

# Drosera (Sundew)

## Identification & Recording

## Native *Drosera* taxa

3 species plus two hybrids

*Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew)

*Drosera anglica* (Great Sundew)

*Drosera intermedia* (Oblong-leaved Sundew)

*Drosera* x *obovata* (Obovate Sundew (*D. rotundifolia* x *anglica*))

*Drosera* x *belezeana* (*D. rotundifolia* x *intermedia*)

### A note on names:

The name *D. longifolia* has been applied to both *D. anglica* and to *D. intermedia*.

*Drosera intermedia* was given the common name 'Long-leaved Sundew' in 'Flora of the British Isles (Clapham et al 1952, 1962, 1987). Stace's 'New Flora' (1991, 1997, 2010) adopted the common name 'Oblong-leaved Sundew'. NB the *Drosera* with the longest leaf blades is *D. anglica*.

## Native *Drosera* – identification

In addition to accounts in the standard Floras see the account by Culham in the BSBI Plant Crib, available online at:

[http://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/Drosera\\_Crib\\_3.pdf](http://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/Drosera_Crib_3.pdf)

Culham raises two important points re identification:

- stunted or juvenile material tends towards a round leaf shape in all species.
- In *D. anglica* and *D. rotundifolia* new leaves grow in the centre of the rosette after flowering which makes old inflorescences look as if they arise laterally, resulting in some possible misidentifications if other characters are not checked.

Treatments of *Drosera* in some popular Field Guides are inadequate, especially for identification of *D. intermedia*.

(NB – identification of *Drosera intermedia* x *rotundifolia* = *D. x belezeana* is not covered in these slides. See Stace et al (2015). Hybrid Flora of the British Isles).

## Native *Drosera* – identification

### *Drosera rotundifolia*



- Familiar & ± unmistakable
- Leaf blade ± round, or wider than long, very abruptly narrowed into petiole. Table-tennis bat shaped.
- Leaves forming a spreading rosette
- Seeds reticulate

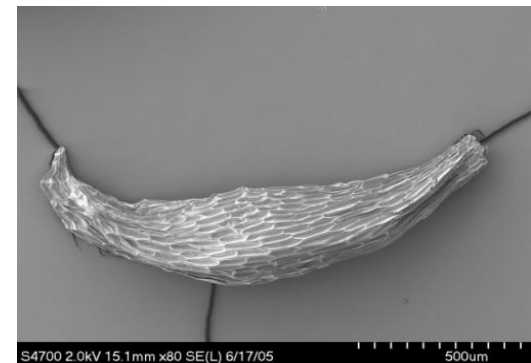


## Native *Drosera* – identification

### *Drosera anglica*



- Leaves  $\pm$  erect
- Leaf blades long ( $\leq 30\text{mm}$ ), (3-)4-6 x width in at least some leaves, very gradually narrowed into petiole
- Leaf blades green with red tentacles
- Flowering stem appearing to arise from centre of leaf rosette
- Seeds reticulate





## Native *Drosera* – identification

### *Drosera x obovata*



- Found growing with parent species (may be locally frequent)
- Leaves  $\pm$  erect, can approach length of *D. anglica*
- Leaf blade length 2-3 x width, gradually narrowed into petiole
- Flowering stem appearing to arise from centre of leaf rosette
- Sterile. Seed pods remain slim and pointed and contain only light brown thread like sterile seeds.

## Native *Drosera* – identification

*Drosera x obovata*



Comparison of typical leaf shapes of:  
*Drosera anglica* (left), *Drosera x obovata*  
(centre) & *Drosera rotundifolia* (right)

Leaf shape of this hybrid is nicely  
'intermediate' between the two parents,  
inviting possible confusion with *Drosera*  
*intermedia*

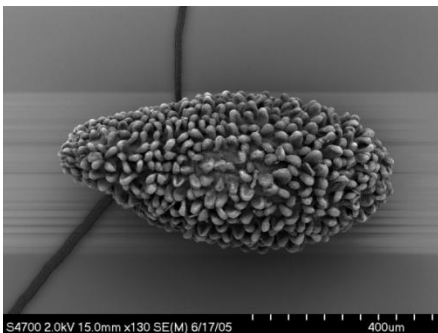


## Native *Drosera* – identification

### *Drosera intermedia*



- Leaves  $\pm$  erect, shorter than *D. anglica*
- Leaf blades obovate,  $\leq 10$ mm in length, (1-)-2-3 x longer than wide, gradually narrowed into petiole
- Leaf blades green or may be reddish
- Flowering stem arising laterally, from below terminal rosette
- Seeds papillose (diagnostic feature). Compared to *D. x obovata*, capsules are usually very plump and somewhat blunt ended.





