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In the Newsletter this Month

Holiday-time for many doesn't seem to have reduced the flow of articles for the SWOG Newsletter this month. Although the August weather has not been ideal for camping, Rich has shared his experience of camping under tarpaulins—useful tips if we do get an Indian summer and feel like trying some lightweight camping.

Phil has brought us up to date on a very exciting project—the Malvern Community Forest. This is a bid to re-create as much as possible of the old Malvern Chase for the benefit of the community, while providing opportunities for individuals or companies to offset their carbon production.

We have shared our own experiences with creating ponds and damp habitats in our woodland for the benefit of dragonflies and damselflies and Mike Pepler has written a practical article on how to use a moisture meter to check firewood.

There are also a host of SWOG meetings coming up in the Autumn and Winter of 2010 and Spring of 2011—See Page 9.

Please do have a look and support these meetings if you possibly can. Meetings are coming up in Hampshire, Kent, West Sussex and Camarthenshire during 2010 and a

meeting will be held in North Warwickshire in May 2011.

Guidance has also been issued regarding the planting of larch in Wales, following the outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum*. There is also some guidance and advice regarding Great Spruce Bark Beetle in the North East of England, and new guidance on management of deer. The British Trust for Ornithology has provided some advice on how to minimize the impact of *Trichomonas*, a disease affecting British finches that has led to a dramatic fall in the numbers of greenfinch in the last year.

There are a number of forthcoming woodfairs and forestry events, and also an updated course directory and notifications of courses around the UK.

This is now the fourth month of the newsletter in this new format: Please do let us know what you think! If you would like to write for the newsletter, then please get in touch with me—anything that features your own experiences in your wood will be really welcome.

Sarah Walters
sarah@swog.org.uk

Tarp Camping



Richard Hare describes his experience of minimalist camping using just a tarpaulin in the woods and elsewhere.

I suppose I should admit to being a bit of serial camper. I'm not really sure why this should be? When I think back I have had some fairly bleak and miserable nights under canvas, and one particularly uncomfortable night

under a picnic table when I discovered that I had forgotten my tent! In this article I will give a quick review of the styles of camping I have enjoyed and endured, then tell you why I think Tarp camping is so great and particularly suited for use in woodland.

Although camping was usually the default family holiday which had to be suffered, once I gained



a bit more independence I realised it was just that, independence. As long as I could carry my stuff around, usually on a bike, I could come and go as I pleased. I bought 4 huge pannier bags, and even a trailer, but soon discovered that with such a large carrying capacity, the temptation was to take more and more gear. The camping was great, but the bit in between became quite laborious and much less fun.

In an effort to simplify matters I junked the bike and threw everything into a backpack, (well squeezed it all in). I still had an enormous tent and heavy stove, pots and pans... For my first walk I headed for the South Downs, it lasted 2 days and I covered a cringingly embarrassing total of 11 miles. This was still no good, I started reading about ultralight backpackers in the United States, who headed out into the wilderness with just some dehydrated food and a small piece of material weighing a few ounces called a Tarp.

These Tarps are very cheap to buy, but are also very easy to make. I made about half a dozen of them before I settled on a design I liked. You can taper them to save even more weight, put funny little 'beaks' on them to give a bit more cover, I even made one where my feet stuck out the bottom as I figured I didn't need the bottom half as I had got myself one of those waterproof bivi bags to sleep in. But actually in essence you can just use a square piece of waterproof material with some tie outs or eyelets punched along the edges. I also discovered that it is not necessarily any colder or more uncomfortable than a tent. With much greater ventilation, condensation ceases to be the problem it is in an enclosed tent, you can adjust the pitching very easily to

account for wind conditions and you have much more room to spread out. Not only this, but I really enjoy being unhindered by the walls of a tent, much less claustrophobic, and I think it makes you feel a bit more 'at one' with nature, you will certainly get to see more wildlife.

Now when I camp, especially in woodland, a tarp is my preferred option. They do take a bit more care and practice to pitch, I find it useful to have the guys ready prepared also it's well worth taking the time to learn a few useful knots. They are not really recommended in very windy conditions, but usually a woodland will offer natural shelter from wind and rain. (Don't ever camp in a woodland in extreme wind, there is of course a risk



from falling trees). On hot sunny days pitch a tarp in the woodland and even sling a hammock underneath, you'll find it much cooler. If bugs are a problem, hang a mosquito net from the inside. Even in winter, the trees tend to retain any warmth around them so I will still choose a tarp in woodland over a tent exposed in a field somewhere.

