

A close-up photograph of a tree branch, likely a beech, showing a mix of green and brown leaves. A prominent, spiky, light green seed pod (cupule) is attached to the branch. The background is a soft-focus forest scene with more foliage.

Small Woodland Owners' Group
Newsletter October 2014

Small Woodland Owners' Group

www.swog.org.uk



Woodfairs are great places to meet up with woodland owners and many other people connected with the woodland world. Thank you to everyone who visited the SWOG stall at Bentley – it was really inspiring to hear about your activities.

The Small Woodland Owner's Group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British woodland. The company Woodlands.co.uk sponsors the group, so membership is completely free and events are free of charge unless otherwise stated. SWOG is open to anyone interested in the management or the enjoyment of woodland.

Copyright © Small Woodland Owners' Group 2014

Picture credits Cover, pp 2, 4, 6 (below) 7 (middle & below) J Millidge; p 3 Forestry Commission; p 5 Tweed Valley; p 6 (top), p 7 (top) Sarah Walters; pp 8 Woodlands.co.uk;

SWOG website and forum

rich@swog.org.uk

SWOG co-ordinator and newsletter editor

judith@swog.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter @_swog



In this issue

- **Events and News** 3
 - New Forestry Commission app
 - Grown in Britain week
 - Win a woodland!
 - Tweed Valley Forest Festival
 - Arbsafe database
- **A tale of two woodshows** 6
- **Managing your woodland for climate change** 8
- **Woodlands Blogs and TV** 9

SWOG COURSE LIST APRIL 2014



SWOG Course Listings

Anyone who buys a wood from Woodlands.co.uk is given £300 towards a woodland course to help towards owners' enjoyment and knowledge. These courses can encompass anything from basket-weaving, green woodworking or pole lathe turning, to chainsaw tuition and woodland management. Buyers are asked to write a short resumé of their course, noting how effective they

found it, and whether they would recommend it to others.

We are gradually incorporating all these valuable comments into a database listing which can be searched by area or course topic. We hope it will be useful to anyone searching for help and guidance in choosing a woodland course. View it on the SWOG website here:

www.swog.org.uk/courses-4

Forest Seedlings – new identifier app

A new app-based field guide from the Forestry Commission has been launched to help identify almost 100 tree and shrub seedlings under one year old that are commonly found in British woods and forests.

Ecologists, woodland managers, foresters, surveyors and conservationists often want to identify young trees and shrubs that have established themselves naturally to help them plan for the future and decide what to keep and what to remove. However, plants under one year old are notoriously difficult to identify even for those with long experience working in the field.

Selecting naturally established seedlings has always been a part of traditional native woodland management and is becoming more common as continuous cover forestry (CCF) expands. CCF does not use clear-felling and replanting. Knowing what is growing where sooner rather than later helps people take decisions on the spot rather than waiting until plants have matured a little.

Speaking from the APF Show, Forest Research's Matt Parratt said:

'Most professionals and experienced amateurs can readily identify trees and shrubs after the plants are just a year or two old. But young seedlings often look significantly different to older plants and this can get in the way of accurately recording what is growing where.

'The app allows people to quickly and accurately identify self-set trees and shrubs regardless of their age. They can also record field notes and locations using GPS without

a mobile signal. This is always going to be more efficient and helpful than revisiting a site.

'We tested the app on experienced colleagues using seedling pictures of rowan and common lime – both trees which are readily identifiable when older. A number of them were unable to correctly identify either one, and were surprised once the app revealed what they were.'

The app includes high-resolution images of leaves and other seedling features that can be used for identification. Instead of flipping through a field guide it uses dynamic filtering to allow users to identify seedlings based upon a number of key characteristics including leaf shapes and stem hairs. It supports species searches and includes listings by common and scientific names.

The field guide app has been developed by the Forestry Commission from content supplied by Forest Research. It costs £1.49 and is available from the iTunes Store and Google Play.



