Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC)

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Community Synopsis

Scientific name	*Prunus spinosa – Crataegus monogyna* scrub
Common name	Blackthorn – Hawthorn scrub
Community code	SC1A

Vegetation

This community consists mainly of thorny mixes of *Prunus spinosa*, *Crataegus monogyna* and *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with clambering stems of *Hedera helix* and, beneath, some straggling *Galium aparine*. *Rosa canina*, *Ulex europaeus* and *Urtica dioica* can be often be added to the rather unfriendly list of species. The fern *Pteridum aquilinum* is frequent, and other other ferns (*Polystichum setiferum*, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*) are occasional.

Ecology

Most records of this community come from hedgerows and hedgebanks in the lowlands, but it also occurs as scrub, invading abandoned fields and fringing woodland. Due to its thorny and rather commonplace nature, it has been vastly under-recorded.

Sub-communities

No sub-communities are described.

Similar communities

Community SC1B is similar in character, but lacks *Prunus spinosa*.

Records and distribution

Number of records (all)

Clearly assigned:	44
Transitional:	11
Total:	55

Number of records (mapped)

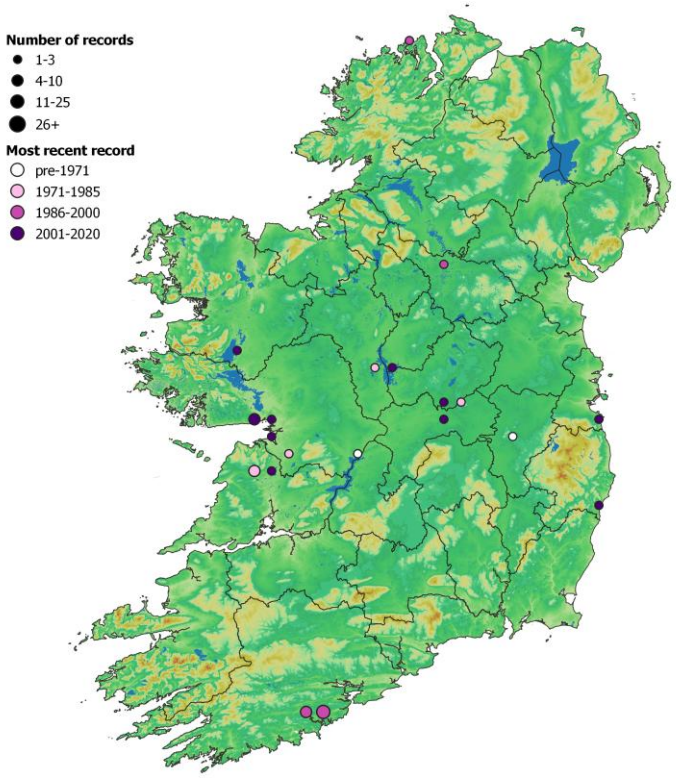
2001-2020:	15
1986-2000:	28
1971-1985:	9
Pre-1971:	3
Total:	55

Number of hectads (by most recent time period)

2001-2020:	10
1986-2000:	4
1971-1985	4
Pre-1971:	2
Total:	20

Number of hectads (records in each time period)

2001-2020:	10
1986-2000:	4
1971-1985	4
Pre-1971:	2



Synoptic table (*n* = 29)

Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max	Species	Frequency (from I-V)	Cover min (med) max
Prunus spinosa	V	2-(7)-9	*Filipendula ulmaria*	II	2-(3)-3
Crataegus monogyna	V	+-(7)-8	*Lotus pedunculatus*	II	2-(3)-5
Hedera helix	V	2-(7)-9	*Viola riviniana/reichenbachiana*	II	+-(2)-3
Rubus fruticosus agg.	V	2-(7)-8	*Arrhenatherum elatius*	I	2-(3)-5
Galium aparine	IV	2-(3)-5	*Dryopteris dilatata*	I	2-(3)-3
Pteridium aquilinum	III	1-(3)-5	*Geum urbanum*	I	1-(2)-3
Rosa canina	III	1-(3)-5	*Ranunculus repens*	I	2-(2)-3
Agrostis stolonifera	II	2-(3)-5	*Cirsium arvense*	I	2-(2)-2
Lonicera periclymenum	II	2-(3)-5	*Deschampsia cespitosa*	I	2-(3)-3
Polystichum setiferum	II	1-(2)-3	*Elytrigia repens*	I	2-(2)-3
Ulex europaeus	II	2-(5)-7	*Eurhynchium striatum*	I	1-(5)-5
Urtica dioica	II	+-(5)-7	*Lathyrus pratensis*	I	2-(2)-3
Heracleum sphondylium	II	2-(3)-7	*Primula vulgaris*	I	+-(1)-3
Geranium robertianum	II	+-(3)-5	*Stachys palustris*	I	2-(3)-5
Rumex conglomeratus	II	2-(2)-5	*Stachys sylvatica*	I	2-(3)-3
Cirsium vulgare	II	2-(2)-3	*Ulota bruchii/crispa*	I	+-(+)-1
Fraxinus excelsior	II	1-(3)-7	*Veronica chamaedrys*	I	+-(2)-2
Phyllitis scolopendrium	II	2-(2)-5	*Radula complanata*	I	+-(+)-+
Dactylis glomerata	II	2-(2)-5	*Teucrium scorodonia*	I	3-(3)-3
Dryopteris filix-mas	II	2-(3)-3	*Vicia sepium*	I	+-(2)-3

Affinities

GHI: WL1 Hedgerows / WS1 Scrub

ZM: CD01D Urtico-Crataegion Passarge et G. Hofmann 1968

EUNIS: F3.1112 Atlantic blackthorn-bramble scrub

NVC: W21a *Crataegus monogyna-Hedera helix* scrub *Hedera helix-Urtica dioica* sub-community (52.0%), but also W22 *Prunus spinosa-Pteridium aquilinum* scrub (50.5%)

Annex I: No significant correspondence

Proxy environmental data

Light: 5.7 Reaction: 6.6 Wetness: 5.4 Fertility: 5.9 Salinity: 0.3

Conservation value

Hedgerows and scrub can provide valuable habitat for bird, mammals and invertebrates particularly within enclosed agricultural landscapes. Species/30 m^2 = 14.1, *n* = 14.

Management

Hedgerows would once have been periodically layed to maintain their vigour and make them stockproof. Today, the vast majority of hedges are mechanically flailed. Hedgerows and scrub may be lost due to enlargement of fields, agricultural improvement and urban developments.

Key references

Browne, A. (1998) Vegetation-environment interactions in the vicinity of a pharmaceutical plant near Kinsale, Co. Cork. (Ph.D. thesis). University College Dublin.

Wilmanns, O, Brun-Hool, J. (1982) Plant communities of human settlements in Ireland. 1. Vegetation of walls. *Journal of Life Sciences - Royal Dublin Society* 3, 79-90.

Synopsis version: V2.1 **Synopsis date:** March 2025 **Synopsis author(s):** P.M. Perrin

Photo 1. Vegetation ascribable to SC1A *Prunus spinosa – Crataegus monogyna* scrub, Corballis, Meath (S. Barron, April 2021)

Photo required