

An update on some Bute brambles in series *Micantes* and *Radulae*

Readers of my of Isle of Bute Flora may recall that a group of Bute brambles was left unresolved at that time. I called this the '*radula* complex' because the bushes clearly belonged to that general type. I can now report some progress towards resolving this puzzling group.



This is the common member of the 'complex', the putative *raduloides*, with (in Bute) a typically short inflorescence, broadly rounded white petals and sepals spreading with upturned tips and reddening near the base.

I am now almost persuaded that the common species may indeed be *raduloides*, as Tony Church originally recorded when he visited Bute in 1998. There are still some issues to settle here, but this is now looking like the most probable outcome. The same plant is certainly common about the Clyde coast, where Alan Stirling first recorded it (after having it named by Eric Edees) at quite a number of sites in the 1970s/80s, and I saw it this year in Castle Douglas (vc73). There is a thin scatter of records elsewhere in central and southern Scotland.

I have recently read a detailed description of the species by Weber (1974), as he knew it around Osna-bruck in Germany, and our local plants fit very well. There may however be some differences from southern English plants, and the question needs further investigation.



Some photos of the putative *raduloides* from Bute

Lower right: A specimen of *Rubus raduloides* from Wiltshire, collected and determined by W C R Watson and later confirmed by Alan Newton. The flowers are just starting to open, so the later disposition of the sepals is not shown. (South London Botanical Institute, @Herbariaunited.org)



Surprisingly, perhaps, *Rubus radula* itself, the commonest species of the type in most areas, appears to be absent from Bute. At any rate, it remains unrecorded so far. Two less common relatives, however, have turned up. Last year, I exhibited some photos of *R. echinatus* (confirmed by Rob Randall), new to Scotland, and only found at one site on Bute. Here are a few more taken this year.



The flowers of *echinatus* are distinctive and striking, with their narrowly tapering petals, quite different from the broadly rounded ones of the common plant on the previous page. The jagged leaf margins, to which the name may refer, also strike the eye at once as something different.



This year I found *R. echinatoides* at 3 sites on Bute. This species is more frequent in the east of Scotland, and David Welch confirmed the identification. It is not always easy to separate from *radula*, but David said that the plants in my photos were convincingly *echinatoides*, so *radula* remains unknown on Bute.

Some photos of *R. echinatoides* from Straad, Bute.

