

Small Woodland Owners' Group

www.swog.org.uk

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September 2009

Rowan Jelly – by Henrietta

I have just made some Rowan jelly for the first time. I used half Rowan berries and half crab apples. The jelly has quite a strong taste, which I liked, but it isn't to everyone's taste. If you don't want it too strong, I would advise using one quarter Rowan to three quarter crab apples. If you don't have crab apples you could try cooking apples, although I don't know what the result would be. The pectin in the apples is what helps it set. I stewed the berries and halved apples with just enough water to cover, to a pulp and pressed through a sieve. I then poured it through a jelly bag. You then measure the liquid, adding one pound of sugar to each pint of liquid. Bring the liquid back to the boil and add sugar. Bring it back to the boil, stirring often. Boil till it reaches setting point. I'm sure you could use a thermometer, but I use the saucer method. Put a spoonful on a plate, wait till it cools and then just push your finger through it. If it crinkles up well it is set. Put into warmed jars.



Bentley Wood Fair

The Weald woodfair runs from the 18th – 20th September and SWOG has its own tent this year. If anyone would like to bring a small amount of your creations to sell, please get in touch.

You are responsible for getting your items to the tent whichever day you wish, and taking home what does not sell by the Sunday night. I will keep track of your earnings! You might also like to make a small sign about your items.

Anyone else like to donate homemade food to share? Please bring it along – be especially good to share food made from your woods (honey, nettle tea, nettle biscuits, silver birch wine etc.)



Events South East

Fungi ID walk

Sunday 27th September
Woodland near Northiam
(Small charge)

Bentley Woodfair

Email Tracy with your postal address if you would like more information and a discount voucher.
18th – 20th Sept.

Woodfuel workshop

Forest Research and RRSP
1 October
WEC, Flimwell.

An opportunity to discuss woodland owner's needs for entering woodfuel market.

See here for more:

www.swog.org.uk/events/wood-fuel-seminar-forest-research

WoodlandsTV.co.uk

Planting a tree
The edge effect
Felling a tree

Woodfuel workshop at the woodfair, 18th September

www.swog.org.uk/events/woodfuel-workshop-at-the-weald-woodfair

North and Wales meetings

Please let me know if you would like to come along to the meetings in Wetherby and Cheshire so that I can plan accordingly!

Red Squirrel count – help needed

The Mid Wales Red Squirrel Project, via a CCW Species Challenge Fund (SCF) grant, undertook a survey of the Mid Wales forests to investigate the presence and genetic make-up of the red squirrel population that is known to exist there. The ultimate aim is to influence the management of these forests to ensure the continued survival of this declining native species in these woodlands. Causes of red squirrel decline have been previously studied and it is thought that there are three main causes: habitat loss, disease and competition. The negative effect of the non-native grey squirrel has been well documented.

www.wwbic.org.uk/redsquirrelproject

Bog clearing question from Steve.

We have a small bog in our Mid-Wales wood, apparently 3-5 ft deep, without a visible water source that sits in a disused quarry, with a mound running down one side of it (perhaps an old mine shaft?). The water level rises and falls with the rainfall. We have opened up this area to the light. We removed part of an old willow that was slunk across the pond and creeping across the quarry itself. The impact on insects and birds was almost immediate. The area around the bog is buzzing. Plenty tadpoles (no newts sighted).

Despite quite a lot of contemplation about whether to step inside this bog and clear out some of the decades of leaf deposit that has built up within it, we are thinking of having a go, assuming this might provide the habitat with a more stable water supply.

If you feel strongly that we should NOT do this, we'd be interested to know why?

Otherwise, besides taking good care to rope up etc., what about the gasses that I have already smelled? Are they dangerous? Should one wear a mask, and if so, what kind?

Thanks.

Post comments on the forum please:

www.swog.org.uk/forum/topic.php?id=352

Events Wales & Shropshire

SWOG meetings

10th Oct Weatherby, Near York
Main topic 'Ponds'

Location:

www.carlshead.co.uk

14th Nov, Delamere Forest Park,
Cheshire

www.forestry.gov.uk/delamereforestpark

Topic to be decided, possibly
'Managing woodland for
diversity'

Wide choice of courses

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

National moth night

[www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/
index.php?option=com_content&view=
article&id=88&Itemid=999](http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=999)

Coppice courses in Pembrokeshire

www.coppicewoodcollege.co.uk

Woodlands.co.uk blogs

Healing through woodlands

Community woods projects

Blisters

Riparian rights

And much, much more!

www.woodlands.co.uk/blog

More information on events
needed, please contact Tracy if
you know of any!



