Tree Wardens Report July 2019

Most of you will have noticed as you walk around the village that this year the Oak was out in leaf before the Ash. The old farmers saying of “Oak before Ash in with a splash, Ash before Oak in with a soak” may indicate we will have water issues again this summer.
Ash Trees continue to be a concern with the Ash Dieback. This disease is caused by a fungus  which blocks the water transport system of the tree causing leaf loss, lesions and die back of the crown of the tree.  Young trees die quickly and older trees appear to succumb over time (although some appear relatively unaffected which gives hope for the future ) . The UK is at the forefront of research into this disease.
Oak Decline continues to excite; but its been around for 20-30 years . Many trees die but also some survive. Factors involved in  Oak Decline are thought to be drought stress and bacterial infections in association with a bark beetle. Research is ongoing, led by the University of Reading along with other universities.
Horse Chestnut canker , less talked about, but seeing a surge of cases across the UK over the last 5 years . It’s linked to a bacterium exacerbated by mild winters and wet springs.
On a positive note the hedgerows and field margins are, this year, looking particularly lovely. Especially those with flowering guelder rose and hawthorn. Uncut field margins besides hedges of frothy cow parsley, pink campion, yellow rattle, vetches and  herb robert to name but a few have been a delight to see.
Many farmers in the area chose not to cut  some hedges last winter, fearing a cold one, thus providing greater larder for wildlife which has added to the look of the hedges this year.
The mapping of Ancient, Veteran and Notable Trees  continues and in Rendham we have a number mapped both native and non-native ( see:  ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk ).
Ancient Trees are trees in the third and final stage of their life and are home to thousands of species of plants, animals and fungi- including many that are rare and may be useful for combatting tree diseases of  today and the future.

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