Blackdown Hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Blackdown & East Devon Woodland

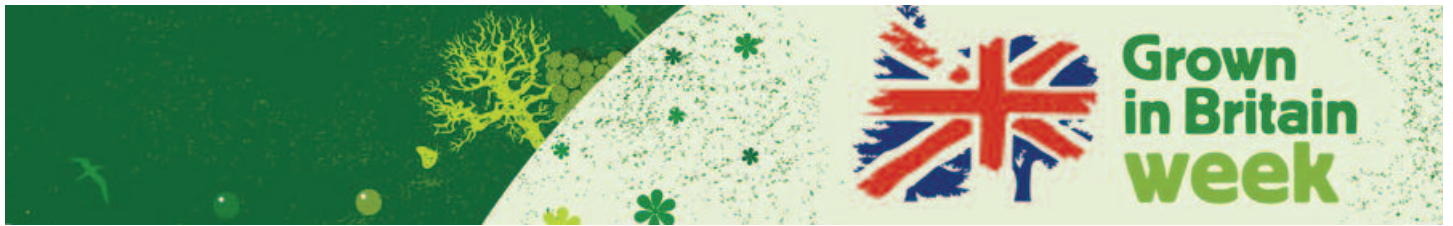
Tree health and grading course

Park Farm, Wellington, TA21 9NP

16th October 2014 10 am to 3.30 pm

The day is designed to help the small woodland owner value their timber, grade and measure standing trees, select for thinning, judge the balance between commercial values and conservation, and measure volumes of round, stack and standing timber. A full agenda is available on request. See the website for more courses : www.woodbiz.co.uk.

It costs £90 for non-members and £75 for members (why not become a member?) to include refreshments and a light lunch. There will be a short walk in the woods and to the saw yard, so outdoor clothing is advised. Numbers are limited and booking is essential. Please contact John Greenshields on 01823 660764 or email parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk to book your place.



The Grown in Britain campaign has done a great deal over last 18 months to revitalise the British timber industry. From 13–20 October, Grown in Britain week will celebrate all things woody and reflect on progress made.

Grown in Britain is trying to ensure that different arms of the forestry sector communicate and work together – from the Forestry Commission, to individual woodland managers and saw mills, and from craftsmen to multi-national construction companies. The aim is to revive Britain's timber trade, and establish a world in which it is actually more efficient to process British timber in Britain, rather than send it half way round the world and back again because that makes more economic sense. Sustainability, craftsmanship and excellence are at the root of the campaign in every area of woodland management, timber production and processing.

Grown in Britain is a not-for profit, government-backed industry initiative. All funds generated from licensing fees go towards

the administration of the scheme and creation of new woodland.

Grown in Britain and small woodland owners

One aim of the Grown in Britain campaign is to bring more areas of woodland into effective management, with the ultimate aim of producing more home-grown timber. Even small woodlands can be productive, and, as we reported in July, the first GIB license was awarded to SWOG members Sarah Walters and Stephen Briggs. Woodland owners must have a Forestry Commission management plan in place before they can apply for a Grown in Britain license. A license will not only increase awareness of British timber, but customers will also know that the timber has been grown sustainably to a high standard.

Overall, more licensed woodlands and producers will lead to a more sustainable future for British forests and woodlands, which must be a good thing for us all. To find out more, visit the website, www.growninbritain.org.

Win a woodland with Dorset Cereals!

Visitors to the SWOG stall at the Bentley Woodfair were slightly bemused when we offered them a free pack of cereal. Lovely though it is, breakfast cereal isn't the first thing you think of when chatting about woodland activities. However, the method in the madness became clear when we explained that Dorset Cereals and Woodlands.co.uk have joined forces to enable one lucky breakfast eater the opportunity to win a woodland. The promotion will run from the middle of September. Six million Dorset Cereal packets of muesli, porridge, and granola will contain a unique

code. Visit the Dorset Cereals website www.dorsetcereals.co.uk, enter the code and cross your fingers!




 Tweed Valley FOREST FESTIVAL

**Tweed Valley Forest Park, near Peebles,
Friday 24 October–Sunday 2 November 2014**

The Tweed Valley Forest Festival is based around the Tweed Valley Forest Park with the beautiful market town of Peebles at its hub. Highlights for 2014 include the Peebles Food Festival, on the Tweed Green and the 8th Scottish Conker Championship (the Smash-Off starts at 12 noon on Saturday 25th).

The Tree-mendous Wood Market returns to the Community Centre, which provides a great opportunity to buy a wide range of unique Scottish wood products direct from the makers.

Beautiful bowls and boxes, clocks and chopping boards, rocking horses, toys, jewellery, garden ornaments, candle holders, ash hurdles, mushroom seats and lots more!

