

May lily *Maianthemum bifolium*

Status

Nationally rare.



WHAT IS THE MAY LILY?

The May lily is a slender, creeping perennial; similar to Lily of the Valley, with heart-shaped white flowers which bloom inconsistently. The species is an indicator of ancient woodlands, being found in sites with acid soils, where it prefers shady positions.

WHERE IS IT FOUND IN THE UK?

Although quite common in mainland Europe the May lily is found in only four locations within the UK in Durham, North Yorkshire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire.

WHY IS THE MAY LILY OF CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE?

The May lily is nationally very rare and is associated with a habitat, ancient semi-natural woodland, which is declining in extent and condition.

THE MAY LILY IN THE DURHAM AREA

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE LOCAL POPULATIONS OF MAY LILY ?

The May lily is severely restricted in range in Durham, being confined to probably a single remaining site, in the North West of the county, at which it can be found over an area of approximately 300m².

HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE MAY LILY IN THE DURHAM AREA?

There is precise knowledge about the May lily's local distribution.

WHERE DOES IT OCCUR IN THE DURHAM AREA ?

The May lily has been found in three sites in the upper Derwent Valley. Two of the historical sites had small populations, which may no longer be extant, the third has a population of approximately 1000 plants. At the principal site, tree felling has left the plants exposed although this is not currently believed to be a serious threat to the plants. There are few flowering plants at the main site.

THE MAY LILY IS AT RISK FROM:

Destruction of habitat– the May lily prefers shady positions and any removal of woodland cover can adversely affect the viability of the species.

Encroachment by bracken and wood rush.

Grazing by rabbits and slugs.

THE MAY LILY BENEFITS FROM:

Conservation and enhancement of existing sites.

Management of bracken and wood rush at existing sites.

Introduction to new sites with suitable conditions.

IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR THE MAY LILY:

Semi– natural ancient woodland

OTHER SPECIES ACTION PLANS COVERING ISSUES RELEVANT TO MAY LILY:

Royal fern
Lemon slug

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N.B. ** indicates action plan produced in 1998.

* indicates action plan produced in 2000.

MAY LILY AND THE LAW

The May lily is not protected.

TARGETS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MAY LILY IN THE DURHAM AREA:

DATE

Target 1 To secure the future management of the county's principle site for May lily.

2004

Target 2 To ensure that the populations at the species main site is monitored on least a five year basis, after an initial baseline survey.

2001

ONGOING

Target 3 To maintain and monitor May lily at all sites.

ONGOING

Target 4 To survey historical sites for May lily.

2003

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MAY LILY ACTIONS			
ACTION	DATE	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	MEETS TARGET NO.
<u>SITE MANAGEMENT</u>			
1. Liase with land-owners at principal site to ensure adoption of appropriate management schedule for this species	2004	DWT, DBAP, Land owners, FC	1, 3
<u>SURVEY</u>			
2. Instigate a survey at all known and historical sites	2001	DWT, DBAP, EN, Land owners	2, 3, 4
<u>ADVISORY</u>			
3. Formulate guidance notes on how best to manage the species and liase with land owners.	2004	DWT, DBAP, EN, Land owners	1, 3