

SURREY BOTANICAL SOCIETY

RECORDING STRATEGY 2011-2019

Introduction

This document sets out the Society's recording strategy for Date Class 5 (DC5) which covers the period 2010-2019. The main objective of the strategy is to guide the Society's recording efforts in order to enable us to produce a new Flora of Surrey, so updating J.E. Lousley's *Flora of Surrey* which was published in 1976.

The BSBI booklet "Recording the British and Irish Flora 2010-2020" sets out a national programme for botanical recording in this period. The SBS recording strategy has been designed to be compatible with this framework. The BSBI doc is available on its website.

Recording Areas - Hectads

A key BSBI requirement is that from 2010 all Vice Counties should move to an ongoing recording programme to achieve at least sample coverage for all hectads (10km squares) within their Vice County. This is in preparation for the third Atlas of the British and Irish Flora.

Recording Hectads

Each year a number of hectads will be selected for recording and these will be surveyed in a structured manner. Thus, in year 1 a start will be made with the extreme eastern and western hectads i.e. SU83-SU86 & TQ43-TQ45 as shown in the table below.

YEAR						
2011	2012	2014	2016	2015	2013	2011
					TQ38	
	SU97	TQ07	TQ17	TQ27	TQ37	
SU86	SU96	TQ06	TQ16	TQ26	TQ36	
SU85	SU95	TQ05	TQ15	TQ25	TQ35	TQ45
SU84	SU94	TQ04	TQ14	TQ24	TQ34	TQ44
SU83	SU93	TQ03	TQ13	TQ23	TQ33	TQ43

In future, the Field Meetings will be structured to reflect this hectad sampling process and each year at least one meeting will be held in that year's tranche of hectads. Over the whole of this date-class, at least one meeting will be held in all or almost all of the hectads.

Recording within Hectads

Within hectads, the basic recording unit will be the monad, a 1 x 1km OS square, with a 4fig GR, and, where possible, representative sites such as footpaths, arable fields, rivers etc. should be included in the sampling. Records obtained in this way will be supplemented by information obtained from the continuing updates of Rare Plant Register (RPR) records.

The table below is taken from the BSBI Recording Strategy booklet and shows the **minimum** level of recording needed. Grid references should be taken using modern GPS units and /or satellite images. If conditions are good, a 10fig can be given.

Resolution of Recording	10m/8figs	100m/6figs	1km/4figs
Nationally rare & scarce	✓	✓	
UK Priority Species (e.g. Red List, BAP)	✓	✓	
County rare & scarce	✓	✓	
Axiophytes – see below	✓	✓	(✓)
New county or hectad records	✓	✓	
Refinds of ‘extinct’ species	✓	✓	
All other species			✓

An axiophyte is a ‘worthy’ plant, one that occurs in good quality habitats. See BSBI website for more on this topic. The Surrey list is being prepared and will be circulated soon.

Other aspects of recording

BSBI hope to be providing guidance on recording difficult taxa in the course of 2011 and members will be encouraged to look at these groups, which include grasses, sedges, roses, willows and sub-species. For example, through:

- a. Field meetings with an emphasis on these species, led by specialists
- b. Encouraging members to consider adopting a particular species as their own specialism.

Use should be made of referees, either some of our own members or the BSBI referees – see BSBI Yearbook.

LNHS

Recording is underway towards the production of a new Greater London Flora. Sampling is based on monads within hectads and will include those parts of VC17 that lie within the Greater London administrative area. We maintain close liaison with the LNHS and share information as appropriate. The current agreement is for the LNHS 10km coordinators to process the records for their squares and to send them directly to the relevant VCRs. They in turn will send them to Mark Spencer, LNHS Recorder. This direction of flow avoids duplication of records.

SITE RECORDING GUIDELINES

Rationale

SBS currently records in the field using habitat-based site definitions, e.g. a lake, woodland or roadside verge. For current purposes, this approach best meets our needs for reporting and analysis. The central grid reference of these sites are usually defined by 6 figures and any current analysis of records by grid square has to assume that all such site records are associated with the grid square within whose boundaries the centroid of a site is located.

