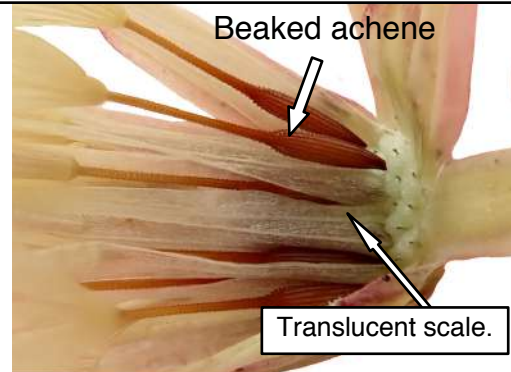
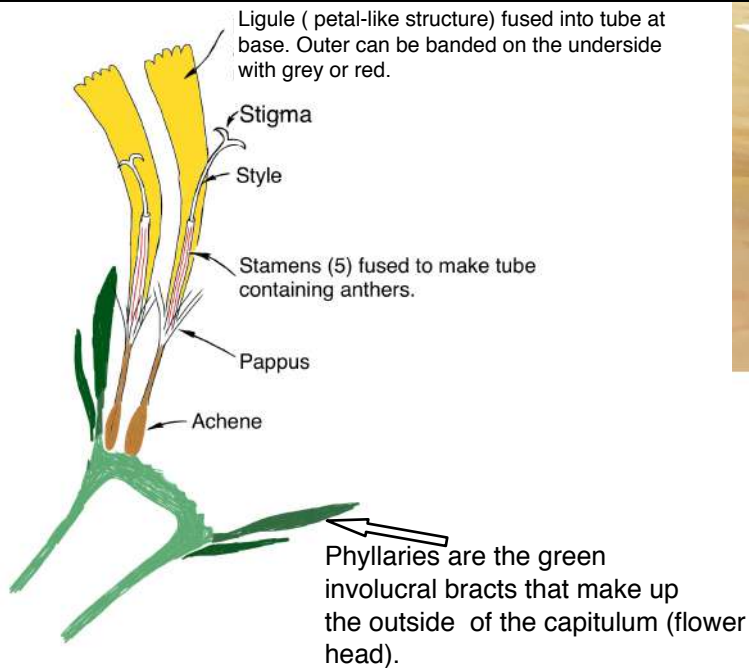


## Yellow Composites Cat's-ears + Hawkbits

## ID Key Features



Cat's-ears have achenes subtended by a scale which can be seen by cutting the capitula in half. Quite hard to see. This is the special feature of the three Cat's-ear species found in the UK. Backup feature if required.

### Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*

1) Pale centre line to phyllaries on most flowers heads.

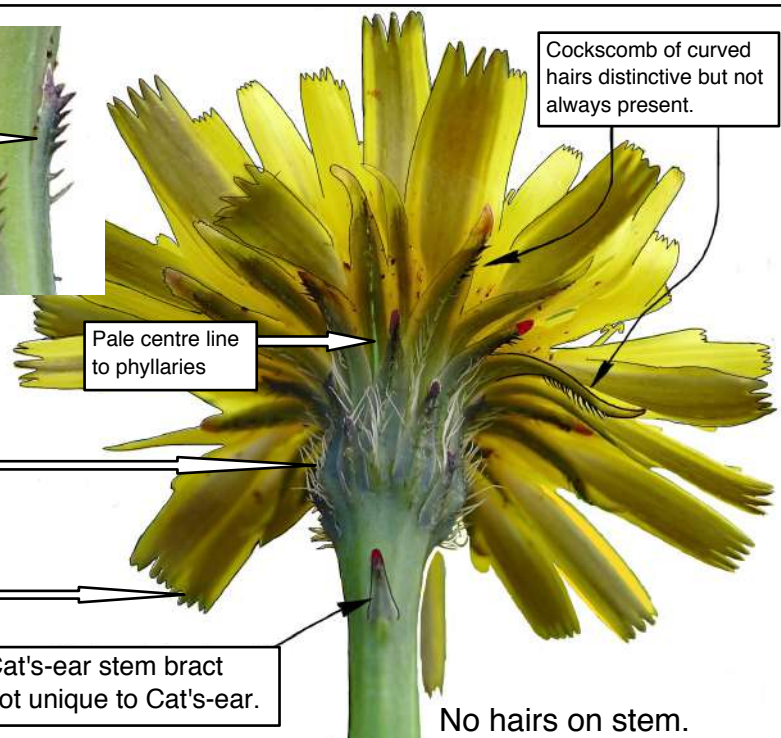
2) 'Cockscomb' at end of phyllaries on most flowers heads. Hairs thick, dark and often curved but can be reduced to short stumps.

3) Phyllaries tipped yellow on inner and either red / black on outer, on most flowers heads.

4) Phyllaries can have either white and/or black simple hairs OR no hairs.

5) Ligules protrude twice as far as phyllaries and outer are often banded with grey (or red).