Well now I notice that my camping habits seem to have come full circle. I took my 7 oz tarp and dehydrated food and walked with the ultra light backpackers through the mountain ranges of the Pacific Crest in the States. Now I have a heavy canvas tarp and cast iron cookware weighing more than my entire backpack, bike and bike trailer put together. As custodians of such a beautiful piece of ancient woodland here in East Sussex, there just doesn't seem to be the same urge to seek out those wild and wonderful places anymore. I'm just content to relax, observe and enjoy the one we are so privileged to look after here.

Woodheat seminars

These are *free* seminars for all of those interested in the business, environmental and cost issues surrounding heating with wood. They cover:

The Wood Fuel Resource – how much is available?

Modern day conversion of wood to heat

Woodfuel processing techniques

How you can benefit from Wood Fuel Standards

How to develop suitable business models

Dates are as follows

Buyers

Sept 6th, Guildford, Surrey

Oct 7th Newbury, Berks

Oct 14th Flimwell, E Sussex

Sellers

Sept 28th Lower Basildon, Berks

Oct 6th Lyndhurst Hants

Oct 12th, Ashford, Kent

Contact

Jeanette Hawkins,
Forestry Commission
jeanette.hawkins@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

See also

www.woodheatsolutions.eu

www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk

Further details are on:
<http://tinyurl.com/3a6pgdt>

Using a moisture meter to check firewood



Mike Pepler provides some sound and practical advice on how to check moisture content of firewood.

People tell you that wood needs to be seasoned before it is burned as fuel, but what does this actually mean?

When a tree is felled in winter, the moisture content of the wood will be over 50%, and even higher if it is felled in summer. By splitting the logs and/or cutting them to short lengths, you can accelerate the rate at which the wood will dry out. You can check how dry it is using a moisture meter. The picture above shows the spikes on the end of my moisture meter - you just jab these into the end of a log and it gives you a reading.

The reason the wood needs to have dried out is that when you put a log into a fire or stove, before it can burn all of the moisture must be driven off, and this uses some of the heat from the fire - so, the wetter the log, the less heat you get out. But there's another problem too - wet wood doesn't burn as cleanly, which is bad from the point of view of pollution, and also can deposit tar in the chimney, potentially creating a fire risk.

So how dry should your wood be before you burn it? This varies from one stove to another, but the moisture content should be 30% at most, and ideally should be 20%. How long it takes to get this dry de-

pends on how the wood is stored. Ideally it should be split as soon as possible, then stored off the ground in a place where air can circulate through it and the rain is kept off it. Drying to 30% should usually happen within a year, and 20% in two years, although in ideal conditions these times can be reduced.



Above is an example of how important it is to split logs. These two logs were both felled about two years ago, and have been freshly sawn from the centre of 2m lengths. The first one was split straight after felling, and the moisture content is just over 20%:

The second one has only just been split, and the moisture content is still over 40% (the meter only reads between 3 and 40%):

The good news is that a short split log like this dries out very quickly in the summer - I checked it again a week later and it had already dropped to about 30%, having been left in the sun.

In case you want one, I got my moisture meter at <http://donkeycow.co.uk/moisturemeter.html>

This has been adapted from an article on Mike's blog—see <http://peplers.blogspot.com/2010/08/using-moisture-meter-to-check-firewood.html>.

From Little Acorns—Malvern Community Forest by Phil Hopkinson

We had a vision, just over a year ago, of a community owned woodland which we thought could benefit the people of Malvern and the surrounding area in many different ways. And so **Malvern Community Forest** was born, with the intention of recreating - as much as possible - the ancient Malvern Chase an area of ancient forest which was administered from Hanley Castle, and which covered 13 parishes in south Worcestershire.

In days of old when knights were bold large forests surrounded Malvern . Royal hunting parties pursued deer through what was known as Malvern Chase, a woodland that had been declared a royal forest by William the Conqueror in the 11th century. It's a long time since a peasant was hanged for stealing the King's firewood.

The land would be a massive amenity and asset to

Malvern Community Forest—continued

the local people, a wildlife refuge from the urban environment and the intensely managed countryside.

Much of the original chase has now been developed over the years, but we intend to discover and acquire suitable tracts of land where it existed, where we can set up community woodlands of oak, ash, field maple and hazel for the benefit of local communities and encourage local landowners to plant trees on suitable land.