## Native *Drosera* – identification



Left to right:

*Drosera rotundifolia*

*Drosera intermedia*

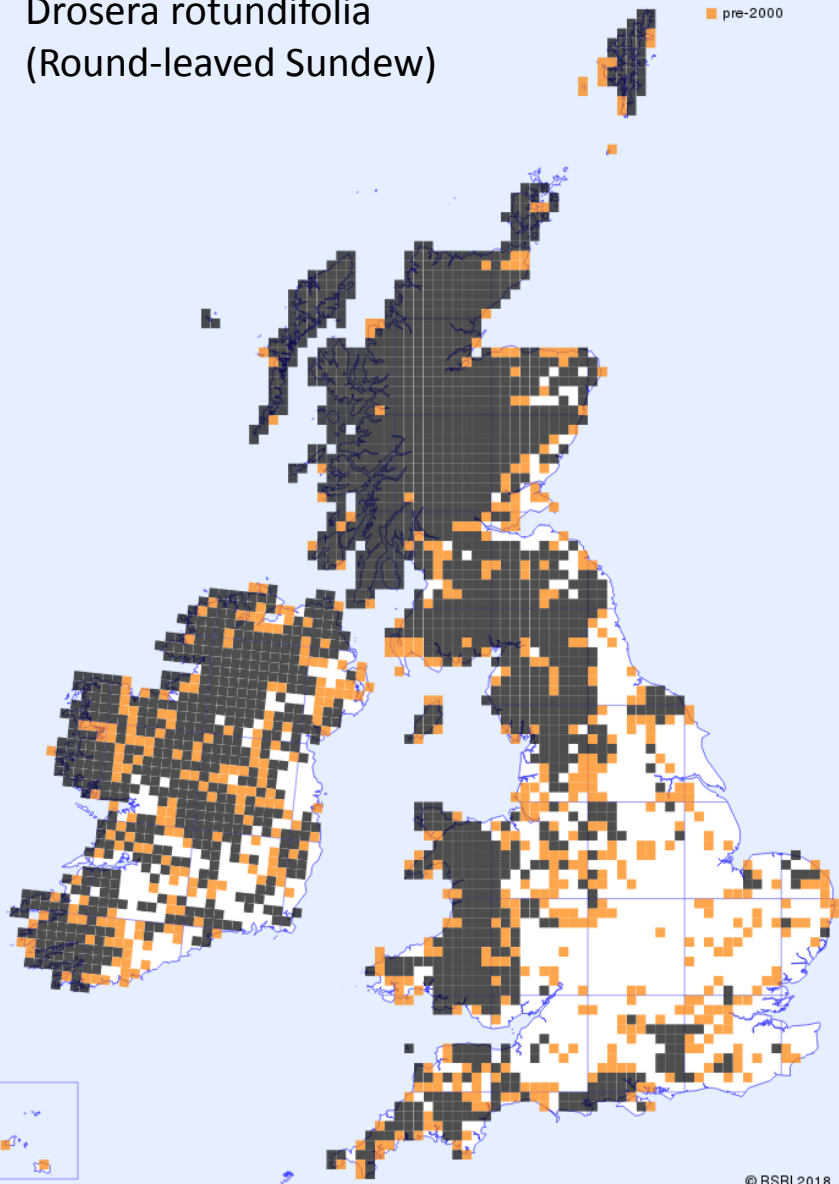
*Drosera anglica*

*Drosera x obovata*

Photo – Pete Stroh

*Drosera rotundifolia*  
(Round-leaved Sundew)