On Tweed Green you can see chainsaw artists in action creating wonderful animals. Discover bodging, try your hand at making a wooden spoon, bat box or make a witches broom for Hallowe'en. Discover the armadillo huts, hot tub and huts and (part of)

a traditional log cabin. And there's lots of children's activities and entertainment including the magical Woodland Puppets.

Music will be provided by local musicians.

The popular Dark Wood night-time events will return to the forests at Bowhill and Glentress for a third year.

Iain Laidlaw of the Treefest Partnership explains, 'The Tweed Valley Forest Festival is shaping up to be a fantastic event packed with heaps of entertainment and activities for everyone. Our dynamic team of Treefest partners have pulled together to lay on a fascinating blend of indoor and outdoor events. Thanks to all the organisers, the festival should be brilliant so I'd urge everyone to join in the fun and get a real taste of the history and culture in this stunning part of the Tweed Valley.'



Arbsafe is a new free security

initiative by Arbtalk.co.uk (sponsored by Stihl) that has been launched in direct response to the losses incurred by woodland workers. It is a searchable online database www.arbsafe.co.uk of stolen tools, be they hedge trimmers, wood chippers or chainsaws.

Owners can register to list their assets,

including serial numbers, on a secure private listing. Should anything be stolen, owners can move the listed item to the public list of stolen possessions. Recent thefts and stolen equipment will be listed in the subscriber email alerts and are listed prominently on the website.

While this system will not stop woodland theft, it may at least act as a deterrent to criminals and help reunite owners with their stolen possession.

A tale of two wood shows



SWOG is officially represented at three or four wood fairs around the country each year and we love attending. It is a great way to meet owners and to sign up new members, whether or not they own small woodlands. It's also a

wonderful opportunity to learn about wood-related skills and to meet any number of crafts people, small-scale producers of timber or charcoal, and at the other end of the scale,

power tool dealers and professional foresters and trainers. Woodfairs are one of the few places where no one bats an eyelid if you walk around with a large axe or pruning saw slung casually about your person.

In the space of a week, two well established, but very different, wood shows demonstrated that the British interest in woodlands and the timber industry is thriving.

APF Show

The APF show plays to the union between man (and it is usually man) and machine. It is a feast of engineering marvels, aimed at professionals in the timber trade, which displays the cutting edge in chipping, chopping and lifting machines useful to foresters. It is the UK's largest forestry show and this year attracted record numbers of visitors. Spread out over a vast site on the Ragley Estate in Warwickshire, it takes three weeks to build and position the stand and demonstration



areas, and when complete, there are 2½ miles of working machinery to view.

It is a jaw-dropping display, and there are plenty of opportunities to watch demonstrations of chippers, forwarders, shredders and chainsaws, as well as amazing displays of pole climbing and chainsaw carving. But the APF show does not forget its roots, and the craft area provides a more peaceful haven of green woodworkers demonstrating their skills.

Bentley – rural woodcrafts

If APF is all about the power tools, Bentley Woodfair in Sussex, is aimed at those who value traditional skills. It focuses on older woodland crafts, from willow weaving and green woodworking, to small-scale charcoal burning and family forestry.

You can pick up old hand-forged tools, learn how to weave willow, make log animals, or just marvel at the talents of many of the stall holders.

The aims of both shows are not utterly dissimilar, however; both promote a love of woodlands and want to encourage the sustainable use of wood and timber. Both are really valuable sources of knowledge on how to manage woodland effectively, whatever its size. Organisations such as the Forest Commission, the Royal Forestry Society, the Woodland Trust, Confor, and, ahem, SWOG, are keen to talk to woodland owners about their woods and how they manage them.

The exhibitors at APF sell kit that enables foresters to harvest and utilise timber efficiently in industrial quantities, whereas the displays at Bentley show that coppicing, and small-scale extraction is equally valid in different circumstances. Interestingly, both shows feature horse loggers, who often succeed on challenging terrain where bigger machines fail.

As to which is the best, I wouldn't have missed either of them, although we did have a tent and a ready supply of tea at Bentley!



Young visitors to the SWOG stall enjoy the twiggy noughts and crosses.



Maker Martin Brockman weaves a deer sculpture, from the woodland undergrowth.