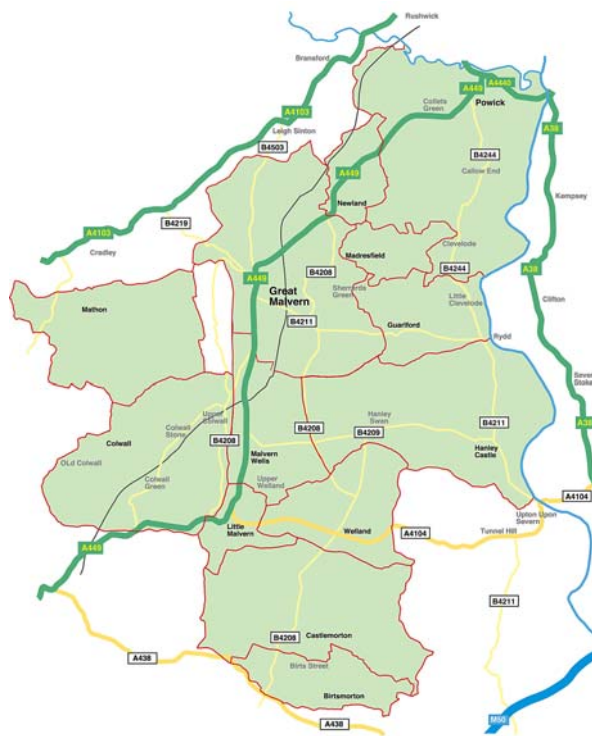
“Offering them, through full public access, with cycle tracks and facilities for the less able, space for leisure, quiet reflection, access to nature, and a place where young people can learn ‘hands on’ about the wildlife that such a natural habitat supports.”

In time, these woodlands will also become productive, offering, besides nuts and fruits, timber for building, furniture and garden products.

We have come quite a way since that early vision. We have formed a partnership with the Woodland Trust and are recognised and supported by Malvern Hills District Council, Worcestershire County Council, the Malvern Hills Conservators and others.

Some of our activities to date May 2009

Members visited Dorsington Farm Woods on the Worcestershire/Warwickshire border. These native, deciduous woods have been planted by Felix Dennis over the last 12 years. The visit included a guided tour led by the woodland manager Stephen Coffey,



who described the benefits of random planting and the benefits and drawbacks of organic planting and maintenance. The use of fruit trees and planting along the rides was particularly inspiring.

September 2009

Ian Rowat, Chief Executive of Malvern Hills Conservators, led a large group of MCF members and friends on a very enjoyable and informative tour of the Community Woodlands alongside Townsend Way. This area was planted about 15 years ago. It was agreed that this is one of Malvern's best kept secrets!

After the walk we all met up at The Swan Inn, Newlands for some very welcome refreshments including complementary sandwiches kindly provided by the landlord.

October 2009

A small group of members and friends spent the evening exploring the delights of Ravenshill Woodland Reserve in Alfrick followed by a 'sausage sizzle' around a cosy campfire. A great time was had by all!

Course Directory

Field Studies Council
<http://www.field-studies-council.org/>

The Wildlife Trusts
http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=events&search_month=6&search_year=2010

Institute of Chartered Foresters

<http://www.charteredforesters.org/default.asp?page=33>

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

For *BTCV Short Courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/536/level>

For *BTCV long courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/561/level>

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To download the short course brochure visit http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/CAT_Shortcourses_2010.pdf

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To download the short course brochure, please visit http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Programme_tcm9-245883.pdf

Low Impact Living Initiative

A course on small woodland management
http://www.lowimpact.org/course_outline_woodland_management.htm

Malvern Community Forest—Continued

December 2009

A nationwide initiative had been set up by the BBC to encourage people to plant trees as part of National Tree Week.

The BBC's Breathing Places 'Tree O'Clock' campaign was an attempt to

break the Guinness world record for the most trees planted in multiple locations in one hour (the current record stands at 653,143) and the Guinness world record for the most trees planted in a single location in one hour (the current record is 18,124).

MCF group plus 35 volunteers planted 300 hazel trees at Ravenshill Woodland Reserve, Alfrick in a recently coppiced area that had been damaged by deer. They were planted in just 28 minutes!

The BBC kindly provided freebies for the children and refreshments were gratefully received.

January 2010

We held a 'bird box building' event at Malvern Youth Centre. Keith and Linda Hall very kindly provided the bird box kits along with a quantity of tools. Everyone sprang into action and some enthusiastic youngsters made three or four boxes in record time!

Progress

We are in discussion with a major landowner to create woodlands on their land and we have identified other areas which could be enhanced by careful planting of trees. We have been approved by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs as having charitable status and can therefore reclaim tax through Gift Aid and have now started the process of becoming a registered charity, having reached the £5000 per annum threshold.

But nothing can be achieved without a suitable area of land, up to around 20 hec-



tares, and preferably to the east of Malvern which has been designated as Priority 1 for woodland creation by the Forestry Commission.

We have launched an appeal to raise £30,000 through pledges, donations, sponsorship and the chance to join our carbon offset scheme.

