



plant identification course for beginners in serious botany



The on-line course has just completed a very successful 8th year despite Covid-19, but sadly there will be no further intakes. The website will remain open next year just to allow year 2 students to complete.

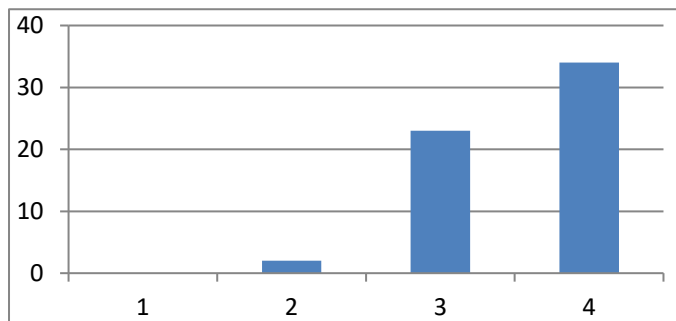
Although the course material is delivered on-line students have to complete practical work, finding 2-3 named common species each fortnight throughout the season and listing their diagnostic features. The species occur in all types of habitat, from pavements and gardens to woods and meadows. This develops observational skills as well as familiarising terminology, family characteristics and scientific names. It is time-consuming and requires strong commitment; about 60% of each cohort complete the course and earn a certificate of completion.

A feedback form is sent at the end of each year. The bar charts summarise the replies from this year's 59 respondents (with an admittedly positive bias since 49 of these had completed the course), with a selection of their added comments.

HOW FAR HAS THE COURSE COME UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

1 = disappointing

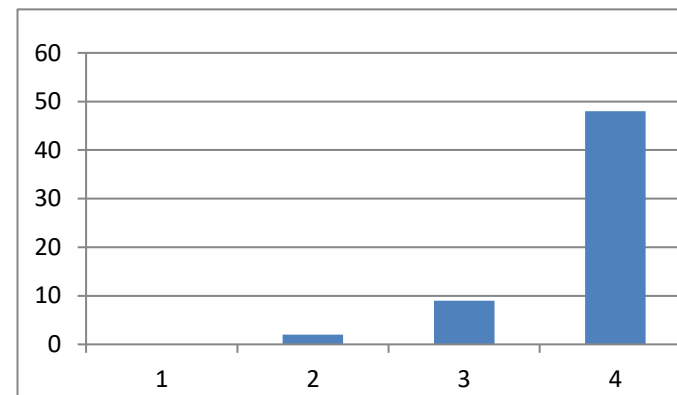
4 = exceeded them



HOW INTERESTING WAS THE COURSE?

1 = uninteresting

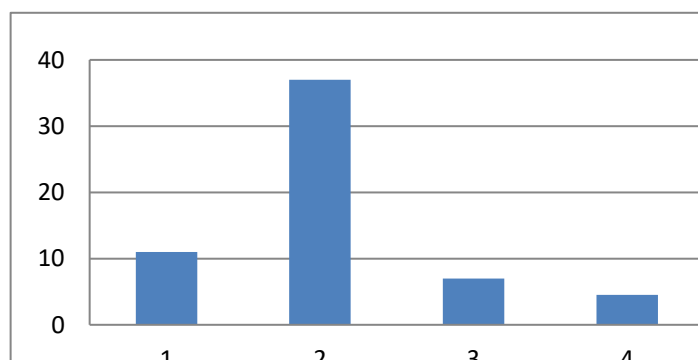
4 = fascinating



PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

1 = little/none

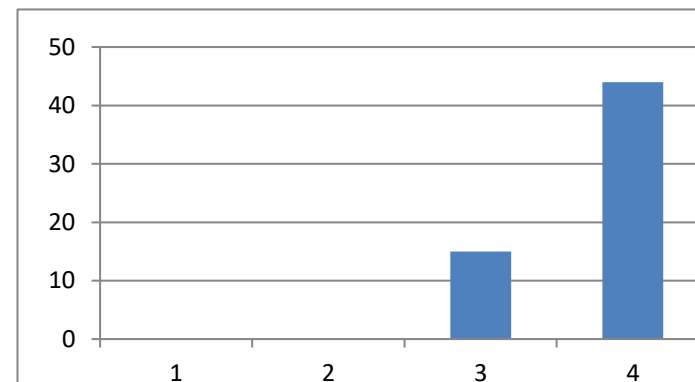
4 = good



HOW MUCH DID YOU LEARN FROM THE COURSE UNITS?

1 = very little

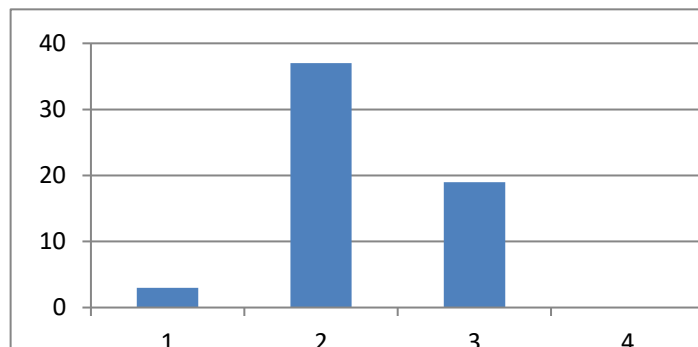
4 = masses



HOW DIFFICULT WAS THE COURSE?