Weeds in the wood: By David

My wood borders farmland and by the boundary, the bright yellow flowers of a ragwort bloom. Ragwort, fatal to livestock, is one of the five injurious weeds listed in the Weeds Act 1959. The five species of weed are:-

Ragwort, (*senecio jacobaea*)
Broad leaved dock, (*Rumex obtusifoliosus*)
Curled dock, (*Rumex crispus*)
Creeping field thistle, (*Cirsium arvense*)
Spear thistle, (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Photos of these plants are on the website:
www.swog.org.uk/articles/weeds-in-the-wood-by-david

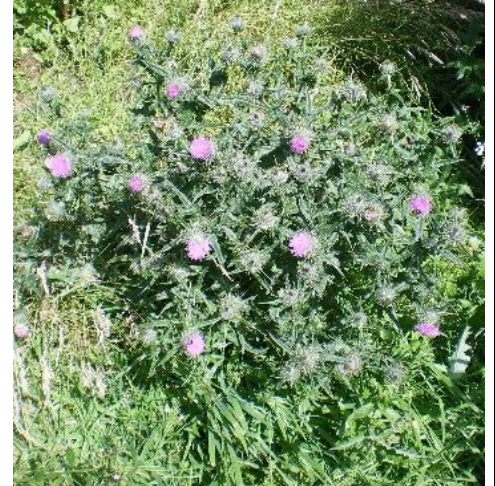
(The Government Minister for DEFRA does have the power to include other weeds – none yet to date.)

The Act, enforced by Natural England, allows a notice to be served requiring land occupiers to prevent the weeds from spreading, or else face prosecution for failing to comply with the notice. Natural England can also enter the land, do the job themselves, and bill the occupier.

Natural England takes action on individual complaints, preferring to resolve the issues with advice, regarding statutory notice service, land entry and prosecution as final resorts. Their guidelines state that if a land occupier has the weeds within 100m of agricultural/ horse grazing land, a letter will be sent to the occupier requesting weed control. This usually works and the complaint is closed.

Mowing controls the weeds; it is not selective and may be difficult around woodland margins. Regular seasonal cutting helps “wear down” the weeds. Manual up-rooting is easier with wet soil. Cut and up-rooted, weeds are best burnt as they still spread seed and can be eaten. Spot application of herbicide is very effective. Docks can be difficult to remove and a fence post spade, with its long thin blade, is excellent for digging them out.

The Act is sometimes known as the “dangerous weeds act” and does anyone still rub a nettle sting with a dock leaf? Use stout leather gauntlets to protect the hands and please regard the instructions for herbicide use.



Spear thistle

Events North SWOG meeting

10th Oct Weatherby, Near York
Main topic 'Ponds'

Location:

<http://www.carlshead.co.uk>

14th Nov, Delamere Forest Park,
Cheshire

www.forestry.gov.uk/delamereforestpark

Topic to be decided, possibly
'Managing woodland for
diversity'

Basic Tree inspection
25th Sept, Ripon

<http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/events/landskills-basic-tree-inspection>

Arbiculture and bats
Worcestershire, Cambridge

http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/arbiculture_and_bats.html



Recording your bank or ditch - by David

Delving into the history hidden in your woodland

It may well be marked on a 1:25000 Explorer map, so its position could be very easy to plot. But it may not be complete – there could be gaps in it where vehicle access has been bulldozed through, or where old trackways crossed it. You may also wish to plot the position of important trees situated on the bank. I'm going to assume you don't have access to a GPS (they're not very accurate, anyway – even the better ones), and you'll need to mark the position of gaps or end points on your map. This is quickest done by pacing– and it's surprisingly accurate. First of all, how long is your pace? Use a measuring tape and work out what an average stride is. Then all you have to do is pace the position of the gap from the nearest identifiable feature on the map. You can either invent your own set of symbols and do a key to identify them, or use a simplified set which are commonly used by archaeologists (from Oliver Rackham's book 'Ancient Woodlands')



If the bank is not marked on a map your task is a little harder, but very rewarding, as you're adding to our store of knowledge by plotting it. As well as pacing it, you will probably need to use a compass in order to get its direction. If it's sinuous just do small bits at a time. I always work from one end and continue to the other. Once you get to the other end what meets on the ground usually doesn't meet on your map, so a little re-adjustment to your drawing may be necessary.