We all use energy, and hence produce carbon dioxide (CO₂); the national average for an individual's CO₂ emissions is 4.46 tonnes. As CO₂ is an important greenhouse gas, all of us need to reduce our carbon footprint to help prevent Climate Change. There are many ways that we can do this: for example a drastic reduction can be made by giving up flying. Using public transport more and making our homes more energy efficient also help.

But all these require effort and a commitment to a change in life-style that not everyone is willing to make. So it is good to know that another way exists that allows us not simply to reduce our carbon footprint but, should we choose, to cancel it out completely. It is called Carbon offsetting.

Malvern Community Forest's carbon offset scheme, will help to create local woodland for amenity, wildlife habitat and future timber resources, but also eliminate your carbon footprint completely. For, as they grow, trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air and build it into their trunks and branches. Our carbon offsetting scheme offers a genu-

Course Directory (continued)

Malvern Coppicing

Practical coppicing courses from SWOG member Phil Hopkinson.

<http://www.malverncoppicing.co.uk/coppicing%20courses.html>

Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events

RFS Divisional Events for September are listed on

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2010/09/01/month/all/all/1>

Small Woods Association

Run a wide range of woodland-related courses at their Greenwood Centre

<http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk/WoodlandCourses.htm>

Yorwoods

Run courses for foresters and woodland owners in the Yorkshire area

<http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/training>

Ben Law

Runs a wide range of woodland management and woodcraft courses in Sussex

<http://www.ben-law.co.uk/education.html>

**Are you running
an event or course
at your wood?
Please tell us about
it and we can ad-
vertise it here**

ine opportunity to reduce your carbon footprint, since we will ensure that, with the scheme's proceeds, only native hardwoods typically oak and ash, are planted, and that these trees harvested at maturity, will have the resultant timber used only for building construction and furniture manufacture, thus ensuring that the embodied carbon will remain locked up for perpetuity

Malvern Community Forest's carbon Offset scheme will be independently audited every year and we will publish the details on

where trees have been planted and how much woodland has been created.

But for now we are looking for companies or individuals to pledge to offset their carbon with us.

For more information visit our website www.malverncommunityforest.org.uk

Phil Hopkinson
Chairman Malvern Community Forest

Dragonflies, Damselflies and Ponds



Sarah Walters writes about her experience in developing wet habitats for the benefit of dragonflies and damselflies.

When we took ownership of our oak woodland 3 years ago, we had only one tiny and overgrown pond, remnants of a large and badly-designed pond that had silted up over the years. However we could see the potential for the development of other ponds on our site – there was a damp clearing with standing water in the winter and an impermeable clay layer underneath that made it ideal for development of new ponds. One particular priority was to develop the ponds to attract insects such as dragonflies and damselflies, and we tied the development as a whole in with the construction of a building, the building of gravel tracks, and the installation of drainage on the site.

According to advice from the Pond Conservation Trust, we modified our plans for one large pond, and instead created three smaller ponds that were linked together. The reason for this

is that multiple ponds will provide more varied habitats than a single pond, and thus attract more species. The British Dragonfly Society also recommends a variety of habitats: still and gently flowing water, and a mix of deep water (to protect larvae during winter and dry spells), gently sloping edges particularly at the north and west of the pond, a mixture of shallow and deep areas, and a mixture of shade and open sunshine. They also recommend a good variety of native plants: deep water plants, marginal plants, floating-leaf plants and emergent plants onto which the larvae can crawl to emerge as adults.

Ideally you should let ponds fill with rain-water or groundwater. We thought this would not be possible, but the high level of groundwater in our clearing meant that the ponds filled almost overnight, and we did not need to resort to tap water or rain water to fill them. It is also ideal to let the ponds self-colonise with plants, but this can take several years and you might not get a good mix straight away. We elected to purchase native local plants to start the process off and add to them by harvesting some of the plants in our small remaining pond. Over the years, each of our three ponds in the clearing has developed different characteristics, and although initially planted with the same mix, each now has different flora, and each has acquired other species from natural colonisation.

As well as creating new ponds, we were faced with the renovation of the existing badly-designed pond. This pond was severely shaded, and colonised by willow and grass, and about 85% silted up. It also did not have a proper bank and the overflow had killed two oak trees through waterlogging of the soil.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

Bushcraft Courses

A range of courses concentrating on skills to survive in the natural environment.

Fire and knife handling
11/12th September

Finding Water, Plant ID, Shelter Building and Back Country Cooking
25 & 26 September

Back Country Cooking
9 & 10 October

Long Bow Making Part 1
- 16 & 17 October, Part 2
- 20 & 21 November

Shelter Building, Tracking & Stalking
6 & 7 November

For further details please see <http://tinyurl.com/35oul5e>

Bodging Courses

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust also offer residential bodging courses at £60 per day, including camping.

