

## A new species of *Taraxacum* Wigg. (Asteraceae) from south-west England and Ireland

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### ABSTRACT

A new species of Dandelion, *Taraxacum ronaе*, is described from England and Ireland. It has been known since 1973, but has been confused with other species in the Section *Naevosa* that also have strongly marked leaves.

KEYWORDS: Dandelion, unnamed taxon, type specimens, habitat.

### INTRODUCTION

Many of the early gatherings of dandelions from Northern Ireland and Cornwall – members of the section *Naevosa* – were difficult to place within the framework of the pioneer account of *Taraxacum* in the British Isles (Richards 1972). Some of these were originally determined as *T. maculigerum* H. Lindb., later on as the newly-described *T. maculosum* A. J. Richards (Richards 1981), and finally as *T. drucei* Dahlst. The cause of this confusion was the unsuspected presence of a hitherto unnamed taxon, differing significantly from all these species. As material of this dandelion has been seen from four English and six Irish vice-counties, in a total of thirty-one 10 km squares (Fig. 2), it is now proposed to describe it as a new species.

### *Taraxacum ronaе* L. J. Margetts, **sp. nov.**

Planta magnitudine mediocris. Folia patula vel ascendentia, mediocriter-viridia, dense quasi colore piceo fucata, lucida, glabra, anguste oblanceolata, ad 240 mm longa; lobi laterales 4–5, patentes vel modice recurvati, triangulares, integri ad apicem acutum gradatim contracti, margine distali concavo; lobus terminalis parvus vel paulo major, triangularis, plerumque apice parvo mucronato; interstitium inter lobos longum, integrum; petiolus ad tertiam partem folii longitudinis, angustus, exalatus, purpureus; costa saepe colore tineta. Scapus aequans vel longior (dum floret) quam folia, abrupte sub involuacro angustatus, plerumque purpureus sed zona pallide viridi sub involuacro conico. Involucri squamae exteriores erectae, ovato-lanceolatae, 7–8.5 ×

3–5 mm, supra pallide virides, subtus atrovirentes, apice calloso subpurpureo, anguste sed clare marginato, basi saepe pruinosa. Calathium luteum, 30–40 mm diametro; ligulae stria pallide purpurea ornatae; styli et stigmata primo sublutei, deinde obscuri; antherae polliniferae. Achenium, cona exclusa, pallide brunneum, 3.0–3.2 mm, subter glabrum, supra spinulosum; cona 0.75–0.9 mm; rostrum 7 mm; pappus albus.

Plant medium-sized. Leaves spreading to ascending, mid-green, heavily covered with dark markings, shiny, glabrous, narrowly oblanceolate, to 240 mm long; lateral lobes 4–5, patent to slightly recurved, entire, triangular, tapering to acute point, with concave distal margin; terminal lobe small to a little larger, triangular, usually with a small mucronate apex; interlobes long, entire; petiole to 1/3 of leaf length, narrow, unwinged, purple; midrib often coloured. Scape equalling or longer than leaves at flowering, abruptly narrowed below involucre, usually purple, with a pale green zone below the conical involucre. Exterior bracts erect, ovate-lanceolate, 7–8.5 × 3–5 mm, pale green on upper surface, dark green on lower surface, with apex callose and purplish, narrowly but distinctly bordered, often pruinose at base. Capitulum yellow, 30–40 mm in diameter; ligules striped pale purple; styles and stigmas yellowish at first, discoloured later; pollen present. Achene excluding cone, body pale brown, 3.0–3.2 mm, smooth below, spinulose above; cone 0.75–0.9 mm; rostrum 7 mm; pappus white.

HOLOTYPE: Honiton, South Devon, v.c. 3, ST157008, in garden, 19 April 2005, L. J. Margetts, no. Dev/06/1 (NMW).

