

# Dancersend Tree Trail

Follow our tree trail to find 12 tree stops. Try the 12 activities on this page.  
Turn over for interesting facts about the trees.



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## 7 Trunks: homes

Other living things often grow on trunks and branches.

- ▶ Can you spot moss, lichen, algae or fungi growing on these trunks?
- ▶ How many different things can you see living on the trunks and branches?



## 6 Seeds: flying away

Tree seeds need to move away from their parent trees in order to find enough space and light to grow.

- ▶ Can you find a seed with wings? Try throwing it into the air to make it spin to the ground like a helicopter.



## 5 Seeds: cones

Conifer trees hide a fruit or seeds inside a cone.

- ▶ Can you see any cones on or under the tree? Pick up a cone, what does it feel like? Can you see any seeds that are secretly hidden inside the cone?



## 4 Trunks: how tall?

Trees grow tall to reach the sunlight. These larch trees need an open light area to grow.

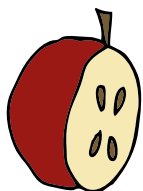
- ▶ If you stand next to one, can you estimate how tall it is?
- ▶ Try to estimate the height of a really tall tree.



## 8 Food for animals

Trees provide lots of food for animals large and small. This crab apple tree grows flowers and leaves and hides its seeds inside tasty fruit.

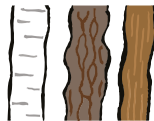
- ▶ Can you spot any signs where creatures have been eating flowers, leaves or fruit? Clue: look for holes, nibbles or even poo!



## 9 Trunks: bark

Different trees have different types of bark. Bark can be smooth, rough or even knobbly!

- ▶ Look at the birch tree. Can you describe its bark?
- ▶ Look out for bark to feel as you continue on your walk. Make rubbings of different bark with a crayon and paper.



## 10 Leaves: catching the light

Leaves help the tree to make its own food. They capture energy from the sun to help turn water and carbon dioxide into sugar and oxygen.

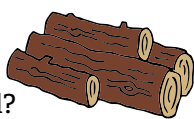
- ▶ Look around at the trees nearby. How many different leaf shapes and sizes can you find?



## 11 Deadwood: a log pile

A log pile – made from fallen branches and dead trunks – provides a home for many creatures including spiders, woodlice, beetles or even newts.

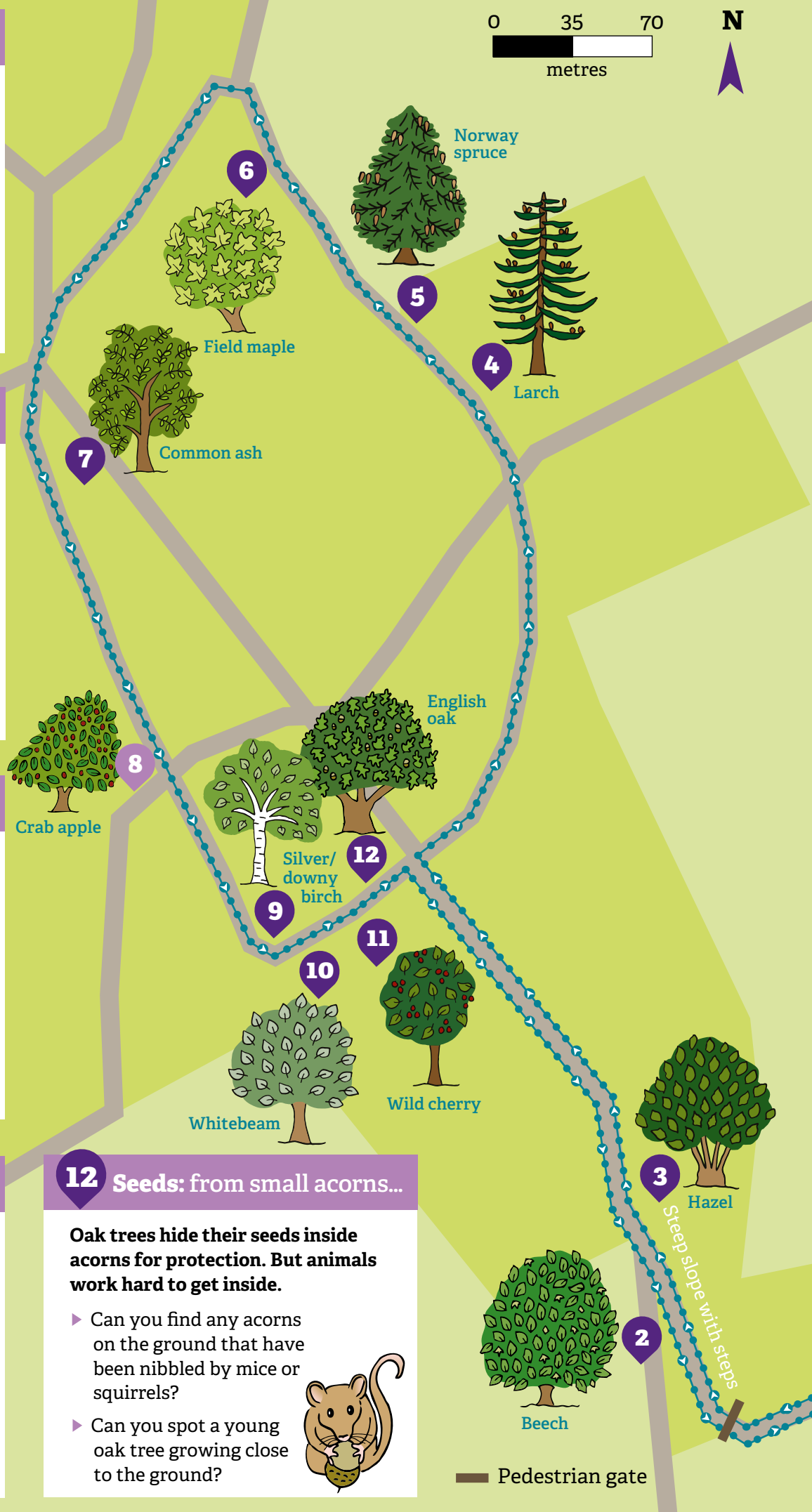
- ▶ Look closely in-between the logs nearby for any signs of something living there.
- ▶ Why not make a log-pile in your garden or school field?