There is now a need to map plant distributions accurately according to grid squares for the BSBI recording scheme, the Surrey RPR and the New Surrey Flora. So we need to fit in our habitat based approach to site definition with an accurately mapped grid square distribution for a species. The way in which we propose to reconcile these issues is shown in the diagrams below.

Monad recording must now assume a greater degree of importance than has hitherto been the case, but without losing all of the benefits of habitat based recording. In terms of numbers, there are 555 tetrads in VC17, 460 wholly within the county. Taking 500 as a mean, this gives c2000 monads on which our efforts will need to be focussed.

We record for several reasons, including:

1. To show just where the species are, especially the important areas. This will aid re-finding them and their conservation
2. So that the monad maps reflect the accurate distribution of species
3. We enjoy recording

The more rare a species, the more accurately we need to know its exact site. If in doubt, give more detail rather than less.

Recording in a monad

Different types of habitat and monad require different approaches. The main types are:

1. Urban and suburban areas: most records can just be given as 4fig GR, except for any distinct sites such as graveyards, parks or similar where a named site with a 6fig GR will normally be used.
2. Rural areas: ideally this will be site based, with records collected for defined sites and habitats, such as woods, ponds, footpaths, road verges, downland, heathland etc. It may not be necessary to visit every site in the monad but all different habitat sites should be covered and at different times of the year.

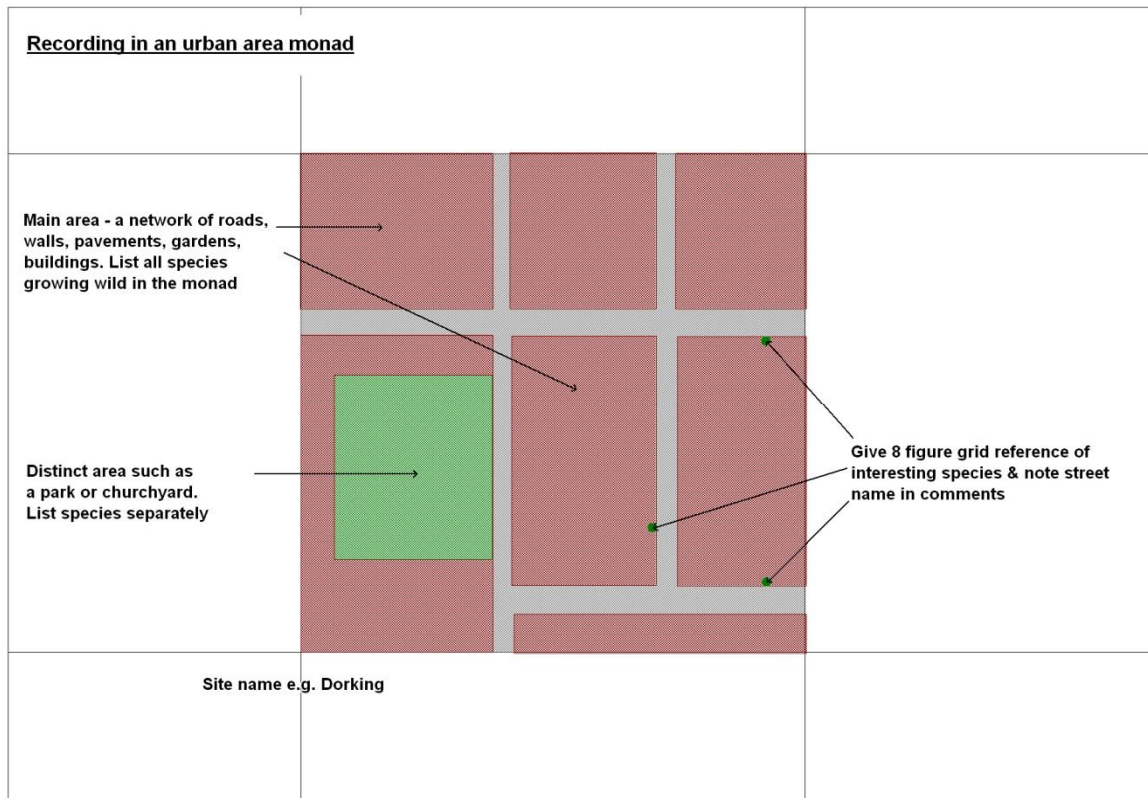
The diagrams below illustrate these approaches. Some monads could require more than one approach, e.g. those suburban areas on the edge of countryside.