When you've finished drawing its position on your map, your next job is to record its section (what it looks like if you cut through it). This will vary along its length so you have to make a decision about where you do your section (or several sections), and mark that position on the map as well. As I'm usually on my own I set up a string across the feature and then get it level by sight. I can then measure down from the string to whichever points I think are important and how far along the string they are. Once you draw the measurements onto squared paper the profile of the bank just appears!

In addition to measuring the bank, an important part of your record is a photograph – or two. Another advantage of a photo is you'll look back in 5 or 10 years' time and say 'Did it really look like that?'

Interpretation

Now that you've recognised the feature, it's worth starting to think about how it fits into the culture of earlier times when woodlands were far more valuable than they are today. Why were woodbanks and ditches built and how long have they lasted? I'll go into this in greater detail when we start looking at documentary evidence.

Other more common features we'll be looking at in the future are charcoal burners' platforms and other flattened areas, sawpits, trackways,

Small Woodland Owners' Group



“A wood that pays is a wood that stays”

Learning to balance environmental, social and economic yields with Ben Law at the Sustainability Centre.
By Raina Jones



Sometimes, as Course Administrator for the Sustainability Centre, I get a little envious of our course participants. I spend a good part of my year arranging courses with our tutors, booking trips, writing up course details, sorting out equipment and lunches and telling people about the exciting things that have been set up.

So when I got the chance to do the Open College Network Sustainable Woodland Management level 3 course (accredited through the Green Wood Centre) last March I grabbed it as quickly as I could! Having completed my degree in Countryside Management over 5 years ago it was a good opportunity to get out from behind the desk, brush up on my knowledge and get some practical experience.

The course was tutored by Ben Law who, as I expect you already know, is a household name in permaculture and woodland circles and beyond since building his beautiful house on Grand Designs a few years ago. Having chatted to Ben many times both in person and on the phone I expected him to be the insightful and approachable teacher that he indeed was. His intimate knowledge of his own woodland and obvious dedication to it made the absorption of the information he was imparting occur pretty much on its own accord!

On the course with me there were people who'd invested in a piece of woodland and were using the course to work out the best way to manage it, a small group who were busy learning skills for a career in woodland

management, a few who were working towards setting up their own business in the sector and a couple of others who came because the topic interested them. It was useful and interesting sharing experiences between us; I think we all found a couple of the lads' extensive passion for and knowledge about mushroom growing quite infectious!

In Ben's woods we observed and learnt about woodland indicator species, the uses of chestnut, tree selection, the best and tastiest way to manage squirrel, and much more! The myriad of yields Ben gleans from his fairly small wood was extremely inspirational.

When we returned to the somewhat under-managed wood at the Sustainability Centre Ben got our brains working hard thinking of possible ways it could be managed sustainably, not only in terms of ecological value but also, very importantly, social and economic value too. “A wood that pays is a wood that stays” goes the old adage. The contrast between the two woodlands was a very useful learning tool. We got to see the potential for and outcomes of different management techniques and to consider how the varied demands on the two woodlands would lead us to different management decisions.

Then, of course, there was the fun part – the practical aspect of the course. We all tried our hand at coppicing, cleaving, weaving, turning, faggot-bundling and charcoal burning as well as seeing the sawmill in action. Most people tried out a new skill during this part of the course and I for one really enjoyed it. What's more we all got a mushroom log we'd prepared to take home from Ben!

In fact I found the whole course enjoyable and I learnt a lot of useful things. But you needn't take my word for it. As the March course was so popular we are running the course again from the 9th to the 13th November this year. Please contact me, Raina on 01730 823 166 or courses@sustainability-centre.org for more details about it and to book a place.

