

The Foraging Lane

Chedzoy Nature Walk



Not all plants are edible and some are unsuitable for children, during pregnancy or when suffering from certain medical conditions. Please research their suitability based on your personal needs and enjoy!

The Shelter Belt

This area is packed with different tree species providing shelter and a diverse food source for wildlife. At intervals throughout the hedge-line we have planted alder, these will be left as standing trees. In ten - twelve years the others will be ready to lay, hedge-laying is the process of cutting the tree 2/3rds of the way through the base of the trunk and laying it down, promoting new growth and creating a thick hedge. Take a look at the log pile there are some interesting fungi growing and we have seen greater spotted woodpeckers feeding here.

[104] Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*

There are five standing horse chestnut trees and an ancient hawthorn bordering the fence.

[105] Common Elm *Ulmus minor*

Dutch elm disease is caused by the fungus *O. novo-ulmi* and spread by the elm bark beetle, since its accidental introduction in the 1960s the disease has killed millions of elm trees changing our landscape forever. In Chedzoy there are elm surviving including this standing example tucked into the horse chestnut.

[106] English Oak *Quercus robur*

The oak tree is haven to 2,300 wildlife species and can live for a thousand years, it's no wonder that in England it symbolises strength!

[107] Elder *Sambucus nigra*

A short-lived native classic.

- Flowers and berries can be cooked and used to make cordial
- Flowers are edible raw

[108] Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*

Blackthorn is one of our earliest trees to blossom and an important food source for pollinators, it's used by many moths and the black and brown hairstreak butterflies. Its fruit are loved by birds and, for those into wizardry, blackthorn is the go-to wood for wand making.

- Sloes are traditionally harvested after the first frost, however in our warming climate this is rarely possible, so pop them in the freezer for 24 hours before using to flavour gin or make liqueurs and jelly.

[109 + 103] Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*

Hawthorn is associated with the end of spring, it was used as maypoles and in medieval times the blossoms were said to smell of the plague. Interestingly, botanists later discovered they contained the chemical trimethylamine which is one of the first chemicals formed in decaying flesh.

- Berries are loaded with antioxidants and are best used cooked in preserves, ketchup or cordials
- Flowers and young leaves can be eaten raw

[110] Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*

Sometimes called the Mountain Ash, the Rowan is a tree steeped in mythology, in Ireland the tree was often planted near houses to protect against evil spirits, and the wood was used as a pocket charm against rheumatism. Rowan is still used today to make divining rods and furniture. The flowers provide a good source of pollen and nectar for insects and the berries are eaten by many bird species. Look out for Welsh wave, autumn green carpet and apple fruit moth caterpillars on the leaves.

- Berries are edible and rich in vitamin C, although they taste tart!
- **Berries must be cooked before eating**

[111] Dog rose *Rosa canina*

One of several native wild roses, the dog rose pumps up the pollen and nectar in a hedge whilst taking up little extra room. Its name came about as it was thought the root could cure a dog bite. The hips of the dog rose contain twenty times more vitamin C than oranges and were a vital source during and after the Second World War.

- Flowers can be eaten raw and have long been used for aroma and flavour. Try them sugared as cake decorations or add to jams
- Hips require processing and cooking, try out the Wartime Ministry of Food recipe for rosehip syrup

[112] Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*

Most commonly recognised in the autumn when its bright red stems give a colourful display, dogwood gets its name from the old word 'dag' or 'dog' which means skewer, the exceptionally hard wood was used to make butchers' skewers. The flowers and berries are of value to wildlife.

[113] Alder *Alnus glutinosa*

Alder is a unique tree, it can thrive in any soil and tolerate long periods of submersion. The soft, porous wood becomes highly durable when submerged, it was used in ship building and much of Venice is built on alder piles, today it is being used across Europe in flood mitigation. Alder is commonly used in agroforestry because it absorbs nitrogen from the air into its root nodules improving soil fertility.

[114] Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*

The native ancestor of all cultivated apple trees, the crab apple has a high value to the environment, early spring blossoms provide pollen and nectar, followed by an abundance of fruit enjoyed by a wide variety of wildlife.

- Crab apple is naturally high in pectin and perfect for pairing with other fruits to make jams and jellies set

[115] Goat willow *Salix caprea*

Goat willow has the classic fluffy catkins and this species can live for 300 years. Its leaves support many species of moth and it is the main food source for the purple emperor butterfly.

[116] Holly *Ilex aquifolium*

Holly is one of our very few native evergreen trees providing valuable year-round shelter and nesting sites, it provides a profusion of pollen and nectar, and in the spring you can hear the epic buzz of bees foraging. Birds adore the berries and the mistle thrush will vigorously guard them. There are a few holly trees dotted around the village, look out for the holly blue butterfly caterpillar on the leaves.

[117] Juniper *Juniperus communis*

Another native evergreen and unique to Chedzoy this patch of juniper is a bit of a trial, if it establishes it will grow 10m high and live for 200 years, its spiked evergreen habitat will provide cover and food for birds.

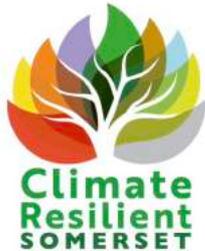
- The berries take 18 months to ripen and can be used dried as a spice or to flavour gin

[118] Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*

Introduced by the Romans the sweet chestnut can live for 700 years and reach 35m in height. This lane of trees will providing significant shelter and forage for many wildlife species.

- Sweet chestnuts are a rich source of vitamins C (the only nut that is) and B, and minerals
- Harvest in November they can be roasted and eaten whole, added to casseroles or cakes
- Nuts stored and dried for 8 weeks can be ground to make flour

Along the nut lane you can see a profusion of wild Alexanders, a pot-herb introduced by the Romans, the young leaves can be eaten raw and the stems blanched like asparagus. Alexanders are an important early source of food for pollinators and honey bees adore them.



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Bibliography

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