An urban monad, Diagram 1

There is no need to keep separate lists for the roads and streets in this type of monad. Just list what you see when walking about, taking a different route when walking to the shops, etc. It helps to have checked against a street map to see the limits of the monad, so that it is not necessary to carry a map. Using torn out pages of an old Surrey Street Map folded into A6, the same size as a field notebook, with the monad boundaries inked in for clarity, is a useful method. Note site details and grid reference of notable species and put information in the Comments field/column. We only need records for species 'in the wild', not species planted in urban flowerbeds. Gardens can be a good source of 'weeds'. Garden escapes should only be listed if they have either genuinely got out by themselves or have been dumped. In the former case, Status will be Casual or Established, in the latter, Planted, as man has put the plants there.

Diagram 1

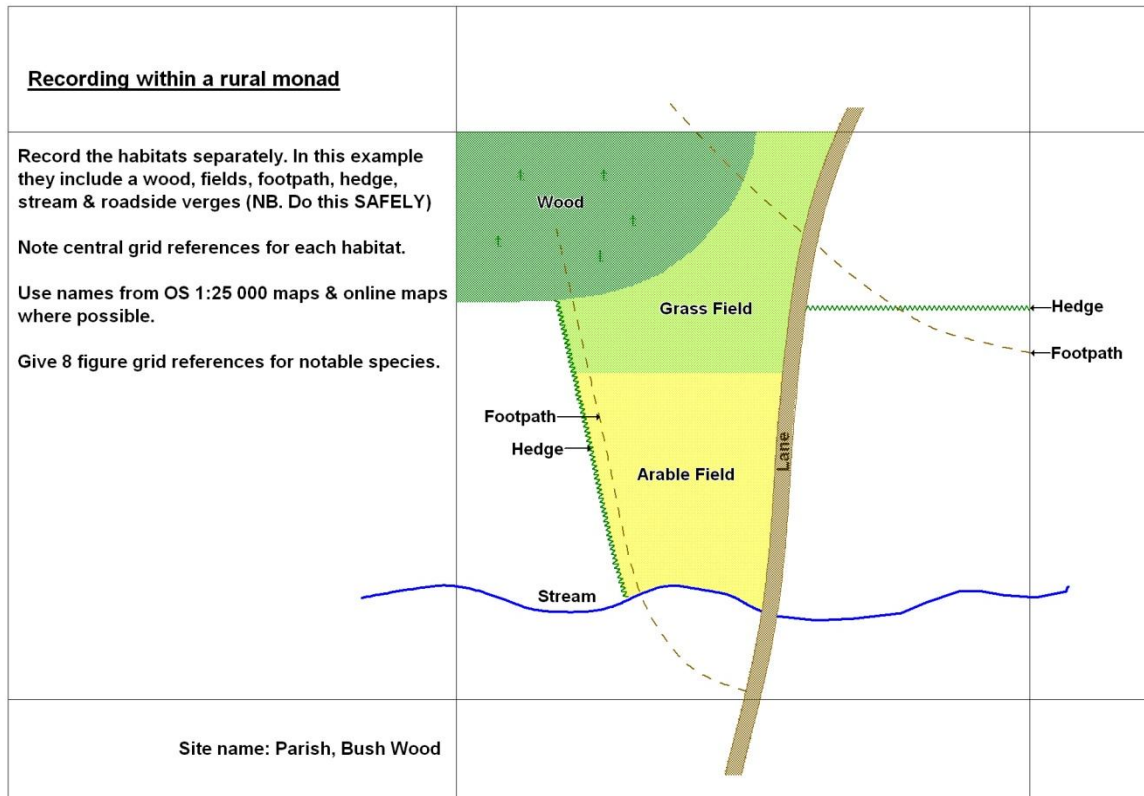
Site name and GR, for example, Dorking TQ1649



