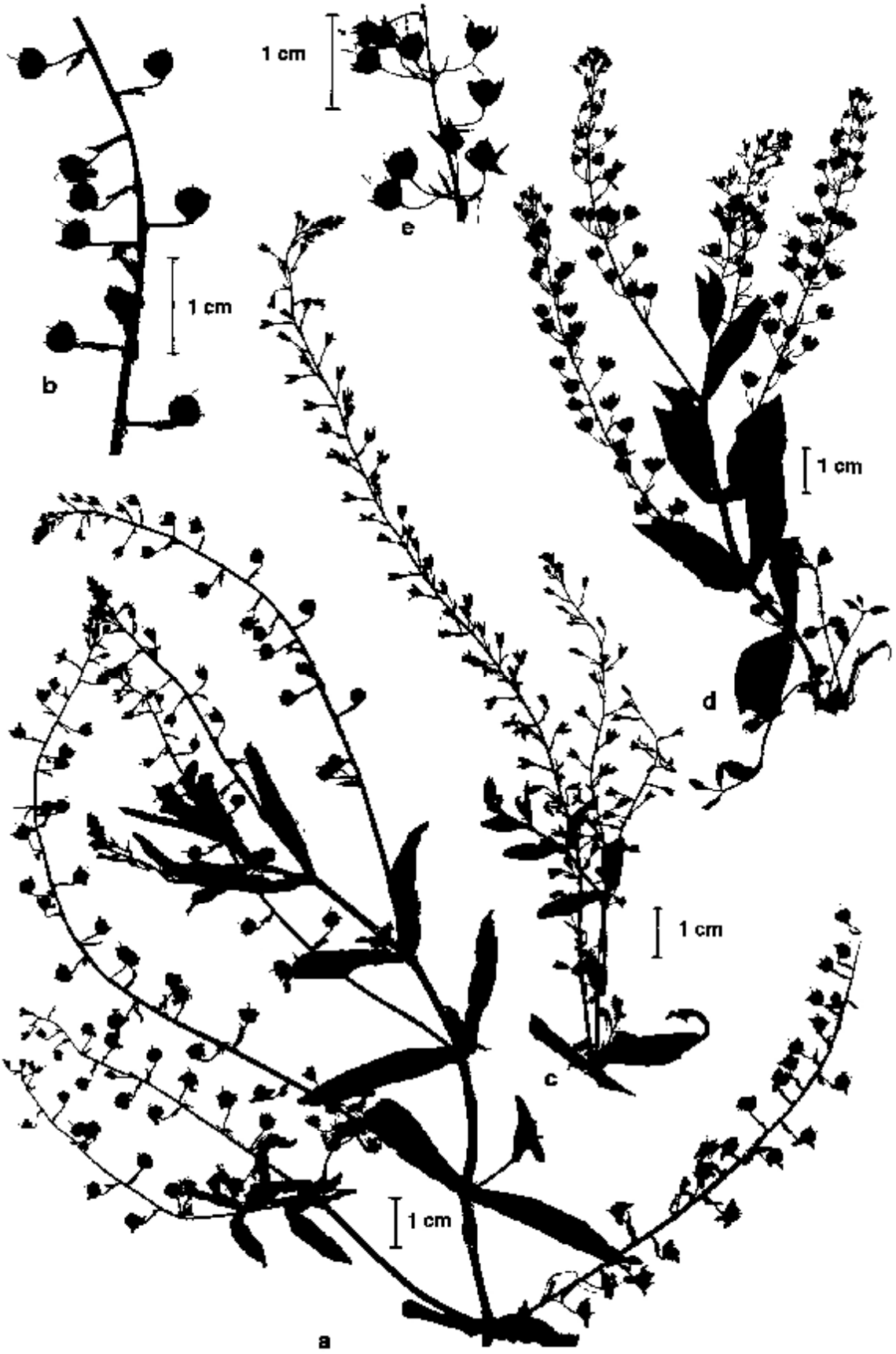

Silhouettes from herb. Druce (OXF) specimens. (a, b) *Veronica catenata*, habit and capsules, (c) *V. lackschewitzii*, habit, (d, e) *V. anagallis-aquatica*, habit and capsules.