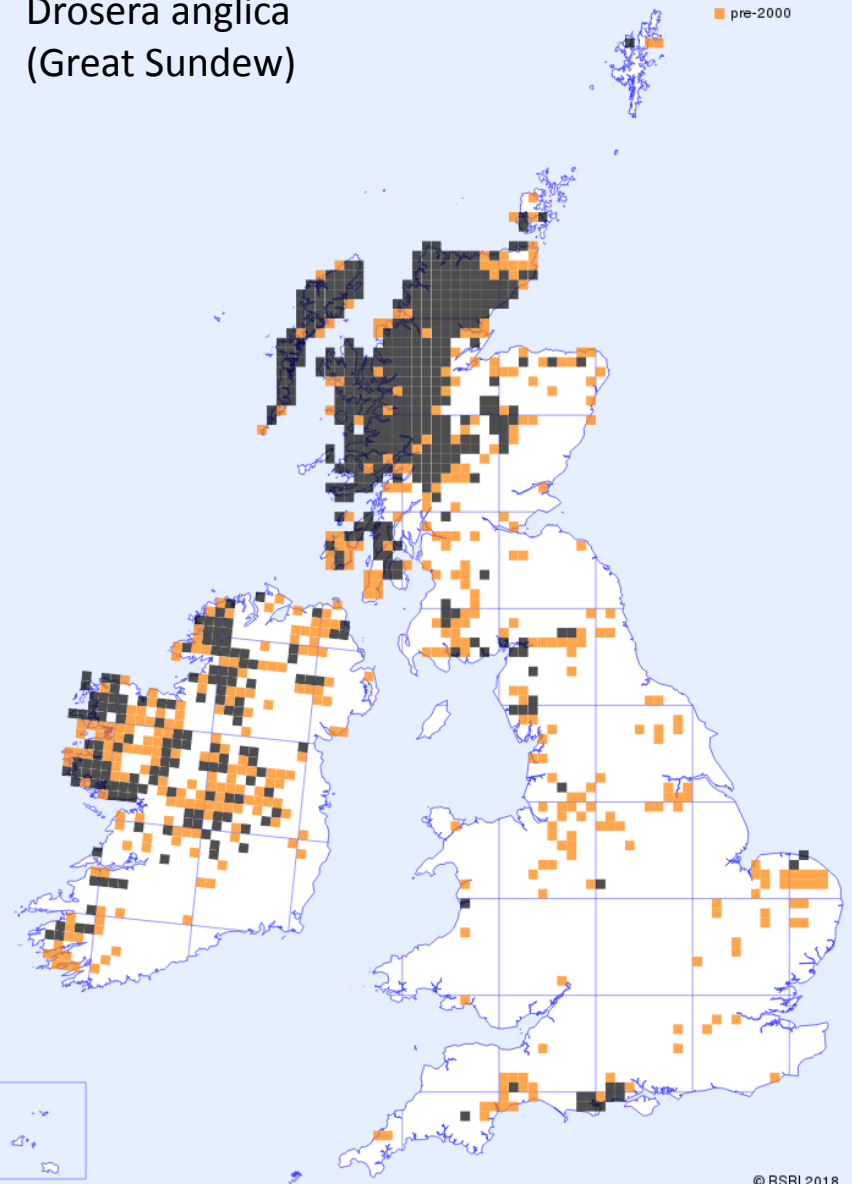
■ 2000 onwards  
■ pre-2000



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*Drosera anglica*  
(Great Sundew)