ISOTYPE: (OXF); (**herb. L. J. Margetts**). Representative exsiccatae:

v.c. 1

Connor Downs, on heathland, SW63, 22 April 1973, L. J. Margetts, no. 10; Tehidy, Camborne, in garden of South Drive, SW64, 26 March 1974, L. J. Margetts, no. 75; Penpol, in garden of Penpol House, SW83, 6 April 1973, L. J. Margetts, no. 11; all (**herb. A. J. Richards**).



FIGURE 1. *Taraxacum ronaе*. Scale bar 5 cm.

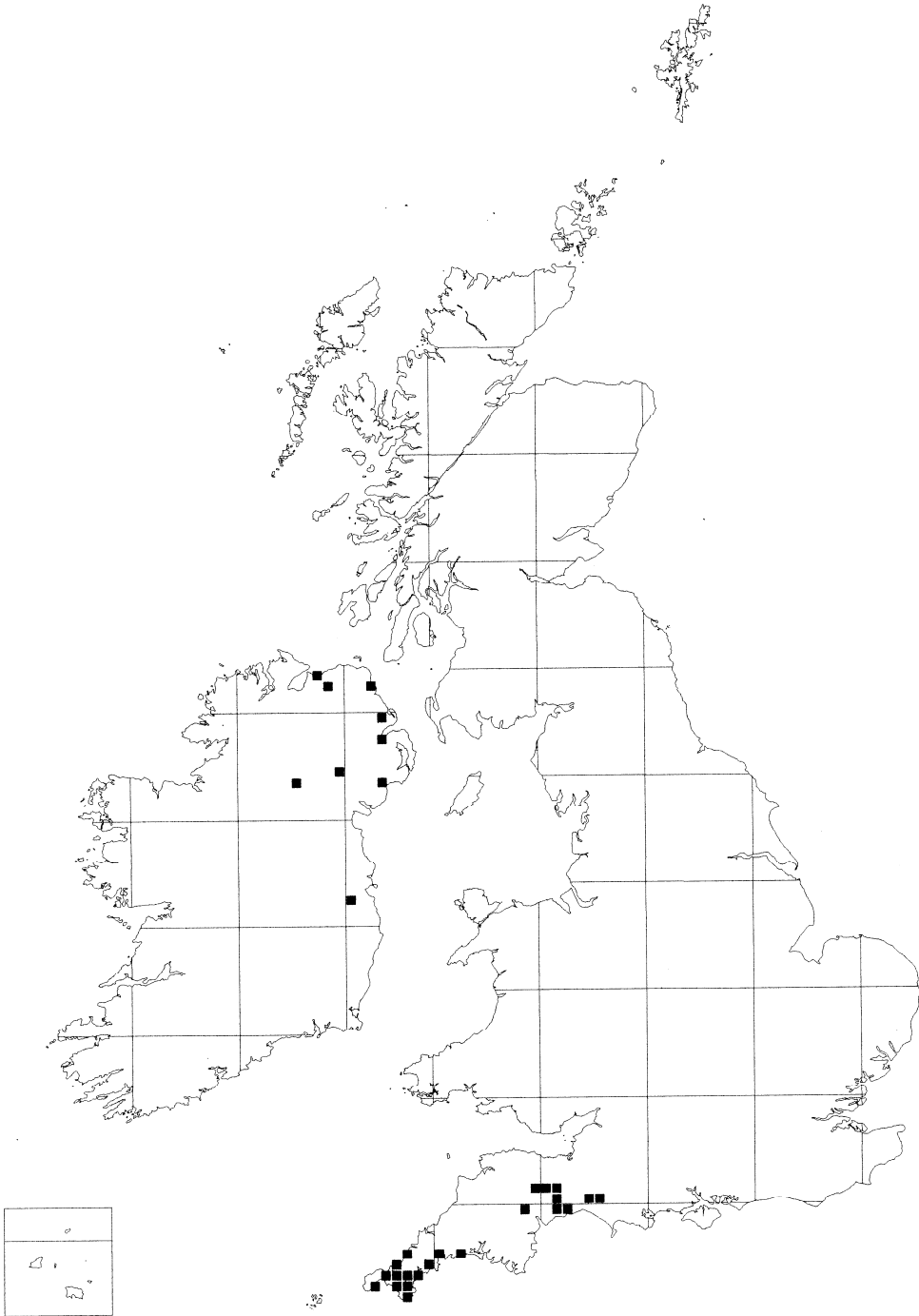


FIGURE 2. Distribution of *Taraxacum ronae* in 10 km squares.