Managing your woodland for climate change

Irrespective of what is causing the British weather, it seems to be getting stormier and warmer, and the tangible effects of this were especially clear during the storms of last winter. Many woodland owners lost trees to gale-force winds and may be considering what to replace them with. We need to consider the long-term resilience of our woodlands to the changing climate and it makes sense to plant a diverse selection of species that will be resistant to global warming.

The Forestry Commission has produced a number of useful publications, notably the leaflet, *Managing England's woodlands and a changing climate*, which can be downloaded from the **FC website here**.

Essentially, we can no longer be sure that the climatic conditions of the British Isles will remain the same: unchanged for thousands of years, the climate in Britain seems less predictable, with meteorologists regularly recording higher average annual temperatures. One study in Germany, analysing data going back to the 1870s, has found that trees are actually growing significantly faster since the 1960s and they attribute this largely to the extended growing season that is a direct result of a warmer climate. (It's a fascinating read and can be seen here: www.tum.de/en).

But while some species will thrive, others may fail. In Britain, only five conifer species account *Sweet chestnut is a hardy species likely to flourish in the face of erratic climactic conditions.*



for 88% of softwood trees; and five broadleaf varieties make up over 72% of the hardwood crop. It is likely that climate change will have a serious impact on drought-sensitive tree species, especially those on free-draining soils in southern and eastern England. In addition, pests and diseases pose an increasing threat to woodlands. The higher frequency of winter gales may mean more damage and windblown trees.

A more diverse selection of species will ensure that our forestry cover remains robust.

John Weir, the Forestry Commission advisor for Woodland Creation and Resilience, has drawn up some guidelines for woodland owners who are thinking about planting.

- Match tree species to the environmental growing conditions.
- Look at trees that flourish two or three degrees of latitude to the south of the UK, in the Loire and Bordeaux regions of France, for example, and consider planting them.
- Plant more of our lesser-used native species, such as small-leaved lime, alder and aspen, as well as those that 'feel' native, such as sycamore, sweet chestnut, Norway maple and Scots pine. It is also worth considering near-native and similar American genus, such as Norway maple, Italian alder, oaks and maples.
- Planting a diverse selection of species is an insurance policy for the future. Don't be risk adverse – take a chance on introducing a new species if it is suitable to your local environment.
- Adopt the principle of anticipatory adaptation – that is, make the change to new species before the worst effects of climate change are seen. In this way forests will be resilient.

There is plenty of advice on the Forestry Commission website: 'Diversity is at the core of woodland adaptation and ensuring resilience in the future'. It is also worth reading the case studies of the winners in the Royal Forestry Society **Woodland Climate Change Award in 2014 here**.

Visit Woodlands.co.uk or click on the title to read the full blog.

A wooden summerhouse part 2 – the reciprocal roof

Anita provides an update on the construction of their summerhouse. The roof is an elegant and self-supporting reciprocal roof.

Burning heather

Lewis explains why heather is sometimes selectively burned to improve its feed value for grazing animals.

Win a woodland with Dorset Cereals

Woodlands.co.uk has teamed up with healthy cereal makers Dorset Cereals to give breakfast eaters the chance to win a woodland.

One planet council

One Planet Development is a recent planning policy for low impact rural development in Wales. One Planet Council is a voluntary organisation that provides a bridge between applicants and local planning authorities, with guidance and tools to support applicants.



What has cheesemaking got to do with woodland management?

Angus muses upon the common factors in cheesemaking and woodland management: both require time and patience.

Forest School

Karen explains why forest schools are so beneficial for children.

Himalayan Balsam – nemesis is nigh?

Colourful, tenacious and almost ubiquitous, Himalayan balsam is regarded by many as an imported nuisance. With the controlled release of a rust fungus, it might finally be brought under control.

Woodlands TV

Making a stile

Monday Group volunteer Jim Edwards takes us through the stages of making a specific stile from unseasoned solid green oak.

The power in the willows

Hugo Hildyard explains how he's turned his willow woodland crop into biomass fuel. For more info on renewable energy please visit www.energycrop.co.uk

The rewards of owning a woodland

George and Jill Smith show us how three generations of their family enjoy their own woodland. They describe the process of buying

via Woodlands.co.uk and their learnings over the years – sharing their obvious delight in their woodland experiences.

