**Tree Warden Report March 2022**

After the storms and winds of the last few weeks the sun is now shining, the air is fresh and trees are budding up; giving us a glorious start to spring.

Along the footpaths and verge, the primroses are awake as are the snowdrops and crocuses and the aconites are mostly over.

Hedge cutting is at an end and bare root tree planting too.

For the Tree Seed Nursery; it’s all systems to the go; potting up last years bounty having stratified it for the whole of the winter. Hoping for a good germination rate this year.

I see around the village and its environs that quite a number of trees and hedgerows have been planted this season which is lovely to see. A word though- don’t expect or want good quality agricultural land to be given up for trees as we need to grow food. Given the current situation abroad this is a particularly important reminder. However, even with arable land many farmer guardians are putting in lines of trees as a crop in between an arable crop; this is called Agroforestry and very of the moment.

There is again and increased interest in orcharding. Not just establishing new community orchards but reviving old ones and grafting old fruit types onto new rootstock. It was with this in mind that I attended a Fruit Tree Grafting Course with Paul Read (famous around these parts for this). If anyone has experience with this I’d be delighted for you to let me know.

It’s not rocket science at the beginners end but it’s definitely a valuable skill and requires a special talent.

Maybe hidden in villager’s gardens are old, new or particularly delicious fruits trees. Next autumn appropriate rootstock could be obtained and grafting commenced if there is any interest. You don’t even need to know what they are called! Nowadays you can take it  to an apple or other fruit identification day, consult with a fledgling database which is getting better every year or send a few leaves in spring for DNA analysis and be communicated the results within weeks. If you fruit tree is unique you can even name it!

Let’s hope the spring continues as it’s begun - that blossom is not spoiled by high winds or frost.  Keep an eye open for the first trees to break bud and hope for a glorious display of spring will flowers. I am particularly nostalgic to see the developing carpet of Cowslips every year along the village green edge.

Tracy Gleeson

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