Small Woodland



Owners' Group

Working for Yorkshire's woodlands

Established in 1998 Yorwoods is a not-for-profit public and private sector-backed initiative that provides support services to the forestry industry in Yorkshire. It has run a variety of projects throughout the region, helping forestry and timber businesses to write or implement management and business plans, advising rural businesses about accessing funding and providing training opportunities to woodland owners, managers and forestry contractors. Yorwoods is part of Rural Development Initiatives, a full-service project management company with a focus upon the many industries that go to make up the UK rural economy and, at a time when security and diversity of the UK's energy supply is being reviewed, has developed the award-winning Ignite Woodfuel Training Course to help further the precept of a low-carbon economy. Yorwoods is responsible for the West Yorkshire Working Woodlands (WYWW) Project, part of the Green Infrastructure Programme being delivered by partners of the White Rose Forest, through funding from Yorkshire Forward. The Green Infrastructure Programme aims to demonstrate the benefits of enhancing green spaces and as part of this WYWW is advising upon and helping to develop management plans for council and privately-owned woodland in West Yorkshire. The project is also helping to identify economic opportunities, especially for woodfuel, facilitate the implementation of woodfuel supply where appropriate and organise a range of training opportunities. Advisory visits to help small woodland owners in West Yorkshire implement or improve management plans are free.

Woodlands are increasingly being recognised as an essential part of the county's green space and for the potential economic benefits they can bring.



The ups and downs of the domestic timber industry over the past twenty five years means that many West Yorkshire woodlands have been undermanaged or neglected, which has affected the quality of growing timber but the project manager, Ben Scotting, says, "There is currently a rapid growth of interest and take-up of woodfuel, whether this is for traditional wood-burning stoves or for modern boilers fed by woodchips or pellets. Issues of grading for structural strength are unimportant in the woodfuel market therefore there is potential for timber from all woodlands to be successfully used or sold."

Yorwoods has also recently secured £100,000 for the LandSkills project, over a three-year period this will provide bespoke training to the forestry sector in Yorkshire; training that will be provided subject to industry demand and requirements. Carrick Armer, who is responsible for the LandSkills project says, "This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone involved in the forestry and woodlands sector to expand their skills base. If you've been thinking of training, whether in a technical area like forest machine operations or mobile sawmilling, a practical area like woodfuels, orchard management or coppicing, or even management in the form of marketing, grants and licences, we can arrange and help fund that training to help you to improve your business."

Yorwoods are contactable on 01765 609355 or visit their website at www.yorwoods.org.uk



News from the woods

Woodtroll has made a chainsaw rig.



To find out more about how and why he made it, visit the website:

www.swog.org.uk/articles/chainsaw-rig-by-woodtroll

He also made a compost corral.



David found this barn owl having a snooze!



Coppice .co.uk
your coppicing resource!

The forum is slowly building momentum; don't forget to use the coppice site for more information on products and cultivation. I am working on a page on Ash coppice, all input welcome!

Family Forestry photography

www.familyforestry.co.uk

Calling all family photographers-
Earn money from your wood!

Here at Woodlands co.uk we need pictures to illustrate "Family Forestry". We need these pictures to show the range of things owners and their families enjoy in their woods. The pictures we use must imply "family". It should ideally include more than one person – people of two different generations, for instance, or a man and a woman, or just children.

The activities could include a whole range of obviously forestry work, e.g. clearing, using a bow saw or a chain saw, stacking cut poles, chopping firewood, clearing bracken or undergrowth, planting, weeding young trees, erecting deer fencing, sharpening a saw, mending gates or digging ditches. Or they could include activities appreciating or encouraging nature and bird-watching, studying a fungus or a moss, photographing wild flowers, investigating a hole in the ground, handling a frog. It must be clear in the photo what they are doing!

And they could certainly include having fun: picnics, camp fires, swings, cooking, climbing, playing.

We are ready to pay £10 each for any photos we use in our publicity. And we would like to use lots!

Be sure no one in the picture objects, and send your photos (reduced to under 100kb in the first instance, please, and not more than six per e-mail) to margaret@dulwich.co.uk. All pictures received will be acknowledged. No person or place will be identified.

All pictures used in any way will be paid for.



Courses and information

Introduction to Woodland Management Flimwell, East Sussex

Friday 6th November 2009 10.00 – 4.30

The course will provide you with knowledge and skills to help you identify what you have in your woodland and how you would like to manage it.