## 12 Seeds: from small acorns...

Oak trees hide their seeds inside acorns for protection. But animals work hard to get inside.

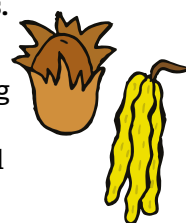
- ▶ Can you find any acorns on the ground that have been nibbled by mice or squirrels?
- ▶ Can you spot a young oak tree growing close to the ground?



## 3 Flowers and seeds

In spring the hazel catkins produce pollen (plants use pollen to help make a seed). The seed of the hazel tree is called the hazel nut – a favourite food of lots of small mammals.

- ▶ Can you spot any catkins or nuts growing on the hazel? Or perhaps see some hazel nuts on the ground?



## 2 Root and branch

Trees have roots that grow under the ground to take in water and minerals. The roots grow out about as far as the branches overhead.

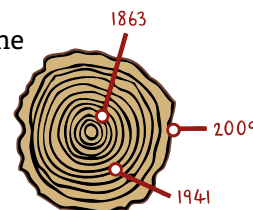
- ▶ Roots support the tree as it grows. Can you spot any roots on the surface?



## 1 Trunks: how old?

Trees grow a new layer of wood every year. When a tree is cut down, each layer can be seen as a ring in the trunk.

- ▶ Can you spot the rings on the trunk?
- ▶ What date was the tree cut down?
- ▶ How old was the tree when it was cut?







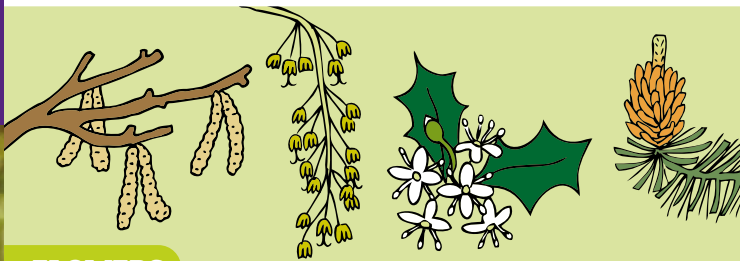
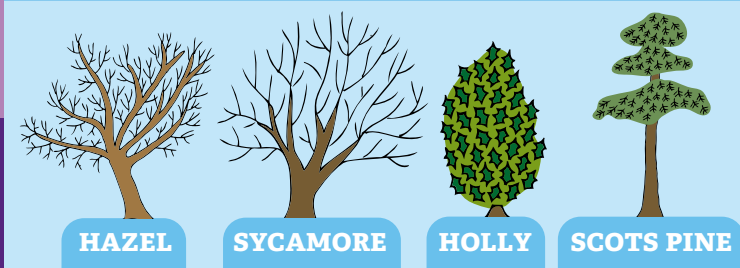
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# Dancersend Tree Trail



**Deciduous trees** lose  
their leaves in the winter

**Evergreen trees** keep  
their leaves in the winter



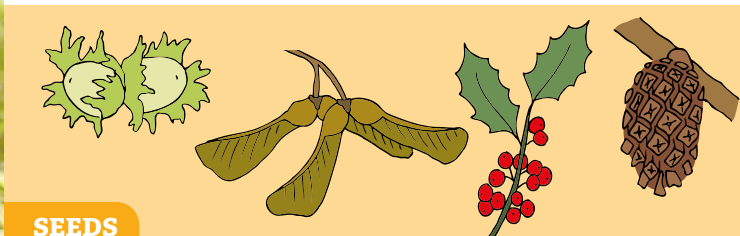
## FLOWERS

In spring, trees produce flowers. Some flowers are blossom, some are catkins; they can be all different colours.



## LEAVES

In summer, trees are full of green leaves. They come in different shapes and sizes – some are even needle-like.



