



The value of dead wood

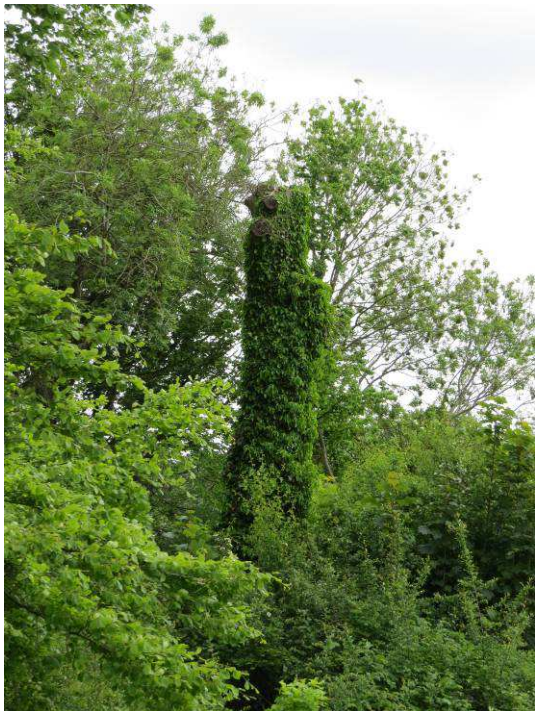


Dead and decaying trees play an essential role in the function and biodiversity of woodlands. Decaying wood provides an important habitat for cavity nesting birds, small vertebrates and invertebrates, as well as providing a host for wood-decaying fungi and saproxylic beetles. Some bats rely on holes in dead wood for summer and winter roost sites. Crevices and rot holes will fill with leaf litter and twigs providing a home for a wide variety of invertebrates, which in turn provide food for birds.

For wildlife, a vital feature is the habitat created within the canopy, trunk and on the ground associated with the veteran tree. Often the dead wood is removed completely - this results in areas of woodland unable to sustain wildlife. Approximately 20% of woodland species depend on dead or decaying wood for a large part of their life cycle.

If old or dead trees are not posing a danger to people or property then they should be left to decay naturally. More dead wood - a richer environment. If any felling is required then March - July should be avoided as this is the bird nesting season.





Standing dead wood (Monoliths) provide quite a different form of habitat from trunks or logs lying on the ground. Creating a monolith by reducing the height and spread of a decaying tree will help to support a wide range of species dependent on decaying wood during part or all of their life cycle. Dead branches removed from the monolith should be left in large pieces close to the tree to create habitat piles and not chipped or removed for firewood.

Ancient hollow trees are especially important and should be retained. High winds and storms have revealed that a younger, solid tree is more likely to be blown down than a hollow one.



Parent Bug

