

FLORA OF HERTFORDSHIRE

ULMACEAE

Ulmus L.

The Hertfordshire elms have caused botanists much trouble. Webb and Coleman recognised four species but confessed to 'have paid no great attention to this obscure genus'. Pryor upheld these species but the editor of his Flora reduced them to two. Little gave the genus more attention and allowed for four species and some hybrids.

Later on the elms were studied more thoroughly by Dr. R. Melville, some of whose early work on the genus was done in Hertfordshire. Melville used a biometric method to distinguish the four species already recognised by earlier workers: **U. glabra** Huds., **U. procera** Salisb., **U. carpiniifolia** Gled. and **U. plotii** Druce (another species, the Cornish Elm, **U. angustifolia** (Weston) Weston, did not enter Hertfordshire as a native tree). He described a new species, **U. coritana** Melville, the Midland Elm, which was present in north Hertfordshire. He found that there was also an 'East Anglian Small-leaved Elm' which was undescribed and entered into the east of the county. Melville allowed for hybridization between his species and described one new hybrid, **U. X diversifolia**, the type of which was a tree on the roadside between Hatfield and Hertford. This has since been destroyed in converting the road into a dual carriageway. Dr. Melville gave me great assistance with the genus in the early years of my work on the flora but I found it impossible to study the distribution of the various species on a tetrad basis.

Still more recently R. H. Richens embarked upon an independent biometric survey of the elms of Eastern England. He considers that there are a few species which are very variable but which can be divided into 'biometrically defined groups'. He thinks that hybrids in elms are rare. Richens collected a large number of Hertfordshire elms in the field and in 'Studies on Ulmus. III. The Village Elms of Hertfordshire' Forestry, 32, No. 2, 1959, he described seven groups in **U. carpiniifolia** and two groups in **U. procera**. He considered **U. glabra** also to be present and that there was one putative hybrid of **U. glabra** and **U. carpiniifolia**.

Elms are found generally throughout the county and are more frequent in the east on the Boulder Clay than elsewhere. **U. procera** is the most common species except near the Essex border where it is replaced by **U. carpiniifolia**. I regret that I did not make sufficient field records to be able to present satisfactory distribution maps of any species.

Extract from

Dony, John G., *Flora of Hertfordshire* [1967], Hitchin Urban District Council