6) Stem can thicken but usually has some distinct step at base of phyllaries.



Stems simple or branched



Beaked achene.



Cat's-ear is a good reference species to learn, noting its features are consistent but vary from plant to plant, e.g. 1), 2), 3) or 4) may be missing in any single flower head.

## Yellow Composites, Cat's-ear's + Hawkbits

## ID Key Features

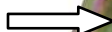
### Smooth Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris glabra*

Short ligule only just longer than phyllaries.

No 'Cockscomb'  
No grey banding.

Involucre a narrow shape.

Pale centre line to phyllaries



Simple or branched leafless stem

4) Achenes, outer can lack beak, or mixed.



Unbeaked achene



Beaked achene

No stem hairs like Cat's-ear.

- 1) Flowers often remain closed except in late morning sunshine. **Short ligules.**
- 2) Pale centre line like Cat's-ear, but phyllaries have no hairs and often have red edges.
- 3) Pale leaves often turn red, few hairs on margins. Some plants can be tiny.



### Hybrid *H. radicata* x *H. glabra* = *H. x intermedia*

Occurs where both parents are present and is intermediate between the two. Those half way between the parents are fairly easy to spot but back-crossed plants nearer to just one parent, more difficult. Compared to Smooth Cat's-ear, look for ligules slightly longer, phyllaries that have the slightest stubby cockscomb and leaves that are hairy.



### Spotted Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris maculata*

**Rare species, limited distribution**



Stem can have scale like bracts below flower head, occasionally 1-2 leaflets.  
Stems simple or branched

- 1) Paler ligules than either Cat's-ear, Smooth Cat's-ear or Hawkbits.
- 2) Hairy stem. Stem occasionally branched.
- 3) Narrow phyllaries. Black & white hairs.  
No pale centre line.
- 4) Leaves have dark purple spots which can be a distinctive feature, but **not** always.  
Hairy, simple hairs on both surfaces.



Purple spots/blotches



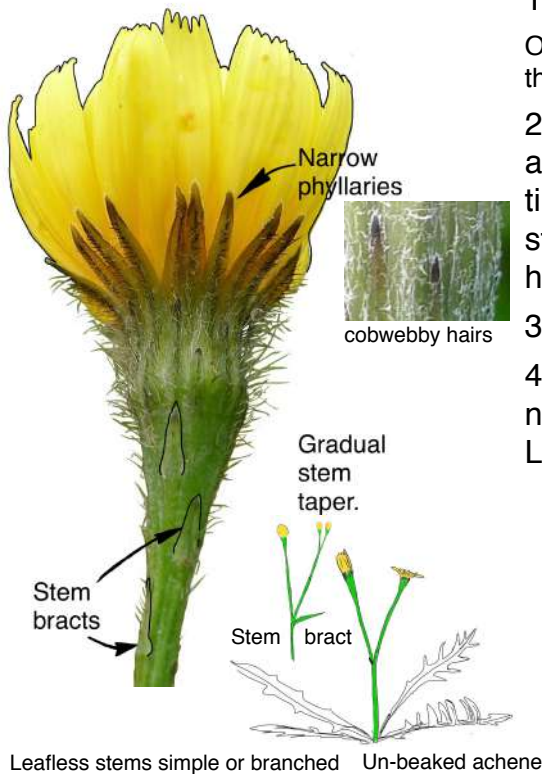
No purple spots



Beaked achenes - less beaked on inner achenes.



## Autumn Hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*



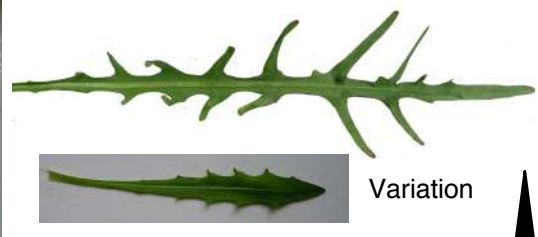
### 1) Very gradual taper from involucre to stem.

Other species like Rough and Lesser Hawkbit can also have a stem that thickens but not quite as smoothly as Autumn Hawkbit.

2) Phyllaries can have simple black and white long hairs as shown left, but some have no hairs. Most have some tiny cobwebby (arachnoid) hairs which also go down the stem. Cat's-ear & Rough and Lesser Hawkbits do not have cobwebby hairs.

3) Ligules can have red banding or none as shown left.

4) Leaf shape is very variable although many have the narrow extended tip and thin side lobes as shown. Leaves have simple white hairs on both sides.



Leafless stems simple or branched Un-beaked achene

**Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*** and **Lesser Hawkbit *L. saxatilis*** are a species pair that can hybridise and produce fertile backcrossing offspring. Most plants are straight forward to identify but those with strange features like 'hairless *hispidus*' are not easy. This means occasionally some plants are hard to identify with certainty.

