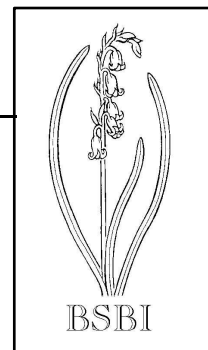


Plant Crib



HYPERICUM

A useful account of the British species of *Hypericum* is given by Robson (1990), including many illustrations. The three main identification problems are given below.

1. *Hypericum maculatum*

Two subspecies of *H. maculatum* Crantz occur in the British Isles (Robson 1957, 1984, 1990). Subsp. *obtusiusculum* is widespread in Britain and Ireland, whilst subsp. *maculatum* is mainly found in west and central Scotland, though occasionally introduced in southern England.

	Subsp. <i>maculatum</i>	Subsp. <i>obtusiusculum</i> (Tourlet) Hayek
Habit	Slender, less branched	More stout, more branched
Inflorescence	Branches at angle of <i>c.</i> 30° to stem	Branches at angle of <i>c.</i> 50° to stem
Leaves	Usually without pale glands, venation densely reticulate	More often with pale glands, venation more lax
Sepals	(1.7-) 2-3 mm wide, tip entire	1.2-2 mm wide, tip eroded
Petals	Entire, margins without dark dots, surface with dark glands mainly in the form of dots	Sometimes crenate; one or two dark dots usually present on margins, surface with dark glands mainly in the form of lines or dashes
Capsule vittae	All longitudinal	Longitudinal and sometimes also lateral, oblique

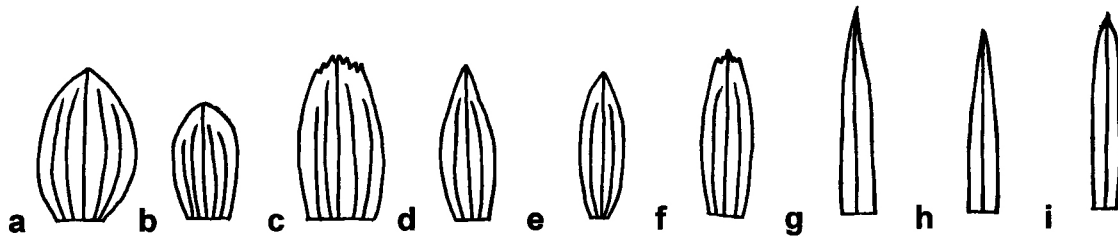
Plant Crib

2. *Hypericum* × *desetangsii* (*H. perforatum* × *H. maculatum*)

This hybrid between *H. maculatum* Crantz and *H. perforatum* L. is likely to occur where the parents grow in close proximity, but also occurs in the absence of either parent (e.g. Crackles 1990). Its characters are rather vague because the parents appear to be inter-fertile and backcross readily, thus producing a ± continuous range of forms between the parental species. The main characters are:

- i) the second pair of stem lines in *H. maculatum* usually disappear in the hybrid, but they may be evident.
- ii) the leaves usually show characters intermediate between the densely reticulate venation with few or usually no pellucid glands of *H. maculatum* and the lax reticulate venation with numerous glands of *H. perforatum*.
- iii) the sepals are the most useful indicators. The intermediate condition is medium-width sepals with a few superficial dark glands, and the apex of the sepals is obtuse-erose and often apiculate. The whole range between the parents exists, the hybrids always having some denticules (i.e. minor erosions at the tip).

H. × desetangsii Lamotte nothosubsp. *carinthiacum* (A. Fröhl.) N. Robson, recorded from southern Scotland, differs from nothosubsp. *desetangsii* in the narrower angle of branching, the more densely reticulate leaf-venation, the broader, entire, acute or apiculate sepals and the dark-dotted and dark-streaked (not dark-lined) petals.



Sepals of *Hypericum* taxa (glands omitted and only main veins drawn; not to scale). (a, b) *H. maculatum* subsp. *maculatum*, (c) *H. maculatum* subsp. *obtusiusculum*, (d, e) *H. × desetangsii* nothosubsp. *carinthiacum* nothoforma *maculatiforme*, (f) *H. × desetangsii* nothosubsp. *desetangsii* nothoforma *perforatiforme*, (g-i) *H. perforatum*.

Plant Crib

3. *Hypericum humifusum* / *H. linariifolium*

These species usually remain distinct, but intermediates (hybrids?) occur in south-west England and the Channel Islands. Typical forms can be distinguished by the following characters:-

	<i>H. humifusum</i> L.	<i>H. linariifolium</i> Vahl
Stems	All decumbent to prostrate, internodes with 2 raised lines	At least central stems erect, internodes terete
Leaves	Oblong or lanceolate to obovate, shortly petiolate, with \pm numerous pale glands	Linear to narrowly oblong, sessile, without or almost without pale glands
Sepals	Always unequal, apex rounded; margin entire or with a few sessile dark glands, surface with few or no dark glands	Sometimes equal, apex acute to obtuse; margin densely dark-glandular-denticulate to dark-glandular-fimbriate, surface with \pm numerous dark glands
Petals	Only slightly exceeding sepals	More than twice as long as sepals
Capsules	Only slightly exceeding sepals	About twice as long as sepals

References Crackles, F. E. (1990). *Watsonia* **18**: 63-67.
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