Coppice Products – Generating income from coppice woodland

Thursday 19 November 2009 10.00 – 4.30

Learn about the uses of different coppice trees for fencing, charcoal, crafts, logs, construction etc; and learn how to harvest, store, market and sell your wood.

These courses are funded by the LandSkills South East Programme, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). If you work in farming, forestry or production horticulture in the South East you may be eligible for the subsidised course fee. For more information about the eligibility criteria please contact us on 01424 775615.

Course tutor: Tim Saunders, Rother Forestry

Tim has a wide range of experience in the harvesting, storage and marketing of coppice and woodland products in the South East. Places are limited to 12. Advanced booking essential.

Cost: £80. Subsidised cost £24.

Venue: Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex, TN5 7PR

To book a place contact Plumpton College at Netherfield tel 01424 775615

For more information

www.swog.org.uk/events/introduction-to-woodland-management-courses-by-ruth

Courses

WoodNet, East Sussex

www.woodnet.co.uk

Malvern Coppicing, Worcestershire

www.malverncoppicing.co.uk

BTCV

Countrywide

www.btcv.org.uk

Greenwood Centre

Coalbrookdale

www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk

Wildlife photography

Near Crawley

www.davidplummerimages.co.uk

Woodland Skills Centre, Wales

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Centre for Alternative Technology

Machynlleth

www.cat.org.uk

Small woods association

www.smallwoods.org.uk

facebook

The Small Woodland Owners Group (SWOG) is also on facebook. Come and join us, post photos and videos and share with others. You can also become a swog blog fan and receive feed from the site when new articles go up.

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523

Small Woodland



Owners' Group

Coppice courses

Worcestershire – by Phil

My September course is now fully subscribed. I still have a few places available on my course on 24th-25th October and I am now taking bookings for my course on 14th-15th November.

The coppicing courses I run are an introduction to coppicing for people who have no experience of coppicing or for volunteers and others who have a little experience but would like to gain more knowledge. They are ideal for woodland owners who have acquired woodland but have little practical knowledge of woodland management and coppicing.

The training course will include tree identification, usually by a trained arborist who is also the Malvern Hills coppice network apprentice. The benefits of coppicing, a walk through the wood to look at the differences between native deciduous woodland and conifer plantations. Coppice restoration, working methods, material selection and processing. Material storage and building workbreaks. All tools will be provided.

We have the use of the classroom at Ravenshill for some of the training; the vast majority of the training will be conducted outdoors in my woodland workshop.

My courses take place at Ravenshill Woodland Reserve, Alfrick, Worcestershire, which is a 50 acre privately owned nature reserve, which has a patchwork of diverse habitat including many indicator species of ancient semi-natural woodland. It has both deciduous and various conifer species.

The course is over two days, usually over a weekend. It costs £95 for the two days. A £20 deposit is required.

Camping is available in the wood for course participants at a cost of £6 per night per person.

My gift vouchers are an ideal present for Christmas, a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion and a way to give your friend or loved one the chance to spend time in the woodland and learn more about the traditional craft of coppicing.

Contact Phil pahoppy@btinternet.com

Centre for
Alternative
Technology



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www.cat.org.uk

Monday 2nd Nov – Friday 6th Nov

Coppicing: Managing woodland sustainably.

This course is a practical introduction to coppicing in local woodland. Learn the ancient skills of growing and harvesting coppice using traditional methods. The course covers felling coppice, sorting materials, planting and layering, sharpening and safe use of a billhook. You will learn principal tree species, recognise a variety of coppice products and understand work site organisation and method. This course will lead to accreditation at Level 3 with the Open College Network.

Sustainability centre, South Downs

September 12th Campcraft Wildfood Wildness!
September 13th Thinking about Sustainability
September 26th Campcraft Sleepover
October 3rd-18th Full Permaculture Design
October 4th Apple Pressing & Bottling
October 10th Herbal First Aid
October 24th-25th Practical Coppicing
October 31st-1st November Gate & Wattle Hurdles
November 8th Campcraft TWO for adults
November 9th-13th OCN Woodland Management with Ben Law
December 6th Festive Willow

If you need anymore information on any of these courses please contact Raina Jones at the Sustainability Centre, Droxford Road, East Meon, Petersfield, GU32 1HR, Tel: 01730 823 166 or see our website

www.sustainability-centre.org