Rural monads

The basic approach is shown in the following picture, **Diagram 2**. Variants on this will be illustrated in the diagrams that follow this. We name sites as follows: *Parish, Manor Farm, Field*

Diagram 2



Many sites will spread into adjacent monads. **Diagram 3** shows approaches that could be taken. The greater the overlap into a separate monad, the more important it is to record this separately. Whilst this could be described as a rather vague approach, we do have to be pragmatic.

Linear sites such as water courses and roads can be recorded in the way shown below, **Diagram 4**, dividing the site into 1km lengths. Common species can be listed under the 4fig GR and any notable or interesting species can have a 6 or 8fig GR, depending on rarity.

Recording large sites

There are two approaches that could be taken, see **Diagrams 5** and **6**. The method chosen partly depends on how the site is managed. Dividing a site into its monads has the advantage that these boundaries are always fixed, even if not directly obvious on the ground. Dividing a site into its management compartments can sometimes be easier and should help site managers, especially with conservation of notable species. Use of a site map is important and most site managers will have one and should be pleased to make this available. In any case it is always helpful to make contact with them, for exchange of knowledge, especially about rarities.

Diagram 3

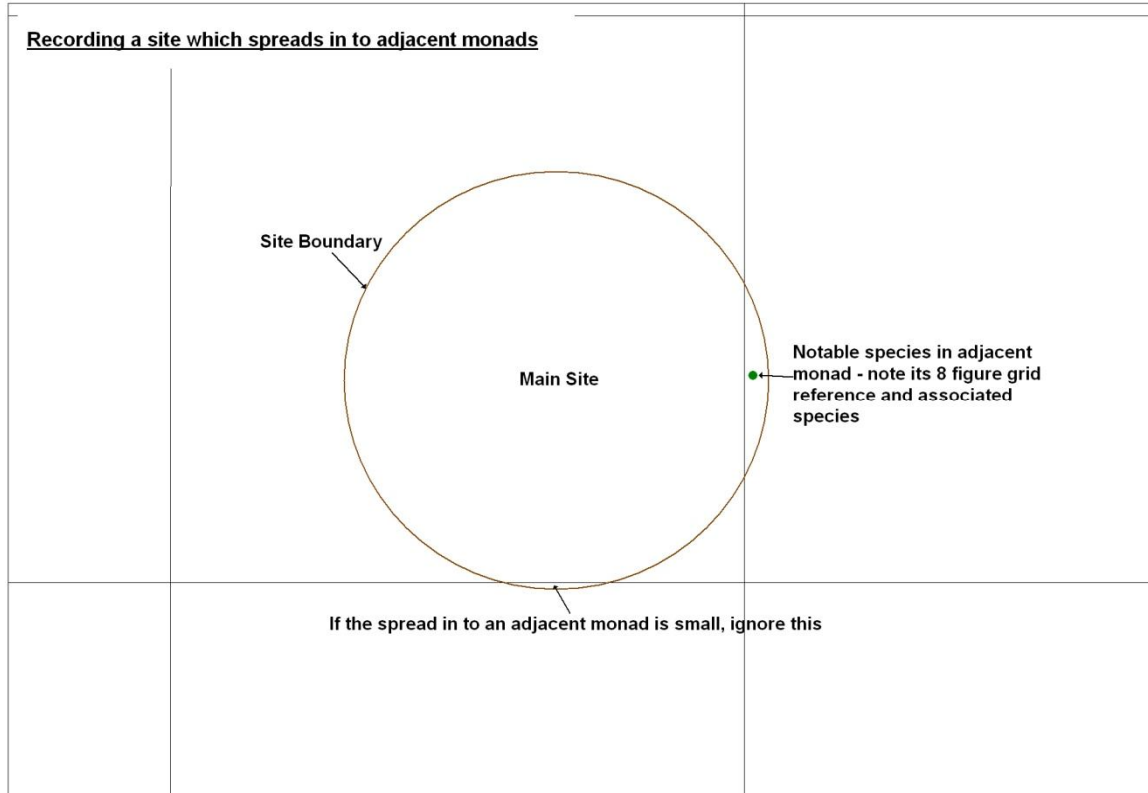
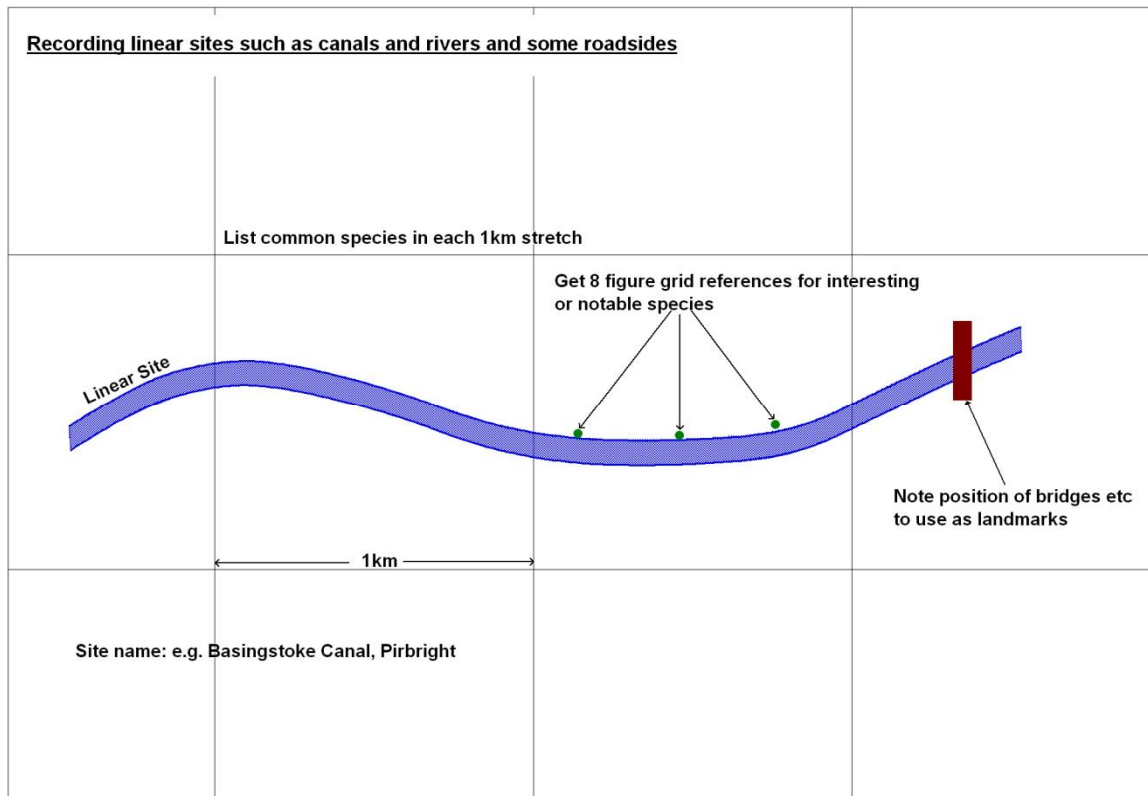


Diagram 4



Large sites that spread over several monads

Diagram 5: For example: Farnham Park SU8348, SU8448, SU8347 and SU8447 and Farnham Park, Named Pond SU845475

