Tree Warden Report

What a glorious coloured Autumn we have been having! The wet weather and late sunshine allowing our trees to retain their leaves for longer. Walks through the village bring a myriad of green, orange, brown and red - too many hues to delineate with words. We have to get out and see them. It’s still not too late, even given the recent gale force winds, as leaves are still aplenty and autumn fruits coming visually into their own as the former disappear. The Spindle trees still have their pink and orange fruits and Wild Rosehips litter the hedgerow. The Yew is in full red berry mode as is the Hawthorn and Rowan. Underfoot conkers and acorns abound along with the satisfying crunch of fallen dry leaves.

The Suffolk Tree Warden Network has been busy collecting seeds from trees in the County and is starting a project to grow trees from seed for a community tree nursery. The resultant saplings to be planted out in the wider community. The count so far is way above 6,000 tree seeds from 32 species. This project will ensure trees planted have a known local provenance. I’ll try and keep you posted on the progress of this project.

So many trees to plant and much enthusiasm by both the populace and government. As mentioned before the Government want to plant 30,00 hectares of trees per annum by 2025.   Given this momentum I thought it would be a good idea to touch on the subject of how these trees are going to be planted. Not specifically but generally and this leads to the United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS). The UKFS first published in 1998 now in its 4th incarnation.  The UKFS consists of 41 legal requirements, 61 good practice statements and 312 guidelines! The standard defines the UK approach to sustainable forestry, biodiversity, water, soils, climate, people history and landscape.  Golly it covers a lot but then so will the trees. UKFS lays down the requirements for trees planting grants, felling licences and consent hoops required for planting ANY woodland over 2 hectares in any landscape and smaller ones in sensitive landscapes. This is to ensure we do not have a repeat of the monocultures of the past and to ensure trees planted are likely to survive to maturity in the chosen place planted. In other words Right Tree, Right Place Right Reason. This is very important and should be in mind whenever a tree is planted. There will be trees planted for amenity and trees planted for commercial production; whether for wood products or biofuel. Some will have a trunk in both camps. There is a huge move to plant only Native trees and this is generating much argument as many of our much loved trees are Naturalised not Native.

Naturalised trees include the Purple Beech, Cedar, many Apples, Pears, Plums and Cherries, Field Elm, Horse Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut, Leyland Cypress, Eucalyptus, Douglas Fir, Larch, Norway Maple, Monkey Puzzle Turkey and Holm Oak, Norway spruce, White and Black Poplar, sycamore, Black, Walnut and Yew.

By way of comparison; Native Trees include, Oak, Alder Ash Aspen, Common Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Box, Bird Cherry, Buckthorn, Crab Apple, Dogwood, Elder, English Elm, Wych Elm, Guelder Rose Hawthorn Hazel Holly, Hornbeam Juniper, Lime, Field Maple, Scots Pine, Black Poplar, Rowan, Spindle, Whitebeam, Wild Service Tree, Bay Willow and Crack willow.

So, you are now informed about the Native and Naturalised Tree debate and can make up your own mind. Some would even go as far as to say there is a good argument for planting some Exotics but that’s another story. Whatever you decide, plant the Right Tree in the Right Place for the Right Reason.

Rendham Tree Warden November 2020.