For further details please see <http://tinyurl.com/33bk8ru>

Other wildlife walks and events—including fungus forays in September from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are on <http://tinyurl.com/2uz66cs>

Other Wildlife Trusts

All 47 UK Wildlife Trusts run events of potential interest to woodland owners, including craft events and practical workshops. For further details please see

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=events:autumn>

Dragonflies, Damselflies and Ponds—continued

We decided to split this pond into three linked ponds, fed by a ditch that flows with water between October and May, and linked by dams and channels to keep the water levels more constant. We cleared most of the willow, and thus provided sunny spaces on marginal plants and trees on which the dragonflies could perch. We re-profiled the edges to provide sloping sides, rather than the deep and steep sides that were there originally. We also dealt with the lower bank and outflow, and these new ponds are now stable, and provide a rich and varied environment for lots of wildlife including damselflies and dragonflies.



The work on the ponds took place during our first winter of ownership, and it was very clear by the following spring that dragonfly and damselfly numbers had increased significantly, and this process has continued this year, with a greater variety of species noted in the woodland.

What do dragonflies need?

Dragonflies hold their wings outstretched when at rest, and damselflies hold their wings folded along the line of their body. However both need certain things to thrive – we have tried to provide all these things.

- Water, not too deep, not too shallow – gently-flowing or still.
- Food for the larvae – healthy ponds with food for the carnivorous larvae are needed.
- Shelter from the wind, shallow water margins, mostly unshaded
- An abundance of aquatic plants – oxygenators, emergent plants for roosting, floating plants for egg-laying, emerging stems for larvae to develop into adults
- Sheltered sunny spots on which to perch.

The majority of the life of the dragonfly is spent as a larva or nymph underwater, hence the importance of ponds to these insects. Water needs to be shallow enough to heat up during the day, but not so shallow that it dries out or freezes – the BDS recommends between 0.5 and 1 metre at the deepest point for smaller ponds. There also need to be sloping sides and emerging plant stems. It is best if the pond is not contaminated by agricultural waste (natural or artificial fertilisers in particular), and you may need to liaise with the local farmers and Environment Agency to see where the water is coming from, and going to.

It is good to avoid having fish in the ponds, as they eat the larvae, and also wildfowl tend to pollute the water. If you have a pond in the wood-

lands, keep some areas unshaded, so that the water can warm up.

Small ponds will need maintenance to clear surplus vegetation, and remove silt: you will need to do this in winter, do it a little at a time rather than all at once, and leave the vegetation at the side of the pond to allow larvae to crawl back in. When restoring our existing pond we were careful only to dredge the parts that were necessary and avoided disturbing the remnant pond as much as possible.

Slow-flowing ditches are also useful habitat for some species. Ditches do need to be cleared, but if you can clear them only once every four years, the overgrown ditches are good habitat for the scarce emerald dragonfly and ruddy darter. If you want to dam or sluice your ditch to make a pond or prevent it drying out, you will need permission from the Environment Agency.

A lot of dragonfly species love to perch on trees, so a woodland pond or ditch is an ideal environment for these insects provided some open areas of water can also be provided for them.

For further information please see

[Pond Conservation Trust](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/)—<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/>

[British Dragonfly Society](http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/home.html)—<http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/home.html>

Photography Workshop

There are still a few places left on the photography workshop at Alvecote Wood on Sunday 5th September. £15 per person. Includes practical exercises on both artistic and technical aspects of photography, and will suit anybody with any type of camera. Please see <http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk/photowsflyer.pdf> for further details.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

There are a number of courses here of potential interest to woodland owners.

Charcoal-making workshop

Saturday 4th September

Scything Course

Saturday 11th September

Bird Identification Course

Saturday 25th September

Besom Brooms

Saturday 2nd October and Saturday 20th October

Twilight Willow-Weaving

Wednesday 13th October

Fungi with Diane Mears

Saturday 16th October and Saturday 23rd October

Rustic Stool Workshop

Saturday 16th October

Rustic Ladder-back Chair Workshop

Saturdays 16th and 23rd October

Basket-Making Workshop

Sunday 31st October and Saturday 4th December

Heating your Home with Wood

Sunday 7th November

Introduction to Green Woodworking

Saturday 7th November and Saturday 27th November

All events are listed at <http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/events/>

Or download pdf at <http://tinyurl.com/35fun5l>

Latest Guidance

Deer Guidance



Deer damage in woodlands, and in our newly-cut coppice and our newly-planted areas, can be a big problem whether the woodland you own is large or small. So what is the best way to deal with it?