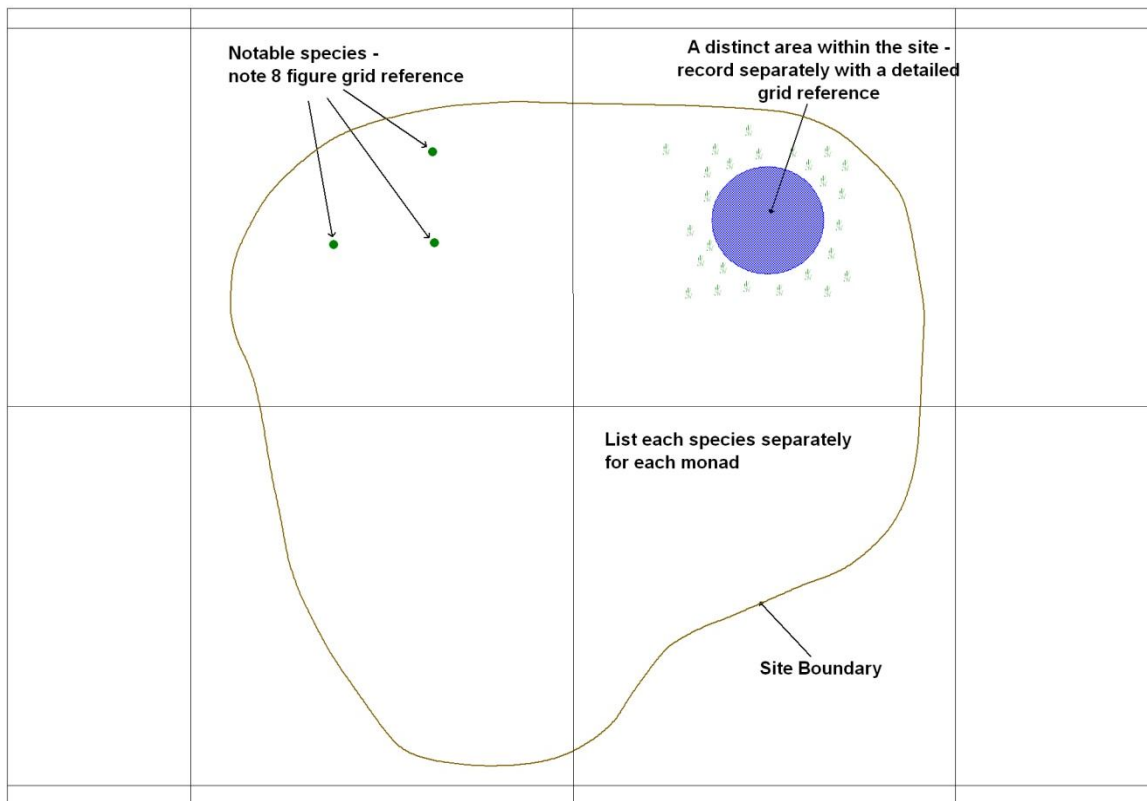