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3. *Veronica scutellata* varieties

Veronica scutellata L. var. *villosa* Schum. is a distinct variety with stems covered in dense long hairs (glabrous or sometimes glandular in var. *scutellata*). Both glabrous and hairy varieties may be found growing side by side. It is widespread in England, Scotland and Wales but is apparently absent from Ireland (*Critical Supplement*).

4. *Veronica chamaedrys* / *V. montana*

Although usually a plant of open places, *V. chamaedrys* L. does occur in woodland and in overgrown rides, and can usually be easily distinguished from *V. montana* L. vegetatively by leaf toothing and colour, and the 2 lines of hairs on the stem (stem hairy all round in *V. montana*). However, be warned, in damp, shaded conditions the characteristic two lines of hairs may not develop and the stems may be ± uniformly hairy all round.

5. *Veronica hederifolia* aggregate

The *V. hederifolia* L. group is a polyploid complex of which 5 taxa are currently recognised in Europe, of which two occur in Britain. Of these, subsp. *lucorum* appears less common nationally.

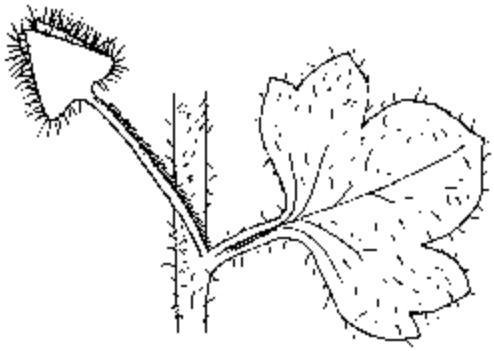
The variability of characters should be emphasised. In some plants, one or more characters may be less well shown, and plants of one subspecies may show a character which is normally associated with the other subspecies. It is essential, therefore, that all characters be assessed, and that identification be based on the combination of characters.

Anther colour appears the most constant character (examine undehisced anthers), whilst pedicel length is useful if taken with other features. Corolla colour its variable, as is leaf lobing. The drawings are of typical plants in typical habitats.

Subsp. *lucorum* (Klett & Richt.) Hartl: Leaves thin, relatively bright green, rather shallowly 5- to 7-lobed, middle lobe as long as wide, or slightly longer than wide, ± pointed. Pedicels 3.5-7 times as long as calyx, with an adaxial row of short hairs, and usually some patent hairs outside this row, especially in distal half. Calyx glabrous or very sparsely pubescent, shortly ciliate. Corolla small, pale lilac. Undehisced anthers 0.6 mm, whitish. Style usually not more than 0.5 mm long. Seeds suborbicular, shallowly ribbed, the somewhat red-brown, brim of the orifice distinctly smooth and shining, whitish. Stomata 26-35 µm (mean 32 µm). Pollen size about 32 µm. Typical forms in woodland, shady places, hedges, etc.

Subsp. *hederifolia*: Leaves thicker and darker green, 3- to 5-lobed, middle lobe wider than long, pointed, incisions distinctly deeper than in subsp. *lucorum*, especially in upper leaves. Pedicels (2-) 3-4 times as long as calyx, usually glabrous except for an adaxial row of patent hairs (which are longer than in subsp. *lucorum*). Calyx glabrous except for rather long patent cilia. Corolla relatively large, bright blue with a white centre. Undehisced anthers 1.0 mm, conspicuously blue. Style 0.7-1.0 mm long. Seeds large, broadly oblong to orbicular, ribbed, pale yellowish, brim of the orifice broad, partly without ridges, somewhat shining. Stomata 35-48 µm (mean 42 µm). Pollen size 40 µm. Typical forms in arable fields, roadsides, gardens.

Subsp. *lucorum*



Subsp. *hederifolia*

References Fischer, M. (1975). Pp. 48-60 in Walters, S. M. & King, C. J. *European floristic and taxonomic studies*. BSBI Conference report 15. BSBI, London.
Fischer, M. (1967). *Österr. Bot. Z.* **114**: 189-233.

Authors M. J. Wigginton & G. G. Graham (1981).