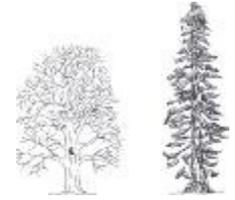


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AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2011

Issue 7

The UK has more ancient trees than the rest of North Western Europe. They are found in mediaeval forests, parklands, hedgerows or old boundaries, church yards, orchards and riverbanks.

News:

We have recently taken on James Brown as an apprentice, he is working with us full time and studying at Bicton on a block release scheme. He is keen and enthusiastic and we are very pleased to have him.

We are carrying out trials at the moment to try and identify the best way of composting woodchip. We have added various treatments such as Ammonium sulphamate, Lime and mycorrhiza to see what affect they have, we are hoping one of these treatments will speed up the composting process so that we have a rich dark mulch sooner ready for use in the garden. There has been research going on showing that

trees benefit from having a layer of mulch out to the drip line of the canopy about 8cm deep but kept away from directly touching the trunk. This can also mean being less tidy about sweeping up leaves—an important source of nutrients and winter protection for beneficial organisms.



Ancient Trees:

There are various categories of old trees: Ancient, Veteran, Heritage, Champion and Notable.

Ancient trees generally have small crowns and very wide trunks, often hollow, in comparison to trees of the same species. The decaying wood is a very important habitat, taking several hundred years to create.

A Veteran tree has developed some similar features to an Ancient tree but not necessarily due to time.

A heritage tree is one that has special connections for some reason such as historical interest or landmarks.

A champion tree is one that is the tallest or has the largest girth in the UK.

A notable tree does not have obvious veteran characteristics but may be notable because it is significant in the locality.

There are plenty of Ancient trees to see in

Devon including Yews in the churchyards of Payhembury and Farway, some amazing Oaks at Escott. There are champion trees at Bicton Park and Heritage trees in East Budleigh and Salcombe Regis more information can be found at 'East Devon Great Tree Hunt'.

Oak at Escott where reputedly Coleridge sat and wrote a poem.



Habitat

Ancient trees support a wide range of species including lichens, insects, fungi, birds and mammals



The medieval Deer Park at Castle Drogo

how those little trees have grown. Jim Furze, Head of Horticulture at the time, planted the young trees in between the mature trees around 1980 so that the avenue would continue as the older trees declined. Already a couple have had to be removed.



The Monkey Puzzle Avenue at Bicton College are heritage trees planted in 1843. There is also a Champion tree amongst them which has a girth of 4m and is 26m tall.

You may have seen Channel 4's Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall climbing one of



these trees to collect the nuts. He isn't the only one to have climbed them — I removed the dead wood back in the mid '80's. The photo taken just after is on the left. It is interesting to see



Above is the Ancient Yew tree at Farway Church on a rather misty day. We recently replaced the old chain cabling the stems together with a new cable. It is noticeable that the crown is re-trenching and the lower crown is looking thick and healthy. I hope you manage to find some of these amazing trees. Do let us know what you think or if there are any near you.

Next Issue:

Pruning techniques.