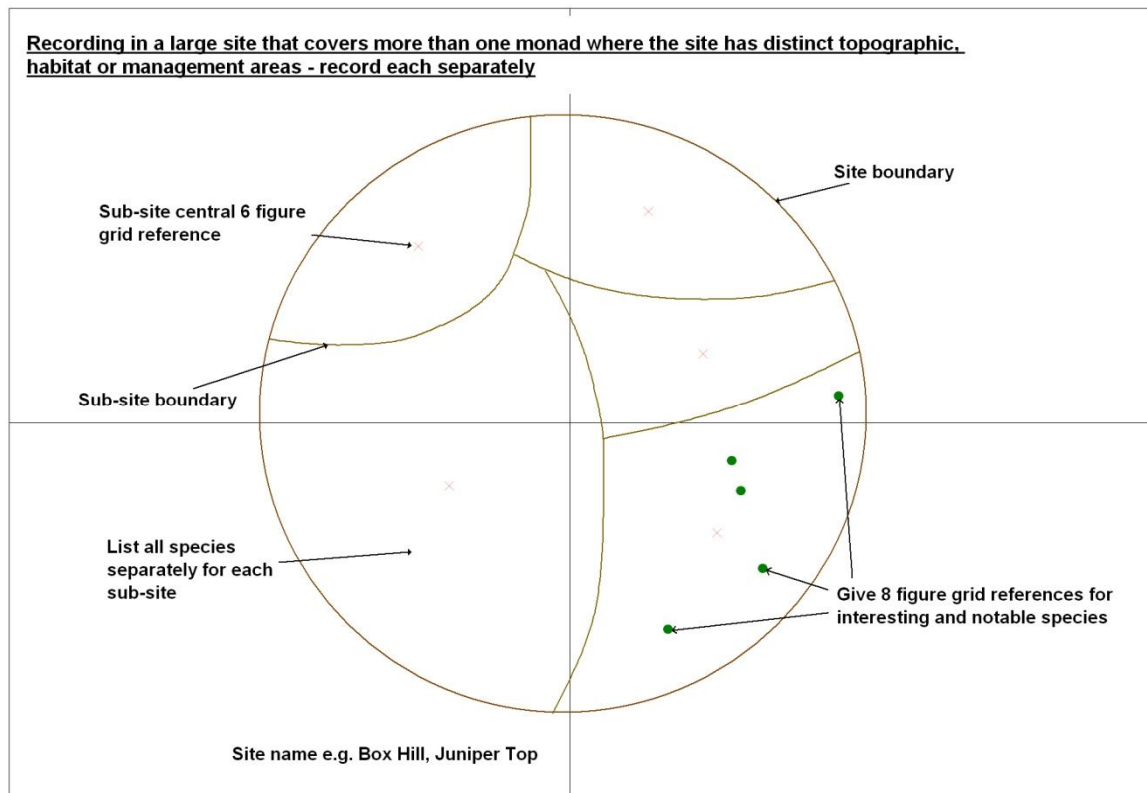