1 = very difficult

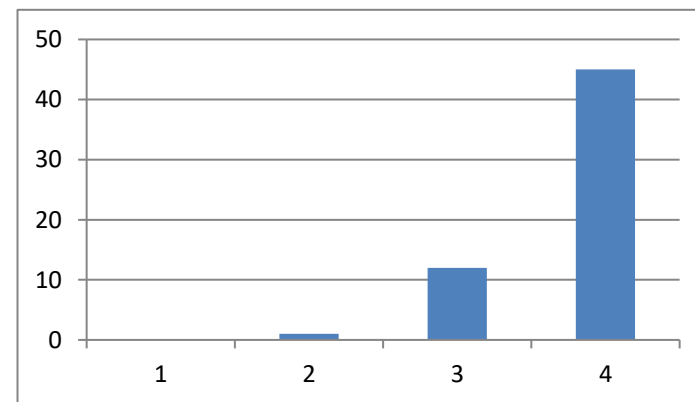
4 = very easy



HOW USEFUL WERE THE QUESTIONS AS AN AID TO LEARNING?

1 = not useful

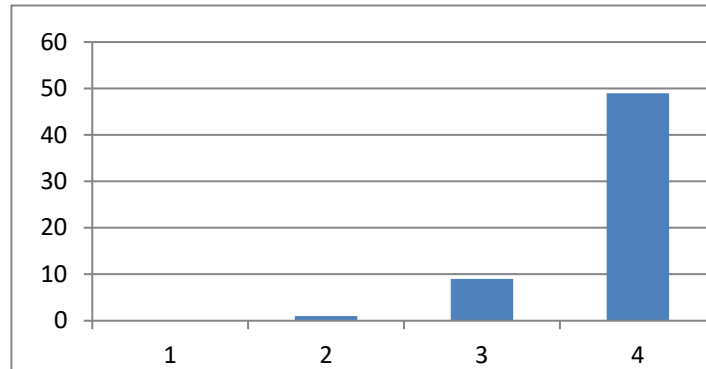
4 = very useful



HOW USEFUL TO FUTURE BOTANICAL ACTIVITIES?

1 = not useful

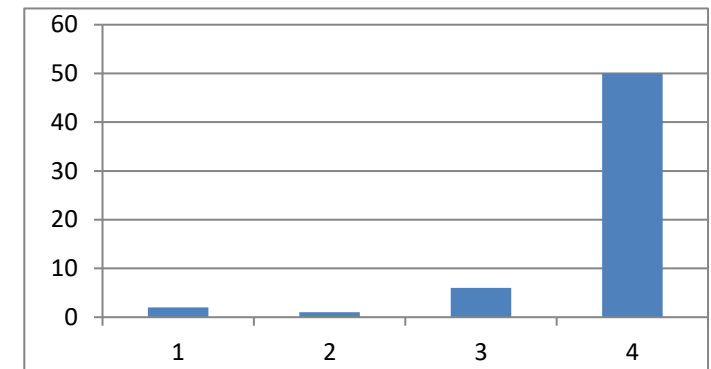
4 = very useful



HOW HELPFUL WAS YOUR TUTOR?

1 = unhelpful

4 = very helpful



A FEW OF THE COMMENTS

The most valuable lesson has been not to make an identification from 3 feet away just because it looks like something I have seen before. Also plants don't always conform to their descriptions in the books!

It was challenging, as expected (otherwise it wouldn't have been so worthwhile), but achievable. Not so difficult as to be discouraging. Why are you not taking students this year? . . lots more people now regularly walking and taking an interest in wild flowers so it seems a shame. . .

The whole course (materials, website and tutor support) was high quality and most professional

All in all a great course- it has not helped my posture though as I now look down at the pavement for plants as I walk along!

My tutor was a truly inspirational teacher

In the early stages I felt quite out of my depth and wondered if I should give up but then things started to sink in and I became much better at identifying parts of the plant and my confidence grew.

I did find it hard, particularly as I could not access help from friends. I intend to continue working on it next year. It is an excellent course.

Although I was doing this study on my own I felt very supported, and the pace of the course was great - it forced me to focus and it was continually interesting. I wish there was an 'Identiplant 2'!

(A BSBI member already) *I now feel confident I could join in Botany activities without feeling a complete dunce.*

Looking at BSBI webinars now and will tackle Stace this winter. Thanks.

By the end of 2021 about 700 individuals will have completed the course. Many of them continue to make an important contribution in recording, conservation and inspiring others. Many have also joined the BSBI, taken FSC courses and some have taken [Field Identification Skills Certificates \(FISCs\)](#).

WHY MUST THE WEBSITE CLOSE?

Identiplant is not a regular on-line course because assignments are individually commented upon by a local tutor and students have up to 2 years to complete. In 2020 there were 62 tutors and 185 new students distributed from Orkney to Jersey and N and S Ireland. This makes the administration too demanding to maintain in these difficult times.

THE FUTURE?

We are considering a new, decentralised mode of delivery. Information regarding the availability of Identiplant will continue to be available on the [BSBI Training courses webpage](#) alongside details of plant ID courses from a range of providers.