The Deer initiative has some very helpful published guidance on deer management. The Deer initiative is a joint initiative with many partner organisations that include public sector organisations such as the Forestry Commission and DEFRA and charities such as the Woodland Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and the RSPCA.

Of particular interest to woodland owners is the advice on preparing deer management plans. The site carries advice on how to complete such a plan as well as an example of a completed plan and a template for you to complete. Forthcoming guidance is also expected on Woodland Impact Surveys, Woodland Design and Tree Protection.

For further information please see:

http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/html/best_practice.htm

Details of a workshop are on **page 10**

Larch in Wales – new guidance from Forestry Commission Wales

In the light of the first confirmed case of *Phytophthora ramorum* in larch in private woodland in Wales, the FC Wales have now issued new guidance to all those with current schemes that include plant-

ing or re-stocking with larch in Wales, together with those planning such schemes. Contract holders are strongly advised to change species where larch species are scheduled for planting.

FCW will continue to fund larch planting in approved contracts up to and including the 12/13 planting season. However, contract holders must bear the risk that if the crop fails due to *Phytophthora FCW* will reclaim grant. Beyond 12/13, FCW will no longer fund planting of larch in approved contracts. New BWW grants will not provide funding for planting of larch. The FC also has money put aside to help woodland owners affected by *P ramorum* in larch in Wales and SW England. For further information please see (put in URL here)

Forestry Commission North East – Great Spruce Bark Beetle

Full article: <http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/NEE-UPDATE-No-18.pdf>

Great spruce bark beetle (*Dendroctonus micans*) is a pest that has been present in England since 1982. Current control relies on identification of infected trees and the release of a natural pest, *Rhizophagus grandis*, a predatory beetle that, although it cannot eliminate *D micans*, can reduce populations by between 80 and 90%, reducing tree mortality to 1% or under. *D micans* affects all species of spruce, including Sitka and Norway spruce.

Symptoms may include dead or dying trees and browning of foliage. On the tree, resin tubes on the trunk or granular resin at the base of the tree are reliable signs of stem or root attack. Bark may be loose and show exposed beetle galleries. The bark may sound hollow when tapped, and removal of the bark may show signs of the beetle, including faeces and bark packed into a quilted island appearance by feeding larvae.

If you suspect a tree is affected, check the symptoms against the full detail on the Forest Research web site (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestresearch>). Take photographs of the tree or any resin

Reminder: Final months of Lantra funding for foresters in the South East

The land-based sector skills council, Lantra, has reminded foresters in the South East that the £2.1 million pot of money for training expires in March 2011.

LandSkills South East is part of the Rural Development Programme for England. It has provided a wide variety of courses including chainsaw training, courses on resource efficiency, wood fuel opportunities for charcoal and biomass, sustainable forestry practices, conservation management, effective marketing, and tree and woodland ecosystems.

For more information, contact LandSkills South East: 0845 278 8800; LandSkillsSE@lantra.co.uk or visit www.lantra.co.uk/LandSkills.

Reminder: Woodland Creation Grant Deadline 30th September

The Forestry Commission deadline for Woodland Creation Grants is approaching. Please see

http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry_nsf/byunique/infd-6dcegu

Latest guidance (continued)

tubes or galleries seen and send these along with a description of the crop, location of the woodland (including a six figure grid reference and your contact details to

ian.murgatroyd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Two half-day site-based information talks are planned in the North East of England. All interested in attending please email

lucy.phillips@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Trichomonas and declining population of Greenfinches

If you feed birds in your woodlands, or have a large population of greenfinches, then this is important news about the spread of a common pathogen, *Trichomonas*, to greenfinches, resulting in a fall in population of one third in one year.

Trichomonas gallinae, the cause of the disease, is a protozoan parasite (not a virus). It is a well known cause of disease in pigeons, doves and birds of prey. It was first recognised in British finches in 2005, most recently in greenfinches and chaffinches.

Trichomonosis outbreaks are most severe and frequent in the period of August to October. Sick birds are obvious, as they have a tendency to stay close to feeders and water sources, and often die there.

Trichomonosis spreads where the saliva of an infected individual comes into contact with that of non-infected bird. This could occur at garden feeding stations and at bird baths, so it is important to keep these as clean as possible.

If you see a bird in your garden that is fluffed up, lethargic and is perhaps drooling and having difficulty swallowing the BTO recommends that you empty your feeders and bird baths, disinfect them, allow them to air-dry, and then fill them again. Provide only a small amount of food so that old food does not accumulate and provide fresh water on a daily basis.