The key feature in **both** of these species is the leaves (and to a lesser extent other parts), which have many hairs that have **split ends** ( into two or less often 3, even 4 ). (Bristly Oxtongue & Hawkweed Oxtongue have split hairs but these are hooked.)

A x10 or x15 lens is needed to see this feature.



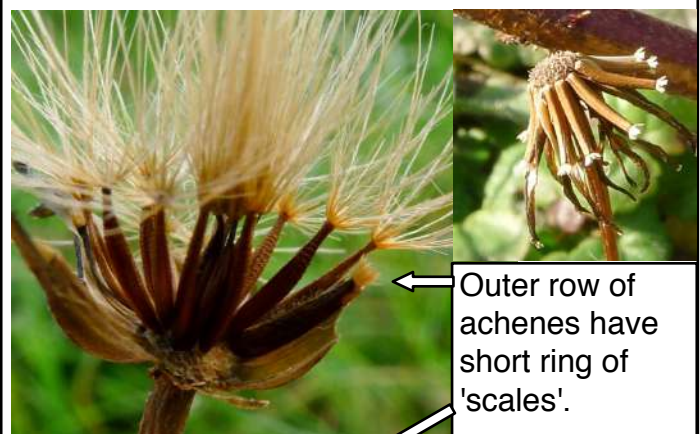
### Rough Hawkbit *L. hispidus*



Pappus hairs

All achenes have long pappus hairs.

### Lesser Hawkbit *L. saxatilis*



Outer row of achenes have short ring of 'scales'.



Key feature of Lesser Hawkbit

# Yellow Composites..... , Hawkbits continued.

## ID Key Features

### Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*

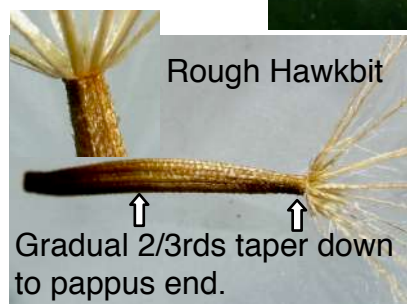
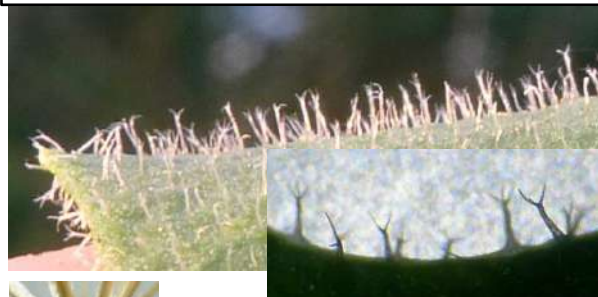
Outer phyllaries longest often reach 60-90% of inner length.

Normally very hairy, occasionally without.

Stems hairy

Often untidy head of ligules and with very hairy phyllaries that often are not adpressed. Inner phyllaries have brown edging that merges into the green centre.

Petal banding, none or grey to pale grey, red sometimes, is same for *L. saxatilis*.



Rough Hawkbit

Gradual 2/3rds taper down to pappus end.

Achene (with full pappus) shape is different but is not always as clear as shown in these examples.

Outer row with short scales on *L. saxatilis* does not show the semi-beaked shape.

### Lesser Hawkbit *Leontodon saxatilis*

Outer phyllaries, longest normally not over 50% of inner, generally shorter than *hispidus*

Inner phyllaries brown edging often distinct and makes clear line.

White hairs sometimes

Both with un-branched leafless stems.

Both basal leaves only.

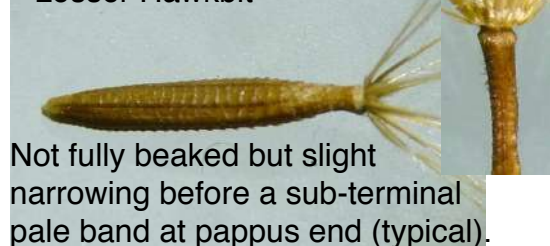


Flower smaller with outer phyllaries often adpressed (held tight) and although subtle, the dark brown edging to the tips of the inner phyllaries is often quite distinctive. Some flowers are not so clear with this feature. Many flowers have no hairs which is rare in *L. hispidus*, unless you are in Eastern Europe.



Wavy-edged to deeply lobed shape.

Lesser Hawkbit



Not fully beaked but slight narrowing before a sub-terminal pale band at pappus end (typical).

### Hybrid *Leontodon x vegetus*



The generally recognised feature for a hybrid plant is the outer achene has the short scales that would be present in a pure *L. saxatilis* but also some long pappus hairs as well. Hybrid plants can lack this mixed feature, showing that plants that look pure, are still of mixed parents.

'Concealed gene flow occurs both ways between these two species'. R.A Finch 1966

See Blogs on [cambridgewildflowers.blogspot](http://cambridgewildflowers.blogspot) for more detail, Section composites by Peter G.Leonard.

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