**Tree Warden Report July, 2021**

**On an alternately sunny and drizzly day in July, I found myself attending a  Suffolk Tree Warden Network (STWN) Day Event in Debenham at Two Fields run by Jeannie Buckingham. Two Field is a community supported mixed  farmscape that is taking part in the STWN Growing Trees from Seed initiative.  Our Guest speaker was the marvellous Mr Wells founder of Barcham Trees in Ely. Mr Wells was there to speak to us about how to achieve strong growth in our saplings . His advice was expansive but there are a few take homes I thought I’d share. The first , obvious when pointed out,  is to pick the best quality seeds/fruits - so pick up the plump oaks and not the tiddlers or deformed unless you have no alternative. Secondly, if a deer or rabbit nips the top of your sapling one night. Do NOT despair as it most probably will shoot again. Let’s face it this is not as good as not having had it’s head bitten off but it will  probably make another leader. I say probably as  a sapling’s ability to grow is really based on how good it’s roots energy stores are.  If when it regrows there is more than one leader just prune to a straight one heading skywards.  Next do not be afraid to lift (pot or field) your saplings and repot/relocate . When lifting clean off the roots and prune the tap roots to encourage lateral root growth.  Ideally a sapling should only be planted out when its root/collar joint is 9mm. This is a big ask as most bare root trees are about 6mm. Repotting in a good compost is most important so the roots can get nutrients and air easily. Finally, when growing  from seed not every successful germination should be grown on. Grade and only grow on the strongest.  All this is subject to the overriding principle that you should get your sapling into the ground in its final location as soon as you possibly can as it will do better in both the short and longterm but this is not always an option.**

**There is a growing interest in just letting trees self seed  and then either leave in place or lift and relocate (as if grown in a pot from seed). This is an equally valid way of tree propagation.  Growing trees from seed as the STWN is finding out is very labour  and time intensive. If I could ask anyone locally who has a small leaved Lime or a Wild Service tree in their garden, wood or field to let me know as the STWN would very much like to collect seeds this autumn as these trees are scare and could do with a boost.**

**Tracy Gleeson**

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