■ 2000 onwards  
■ pre-2000

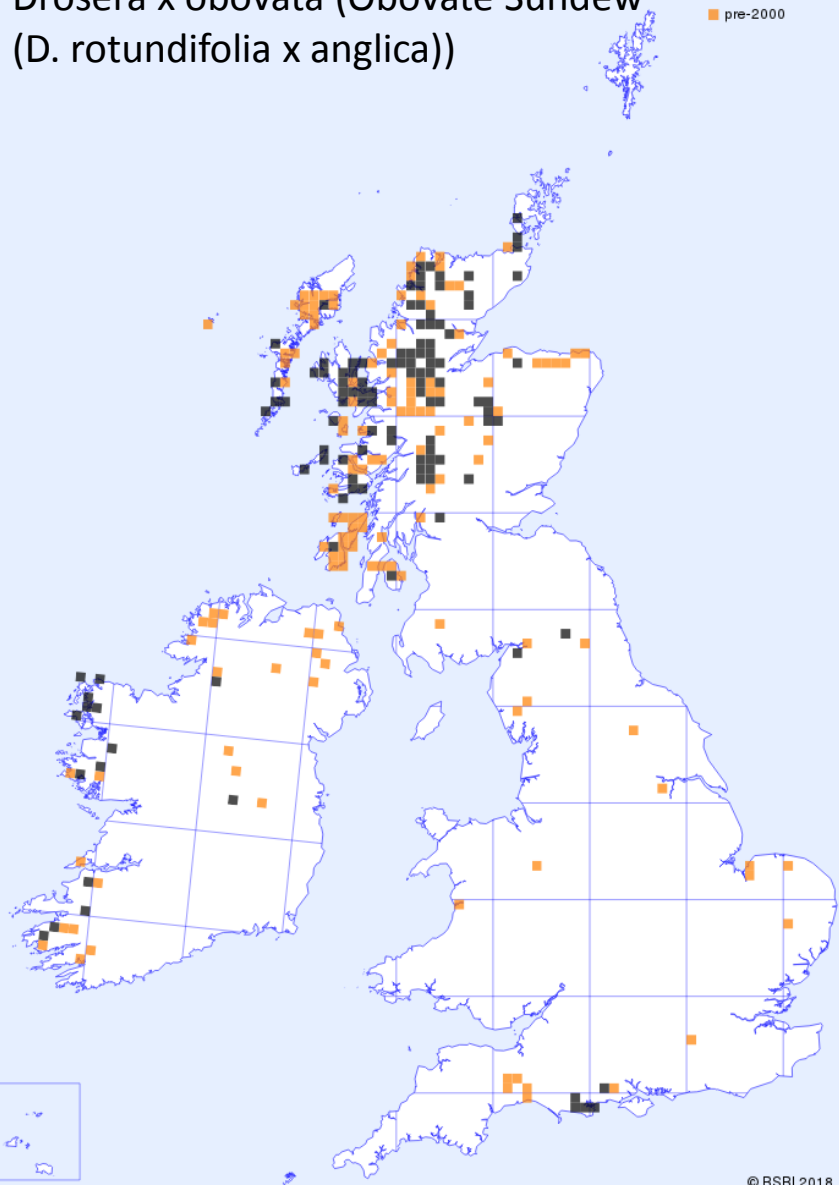


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Distribution maps from BSBI DDb 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018, showing hectad distribution post 1999 cf pre 2000