Diagram 6

For example: Bookham Common, Compartment A, TQ127569, etc

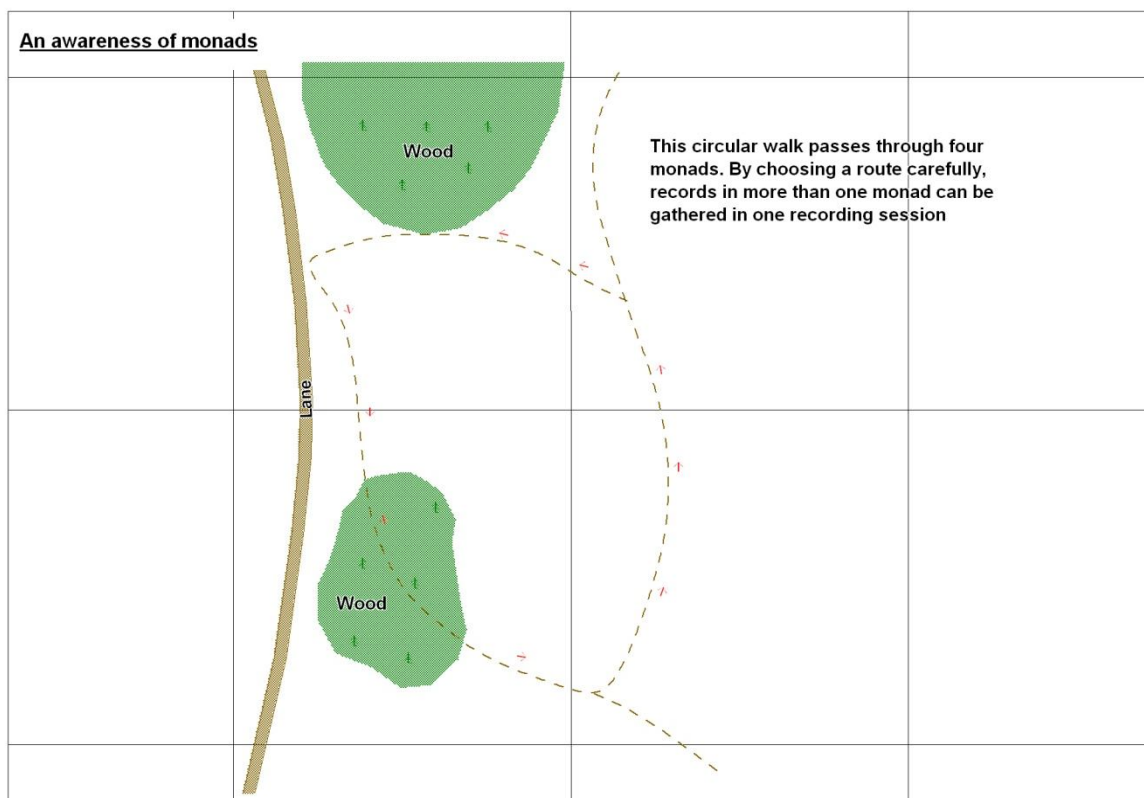


One possible way of resolving site and monad recording for the situation in **Diagram 6** is to record all the compartments that lie wholly in a monad first and then record the overlapping ones afterwards. This way separate monad and compartment lists can be compiled without it being too onerous.

An awareness of monads

It is going to take a lot of work to record all our c2000 monads, so when out and about recording, do think about routes and situations that may allow one to gather records from more than one monad. **Diagram 7** illustrates such a situation, which can be very productive.

Diagram 7



Systematic recording

So that the maps we produce are really representative, ideally the recording time spent in each monad should be standardised. For several reasons, this may not be practical but we suggest that the time spent on each monad should be about 10 hours. There will be occasions, such as recording/monitoring rare species, especially rich sites or where the terrain is difficult, when it will be necessary to spend much more time on certain sites. We need to avoid the situation where someone might spend all their recording time in one monad, as this is not efficient recording.

As a detailed picture emerges from the sampling, it may become evident that in some areas we are missing common species. In such cases we will target these species in a further round of recording. We may also have to sample monads, rather than record all of them. In this case, recording in the richest monads will be the most productive. We also need to ensure that our axiophytes are adequately recorded. It is more important to record these than to find *Bellis perennis* in every monad.

Recording lists

We accept records in two forms; as MapMate entries or as lists using our spreadsheet format, available with instructions, as a download from our website. It would be helpful if lists could be sent in as soon as they are ready, so that they can be digitised. It may usually be necessary to visit sites more than once. We would prefer not to have duplicate species in any one year, as this adds unnecessary clutter to our lists. So whilst it is very good practice to list all species seen on each visit, to cover for species missed the first time, only send records new at each subsequent visit in the same year, with the date recorded.

Notable species: as well as a detailed grid reference, a note on quantity is very important, together with some information in Comments on features of interest for the species concerned.

A note on Status of species:

All new records should be given a Status. The categories we use are Native, Established, Planted, Casual or 'Not recorded' if the status is difficult to determine.

Equipment:

Notebook; GPS; hand lens; field identification guides; self-sealing polythene bags and small plastic pots, both for collecting specimens for identification later and a 1:2500 OS map or street map, depending on the type of habitat. Some Street Atlases have the grids as 1km squares, which is very helpful. A print of a satellite image with grid lines marked can also be useful, particularly in open areas where the junction between wood and grassland is not always accurate on OS maps.

Recording opportunities:

As well as targeted recording occasions, do think of ways in which one can combine a non-botanical visit somewhere, say walking with friends, shopping or seeing a relative, with a spot of botanical recording. It is surprising what can be achieved in this way. Another chance is when one is **passenger** in a car. As we all know, it is amazing what can be seen from a car but it is not safe to record whilst driving! So keep a spare notebook in the car or shopping bag so that records can be collected in these and other ways.