## V.C. H21

Road from Redgap to Knockandinag, in flush north of road, O0224, 1988, *J. Parnell*, s.n. (**herb. A. J. Richards**).

## V.C. H33

Fermanagh, near the border with Co. Monaghan, on vertical bank by roadside ditch, H5139, 30 March 1975, *P. Hackney*, no. H5052, as *T. maculigerum* (**BEL**).

## V.C. H37

Castledillon, Co. Armagh, roadside verge, H9048, 29 May 1980, *P. Hackney*, no. H7833, as *T. spectabile* (**BEL**).

## V.C. H38

Enniskeen House Hotel, Newcastle, damp acid grassland, J3631, 4 June 2005, *D. Doogue*, s.n., as *T. drucei* (**herb. D. Doogue**).

## V.C. H39

Red Bay, bank below cliffs near harbour, D240257, 14 April 1981, *C. R. & P. Hackney*, no. H7979, as *T. maculigerum* (**BEL**).

## V.C. H40

Castleroe, Co. Londonderry, roadside, C863298, 1978, *D. S. Lambert*, no. H6686, as *T. maculosum* (**BEL**); Castlerock, C763352, 1982, *D. S. Lambert*, s.n., as *T. patricianum* C. C. Haworth in sched. *nomen nudum* (**herb. A. J. Richards**).

This dandelion, like some other species in the Section *Naevosa*, has leaves that are strongly covered with dark markings. It was previously determined as *T. maculosum*, and as such it was listed in *A review of the Cornish flora 1980* (Margetts & David 1981), and also in *The difficult and critical plants of the Lizard district of Cornwall* (Margetts 1988); the illustration there (plate 11, as *T. maculosum*) shows a typical plant of *T. ronaë*. However, in *The Cornish Flora Supplement 1981–1990* (Margetts & Spurgin 1991), the records for *T. maculosum* are rejected with the comment ‘the Cornish plant is now known to be a different species, as yet unnamed’. Later, C. C. Haworth and A. J. Richards came to the conclusion that the material from Northern Ireland and the

south-west was conspecific with the northern species *T. drucei*, and accordingly it was mapped as this in *Dandelions of Great Britain and Ireland* (Dudman & Richards 2000).

However, the type specimens of *T. drucei* in the Fielding-Druce Herbarium (**OXF**), reveal clearly how different this species is from *T. ronaë*: the leaves are spatulate, with rounded terminal lobes (Fig. 1), the petioles are shorter, the involucre are rounded below, and the achenes are less spinulose, with shorter cones. In leaf-shape *T. ronaë* resembles *T. maculosum* but, unlike that species, it produces abundant pollen; in the herbarium the two look deceptively alike, but in the fresh state the matt, roughly hairy leaves of *T. maculosum* are quite distinct. *T. ronaë* is readily recognised in the field by its narrow, shiny and smooth leaves and long narrow petioles. *T. ronaë* replaces *T. maculosum* in the extreme south-west, being frequent in Cornwall, and especially so on the Lizard, but extending east into Devon, with outlying records from South Somerset and Dorset. In Ireland it occurs in six vice-counties. In Cornwall its usual habitat is on the sides or at the base of grassy Cornish ‘hedges’, though it also occurs on disturbed ground, and occasionally in plant nurseries and gardens. In Devon, on the eastern fringe of its distribution, its infrequent occurrences seem to be those of a casual. In Northern Ireland it is most frequent on grassy road-verges. The specific epithet is in recognition of the considerable help given by the author’s wife.

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