For further information, please see the British Trust for Ornithology web site:

http://www.bto.org/gbw/news/disease_outbreak.htm

Forthcoming SWOG Meetings

There are SWOG meetings planned all over the country in the coming months. Please do try and support these—we'd love to see as many SWOG members as possible come along to enjoy the networking and learning on offer and the beautiful woodlands in which they are held.

SWOG Meeting

Northdown Plantation, Hampshire

16th October

with author Julian Evans

Topics will include:

Coppicing neglected hazel

Thinning trees to help them grow

How to develop a glade

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-in-hampshire-16th-october-2010/>



New URL for Forest Research

A reminder that the URL for Forest Research (the research arm of the Forestry Commission) has changed to <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestresearch>

Courses at Moyleci Environment Centre

This centre in North Wales run courses of potential interest to woodland owners

Ferns: an introduction
Thursday 9th and Friday 10th September

Small mammal survey:
Friday 17th September

Practical blacksmithing:
Sunday taster sessions

Edible fungi identification: Thursday 23 and Friday 24th September

Wild Food and Foraging:
Sunday 26th September

Green Woodworking – an introduction: Weds 13th and Thursday 14th October

Phase 1 Habitat Survey: an introduction – Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th October

National Vegetation Classification survey: an introduction: Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th October

Introduction to Permaculture: Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th November

Hedgelaying: Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th December

For further details please see

<http://tinyurl.com/38r4d96>

Forthcoming SWOG Meetings—continued

SWOG Meeting, Edenbridge, Kent 17th October

Jonathan is organising a walk and talk through his lovely woodland near Tunbridge Wells. This 25 acre wood has an interesting history. The big question is how to manage the maturing pine trees economically without leaving an unsightly clearfell area as many are 50 years old and reaching maturity

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-near-edenbridge-kent/>

SWOG Meeting Camarthenshire 6th November



Malcom has invited SWOG members to his 42 acre woodland site bounded by a river and crossed by streams, that also features an old lead mine. He is looking forward to meeting other woodland folk, and discussing his BWW grant. Wellies are a must!

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-carmarthenshire-6th-november/>

SWOG Meeting Rusper, near Crawley 12th December

Have a walk with Sussex Wildlife Trust and



David Plummer in these gorgeous woodlands. Find out about SWL projects that are running with woodlands.co.uk community woodland scheme, and see the famous Scrag Copse owned by David Plummer and as seen on the One Show! Topics will include trees, winter tree ID and winter birds. (and even some soup!)

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-in-rusper-near-crawley/>

SWOG Meeting Alvecote Wood, North Warwickshire 8th May 2011

There will be a presentation by Alistair from the Sylva Foundation of the MyForest woodland management web site, together with a walk around Alvecote Wood (20 acres) at bluebell time to discuss the owners' experiences of managing ancient woodland for wildlife.

If you would like to attend any of these meetings please contact tracy@swog.org.uk

Deer Management Workshop

Tuesday 21st September, 9.30am – 1.00pm The Granary, Penstock Hall Farm, nr Ashford, Kent.

The Forestry Commission together with the Deer Initiative are organising a Deer management workshop for land owners and managers on September 21st. The event is a half day that includes a brief indoor session from Jamie Cordery of the Deer Initiative, followed by an

outdoor session looking at some of the practical aspects of how deer affect woodlands and how the damage they cause can be prevented.

Details of how to book a place can be downloaded from the SWOG web site on <http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/DeerWorkshop.pdf>

On the Blogs at woodlands.co.uk...

Citrus Longhorn Beetle

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/trees/citrus-longhorn-beetle/#more-2989>

The [Food and Environment Research Agency](#) and the [Scottish Government](#) are urging people to be vigilant. If you see a beetle that you suspect might be a **citrus longhorn beetle** then trap it if possible, and **report the finding to FERA** (Tel 01904 465625) or email : planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk .

Sitka Spruce

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/trees/sitka-spruce-surprises/#more-2905>

Roadside Works and Traffic Control



<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/roadside-works-and-traffic-control/#more-2736>

Very useful guidance on the processes you need to observe if carrying out work at the roadside.

Woodland Pedestrian Gates

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/woodland-pedestrian-gates-part-1/#more-2544>

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/woodland-pedestrian-gates-2/#more-3075>

Part 1: How to build your gate. Part 2: Hanging a gate



Threats to the Honeybee

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/plants-flowers/threats-to-the-honeybee/#more-3103>

Recent declines in bees, colony collapse disorder, aetiology and possible solutions.

