

SOME HAMPSHIRE BRAMBLES

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For some years past a person attempting the study of the British brambles was perplexed by the various ideas held upon the subject. Our principal British Floras sometimes recognized only one almost infinitely varying species. Messrs. Hooker and Arnott of 60 years ago wrote of ten, Professor Babington in his "British Rubi" (1870), refers to forty. The issue of the Rev. Moyle Rogers' "Handbook" gives us the latest decision on this question; he describes a hundred and seventy, either as species, subspecies or varieties. The excursions of our club in the summer season take the members into all parts of the County and the object of this paper is to direct their attention to the Brambles, or at the least to the forms that have lately been discovered. The northern district of the county has not had nearly the same attention paid to it as the southern. The fact of the Rev. W. Moyle Rogers residing at Bournemouth, may be one of the causes of this. His handbook provides us with an aid to the study of the bramble-forms that we come upon, either by wood border, hedge-side or in open field.

We start then with his division of the fruticose *Rubi* into fourteen main groups, characterized chiefly by the amount and clothing of the annual shoot in the shape of prickles, acicles and hairs.

Following his order we have in Group I. *Rubus suberectus* and *Rubus plicatus*. The first mentioned it would be desirable to have verified; it is named in Townsend's "Hants Flora," and both may perhaps still be found about Tadley and Silchester.

Group II. The variety *Briggsianus* of *Rubus affinis* occurs near the fourth milestone from Winchester, on the Andover Road; the small neat leaflets and large panicle distinguish it clearly from other forms growing near it.

Group III. *Rubus Schentzii* is a peculiarly northern form, abundant in Mid-Scotland and reaching as far south as Carnarvon, yet we find it growing freely in Stratton Park. Its stem is shining, with many straight prickles, the leaves exceptionally broad, the flowers large and of a pale lilac colour.

Rubus pulcherrimus is met with about Stratfieldsaye, Newmer Farm (Old Alresford), Stratton Park and Micheldever Wood. The leaves are very dark green, not large, almost cuneate in shape, with small serratures.

Group IV. *Rubus Villicaulis* var. *Selmeri* is met with about the borders of copses as at Preston Candover. The large broadly ovate terminal leaflet is easy to observe.

Rubus leucandrus grows about the southern end of Micheldever Wood.

Group V. On Milbarrow Down and not unfrequently in roadside hedges we come upon *Rubus Argenteus*. *Rubus thrysoideus* is at present represented by one bush only, near the roadside going through the Hassock, a small wood about a mile east of Lunway's Inn, on the Winchester and Basingstoke road. The *Rubus pubescens* var. *subinermis* only occurs, so far as we know, on Milbarrow Down, above the inn. Its large oblong leaves and panicles quite unarmed make it observable. There has been some confusion between this plant and the next, *Rubus macrophyllus* which stands in Group VI., and should be looked for. *Rubus sylvaticus* we find south of Ellisfield village, chiefly near wood borders. We appear to have no representatives at present in North Hampshire, of Group VII., unless it be *Rubus Sprengelii* on the authority of Mr. Druce who finds it near Silchester. *Rubus pyramidalis* stands in Townsend's "Hants Flora," but requires verification.

Group VIII. *Rubus criniger* is now under discussion. Several bushes occur in Ellisfield village, and something very similar we have collected on Abbotstone Down.

Group IX. We have no further information of *Rubus oigoclados*, than that it was growing, a single bush, in Thorny Down Wood, Brown Candover; we have specimens of it, but the bush has lately been cut down.

Rubus Babingtonii, though not abundant, may be found in Micheldever Wood with *Rubus Lejeunii* subsp. *ericetorum* as representative of Group X. *Rubus Lyennii* and *Rubus Bloxamii* are common: they well represent the characters of Groups IX. and X.

Group XI. *Rubus pallidus* (Wh. and N.)¹ is often met with by the roadside over Preston Oak hills. *Rubus scaber* wants looking for again, though referred to in "Townsend's Hants Flora."

Group XII may be passed over with the bare mention of *Rubus Marshalli* not by any means common yet occurring about the southern end of Micheldever Wood.

In Group XIII, we have two most interesting forms: *Rubus acutifrons* from Micheldever Wood and *Rubus ochrodermis* from Wield Wood, the latter with remarkably bright red stems, the colour however soon fades after gathering. These plants were first identified as British from specimens found in Mid-Wales.

Group XIV. closes Mr. Rogers' arrangement.

There are several other forms which are known, the latest discoveries being mentioned, only that others may take up the search and fill vacancies in this section of our County Flora and increase the pleasure of many a summer ramble. The identification of these plants is not at all easy, even with the aid of the best written descriptions.

Our present knowledge is almost entirely derived from the unfailing assistance of the author of the Handbook of British Rubi, the Rev. W. Moyle Rogers.: Many students have had the benefit of his kindly help in this department of botanical research and doubtless he would give his assistance to any enquirer.

¹ Weihe and Nees von Esenbeck, who first described the species.