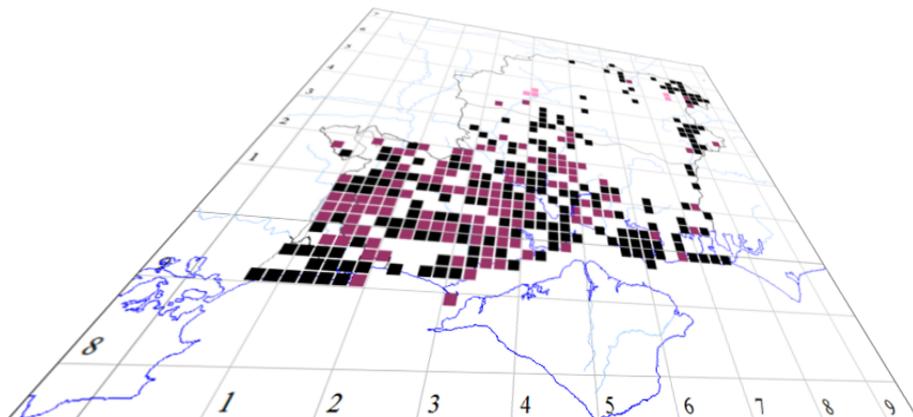# Conventions and Layout

The author of this handbook is pleased to have errors pointed out and to receive suggestions for improvement and other comments.

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vc11recorder@hantsplants.org.uk

The material in this book is graded as **Basic**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced**.

- **Basic** material is what all MapMate users need to know to be able to record, analyse and display data reliably, keep data safe and exchange it with other people.

- **Intermediate** material will open up more sophisticated facilities of MapMate, extending topics already covered and introducing new ones, and give you a basis for extracting MapMate data to use in other settings. In some cases it may require you to extend your technical computer knowledge.

- **Advanced** material will allow you to extend the capabilities of MapMate, often making high demands on your computer skills.

If a chapter includes at least some Basic material, it will have a heading in a blue banner – like this one. Chapters with no Basic material but at least some Intermediate have a yellow banner, and entirely Advanced chapters a red one.

Individual topics in the chapter that are at a more advanced level, and can be skipped on a first reading, will have a coloured tab as a topic sidebar:-

An Intermediate topic

will have a yellow tab.

An Advanced topic

will have a red tab.

The main text body of the chapters from Chapter 3 onwards is mostly concerned with the nuts and bolts of using MapMate, along with some usage hints, and I hope you will be encouraged to experiment as you read along.

I do not normally suggest that you do anything risky for your data; when I do, or if there is some element of MapMate with intrinsic pitfalls, there will be a sign in the margin like this.

The literal wording of anything you are meant to type, or select, or otherwise interact with on the screen is shown **bold in a different typeface, like this**. Other literal text that you can expect to see on the screen is in a similar typeface, but dark grey, like this.

Topics and techniques are introduced progressively through the chapters; so if you are a newcomer to MapMate, on a first reading you are recommended to go through all the Basic material at least.

MapMate refers to the details of a single Taxon recorded during one recording episode as a 'Record'. In general parlance, any instance of a set of uniquely identified data that goes into a database is often called a 'record'. To make it clear what I am talking about, I use the capitalised form for the first meaning and the lower-case form for the second, as in this

paragraph. Indeed, whenever I use the a term like Site for an entity that is part of the MapMate database,with its own meaning, rather than in a more general sense, I will capitalise it.

At various points in the text I refer to the "left" and "right" mouse buttons. This is on the assumption that you use a mouse with its buttons conventionally assigned. If (like me) you are left-handed, you may have switched the button assignments round. In that case, you will need to make a mental switch back.

> **Sideboxes**
>
> From time to time there are discussions of concepts, best practice, or 'under the bonnet' features of MapMate, that you need to take into account so as to organise and use your data most effectively. When these are more than a sentence or two, they appear in boxes like this, marked out from the main flow of the text. They are at the grading level of the topic where they appear, and should be considered essential reading at that level.

At the end of some chapters you will find suggestions for more extended exercises. If you choose to follow these to the letter with the materials provided, we recommend that you carry them out using the Training data set that accompanies this book. This will keep your experiments separate from your real data. Chapters 1 and 2 explain how to install and make use of this data set.