Working for Biodiversity

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/plant-diseases-and-problems/working-for-biodiversity/#more-3070>

Clearing rhododendron in woodland owned by Gatwick Greenspace Partnership.

Finding and encouraging reptiles

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/finding-and-encouraging-reptiles-in-your-wood/#more-3235>

Deals with common reptiles you might find in your wood, as well as ways to encourage their presence: Wide rides, sunny open spaces, log-piles and other places to bask and plenty of insect-attracting plants

Bees Again

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/bees-again/>

More about bees, and how they find their food.

Dormouse Surveys in Aylesbury Vale—help requested

Dave Parsons, who runs the Oxfordshire Mammal Group has requested SWOG Members' help in securing access to woods in the Aylesbury Vale area for the National Dormouse Monitoring Scheme. He would initially conduct a number of 'nut-hunt' searches looking for hard-mast fruits showing evidence that dormice were present using volunteers from the Mammal Group. If positive evidence is found and if access allows, then he would hope to secure funding for boxes for long-term monitoring.

If anybody can help him to secure access to a number of wood-

lands in the Aylesbury Vale it would be greatly appreciated.

The woods he is interested in are

Doddershall Wood;

Tittershall Wood;

Gravenhill Wood;

Little Wood;

Grenvilles Wood;

and any similar around this area.

Please see the forum (<http://www.swog.org.uk/forum/topic.php?id=700>) for further details.

Newsletter - September 2010

About SWOG

The Small Woodland Owner's group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British Woodland. As Woodlands.co.uk is sponsoring the group there will be no annual fee for members, and events are free of charge unless otherwise stated.

Anyone can join in, (you do not need to own a woodland) just send Tracy your details (name, address, email) to be put on the list. We will not pass your information to anyone else.

Please do join with us and share your wealth of knowledge and experience with others, as well as your joys and moans. We have members from all over the country. We are also on facebook if you like to communicate that way! See

[www.facebook.com/
group.php?
gid=61487332523](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523)

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Small Woodland Owners' Group Forum

What have we been doing this month?

There is a lively discussion around forum **etiquette**: what are the "ground rules" for approaching the SWOG forum. **Rich** suggested "Be polite, disagree, but respect other people's rights to hold differing views" while **Adam** suggested "be liberal in what you accept, and conservative in what you send". How do we agree to disagree without upsetting each other? Do we want a load of rules—will this help or hinder discussion?

There have also been discussions around the topics of coppicing, pollarding and pleaching (if you don't know what pleaching is, look on the forum!)

Coppiceer joined us as a new member from Leicestershire, and was immediately offered a lot of advice in response to his question regarding warm gloves for coppicing work. Do you have any favourites? Let us know.

A long and at-times heated discussion

around humane and legal ways to dispatch **grey squirrels** has continued—needless to say there are a wide range of views on this topic! There has also been discussion regarding the membership and role of **Forestry Commission** personnel of the forum. Are postings from the FC helpful or not? What do you think?

How do we keep fungus off firewood stacks? Advice has been sought and offered about how to stack wood and keep humidity low so fungus does not develop.

Twybill has opened a discussion about trees you have planted and then wish you hadn't. Are invasive trees helpful in colonizing areas quickly, and producing a good crop? This one could run and run!

Rich has been trying to prune out spam "bots" from membership of the forum. If you have been accidentally pruned, then please let us know!

On the Web..

Latest videos at Woodlands.tv

Woodlands.tv has many videos on woodland-related activities, including practical demonstrations of woodland techniques.

"Hidden Danger"

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/85/hidden-danger>

A new video this month discusses hidden dangers from older trees in London.

From Woodfairs.co.uk

Woodfairs, forestry and country shows happening in the next couple of months are listed below; full details are all on the Woodfairs web site at www.woodfairs.co.uk

Wychwood Forest Fair

Witney, Oxfordshire
5th September 2010

Bentley Weald woodfair

Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, near Lewes, East Sussex
17th - 19th September 2010

Chilterns Countryside Festival

Ashridge Estate, Berkhamstead
26th September 2010

Surrey Hills Woodfair

Birtley House, Bramley
8th - 9th October 2010

Great Dorset Steam Fair

Tarrant Hinton, Dorset
1st - 5th September 2010

Lincolnshire Firewood fair and auction

Scrivelsby Estate, Horncastle, Lincolnshire
5th September 2010

APF 2010

Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. A huge show for professional foresters that happens every other year. 23rd - 25th September 2010

Bodgefest - Dunnottar Woods

4th September 2010

Tweed Valley Forest Festival

23rd - 31st October 2010.

Coppice.co.uk

Coppice.co.uk is a great web site for all you need to know about coppicing: species, techniques, tools, marketing your produce and much more.