# *Drosera x obovata* (Obovate Sundew (*D. rotundifolia* x *anglica*))

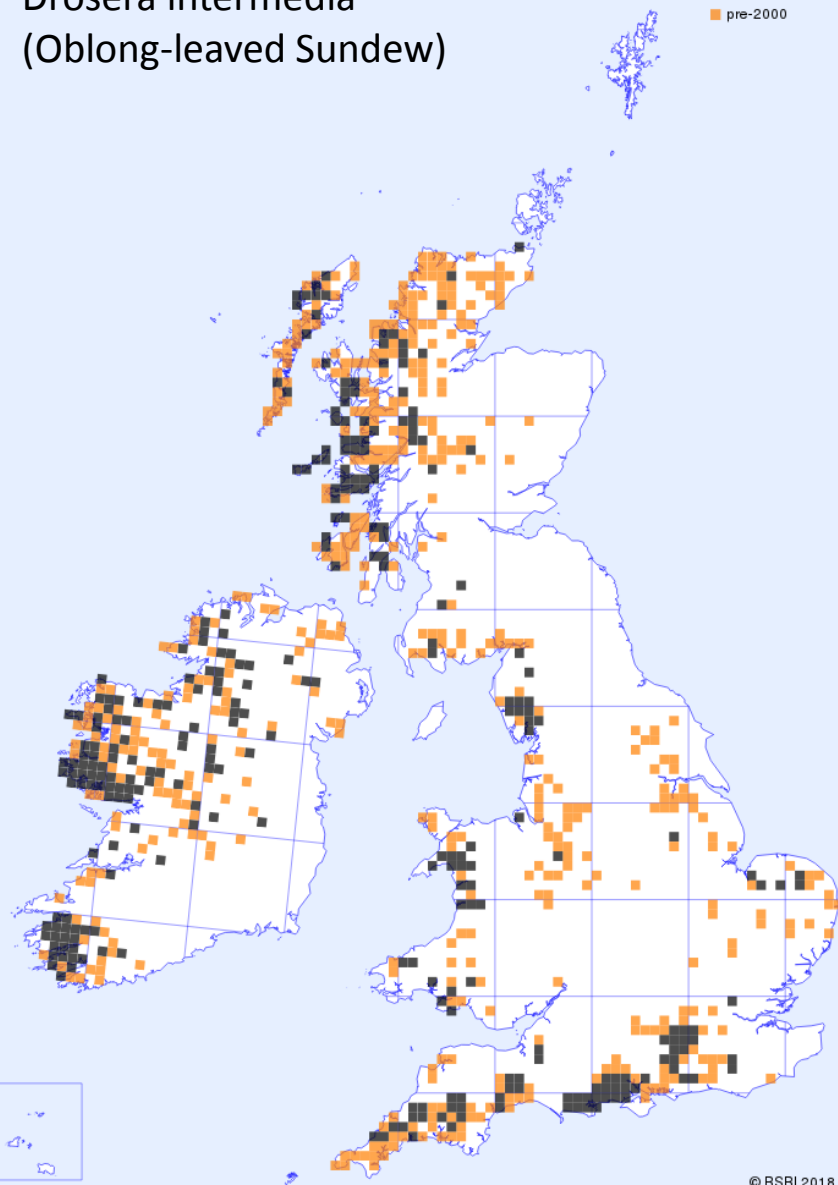
■ 2000 onwards  
■ pre-2000



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# *Drosera intermedia* (Oblong-leaved Sundew)

■ 2000 onwards  
■ pre-2000



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## Native *Drosera* taxa – percentage hectad refind rates

Taxon	Total hectads post 1999	Percentage hectad refind rates, pre-2000 cf post 1999			
		England, IOM & Channel Islands	Scotland	Wales	Ireland
<i>Drosera anglica</i>	554	15.9	70.0	20.0	40.6
<i>Drosera anglica</i> x <i>rotundifolia</i> = <i>D. x obovata</i>	119	21.7	34.0	0.0	7.4
<i>Drosera intermedia</i>	305	33.3	25.2	45.9	43.4
<i>Drosera intermedia</i> x <i>rotundifolia</i> = <i>D. x belezeana</i>	1	50.0			
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	1915	53.4	88.2	77.0	72.4

Refind rates calculated from records on BSBI DDb on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019

- Scotland has the **highest** hectad refind rates for *D. anglica*, *D. rotundifolia* and *D. x obovata*, but has the **lowest** refind rate for *D. intermedia*.
- England has the **lowest** refind rates for *D. anglica* and *D. rotundifolia* (historic loss of habitat)
- Wales has the **highest** refind rate for *D. intermedia*.

## *Drosera intermedia* in Scotland - [Over-recorded, overlooked or declining?](#)

- In Scotland, *Drosera intermedia* has a very low hectad refind rate (25%), & post 1999 has the fewest hectad records (81).
- Observers may have been reluctant to record *D. intermedia* through lack of familiarity, or
- It may have been over-recorded in the past, or
- It may have declined (but if so why?).

### VCRs and field recorders in Scotland (especially) should note:

- Overemphasis, in keys and descriptions, of the flowering stem character (arising laterally, from below terminal rosette). Open to misinterpretation.
- Need to make use of additional ID characters, especially the (diagnostic) papillose seeds.
- *Drosera x obovata* is obviously intermediate in leaf blade shape between *D. rotundifolia* and *D. anglica*, and may be under recorded.
- The name *D. longifolia* was, historically, applied to both *D. anglica* and to *D. intermedia*. Need to check ID of herbarium specimens.
- VCRs should check all post 1999 records of *D. intermedia*; mark as Confirmed, Doubtful or Rejected on DDb.
- The DDb distribution map may be significantly incorrect in parts of Scotland.

## **Acknowledgements**

*Thanks to Pete Stroh for photographs, and to Alastair Culham for comments.*