## SEEDS

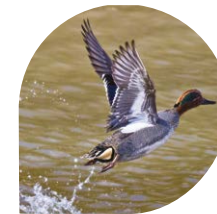
By autumn, the flowers have produced seeds. These can be nuts in a shell, seeds inside a fruit, seeds inside a cone, or seeds on their own.

## Find out more...

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- Visit other BBOWT Reserves  
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**Aston Clinton Ragpits** is three miles to the north west of here. This old chalk pit offers a real treat to visitors in spring and summer. Carefully follow the paths through the swathes of beautiful orchids to see a myriad of colourful butterflies. You can find more info and directions at [bbowt.org.uk/reserves/aston-clinton-ragpits](http://bbowt.org.uk/reserves/aston-clinton-ragpits)



**College Lake Nature Reserve** is five miles to the east of here. Nature reclaimed this worked-out chalk quarry and created an outstanding centre for wildlife, which gives nature-lovers of all ages easy access to an amazing range of wild plants and animals. You can find more info and directions at [bbowt.org.uk/college-lake](http://bbowt.org.uk/college-lake)

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## See our fun facts and tree trail inside...

**Dancersend:** This mixed woodland haven, once owned by the Rothschild family, has seen felling and replanting throughout its history.

**Native trees** grow naturally in the UK.

**Non-native trees** have been brought from another country and planted by people.

## Tree stop factfiles

See map inside for Tree Trail (plus activities too)

### 1 Atlas cedar *Cedrus atlantica*

Originating from the Atlas Mountains of North Africa, the Atlas Cedar (non-native) is more tolerant of dry and hot conditions than most conifers. Its wood contains fragrant compounds which combat fungi and repel insects. The ancient Egyptians used it for embalming bodies, and it is still used to build storage cabinets today.

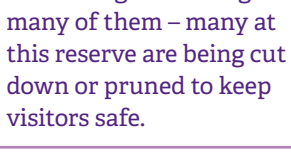


### 7 Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*

The ash (native) has long been associated with folklore across Europe. Vikings believed that a giant ash tree, Yggdrasil, the Tree of the World, united heaven and hell. Ash logs were burnt to drive away evil spirits.

#### Ash dieback disease

Ash trees across the UK are being affected by a fungus disease, which is weakening and killing many of them – many at this reserve are being cut down or pruned to keep visitors safe.



### 2 Beech *Fagus sylvatica*

Beech trees (native) are closely associated with the Chiltern Hills, where they were planted in large numbers for furniture making. Beech fruit, a kind of nut called mast, provides food for squirrels, birds and mice. In times gone by, the energy-rich beech mast was fed to pigs, and in times of famine was eaten by humans too.



### 8 Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*

Crab apple trees (native) are related to roses, and truly wild specimens have thorns. Cultivated for many centuries, the crab apple is an important ancestor of the trees that produced our eating and cooking apples. Though the fruit of the tree is sour, crab apples make excellent wine and jelly due to their strong flavour and good setting qualities.



### 3 Hazel *Corylus avellana*

Hazel (native) has been used by people since prehistoric times for building boats and houses (wattle and daub), hurdle and furniture making, and charcoal. Hazel is coppiced (periodically cut to the ground) to encourage a new crop of growth that can be harvested again in a few years' time.



### 9 Silver/downy birch *Betula pendulum/pubescens*

Both these native birch species grow at Dancersend. They frequently cross, producing hybrids that have characteristics of both. They are short lived but are important colonising species which allow longer lived trees, for example beech and oak, to become established. The sap is rich in sugar and can be made into wine.



### 4 Larch *Larix decidua*

Larch is a non-native conifer that was introduced to Britain in the 17th century. Although originally ornamental, it became an important timber crop. Its fast-growing straight trunks had numerous uses such as fencing and furniture making. Unlike most conifers, it is deciduous and loses its needle-like leaves in winter.



### 10 Whitebeam *Sorbus aria*

The distinctive whitebeam (native) was used in Anglo-Saxon times as a boundary marker. 'Beam' meant tree in Anglo-Saxon, and the white comes from the hundreds of tiny silvery hairs on the underside of the leaves. Before the mass production of iron, its tough wood was used for making cogs in early machinery.



### 5 Norway spruce *Picea abies*

Norway spruce (native) was present in Britain before the Ice Age, and then reintroduced around 1500, but numbers increased vastly in Victorian times when the Royal Family introduced the Christmas Tree. Its wood also became an important timber crop used in the building trade and paper industry.



### 11 Wild cherry *Prunus avium*

The fruit trees that provide us with cherries to eat today were crossed and selected from the wild cherry (native). It is particularly associated with beech woodland and is common in the Chilterns. Its wood is used for making high quality furniture and veneers, and its fruit provides a tasty snack for birds and small mammals.



### 6 Field maple *Acer campestre*

Preferring chalky soils, the field maple (native) can be seen throughout the Chilterns, often growing in hedgerows as well as woodland. Historically its wood was used for furniture and violin making due to its attractive rippled grain and as a result it was more common than it is today.



### 12 English oak *Quercus robur*

The flowers, leaves, bark and acorns of the English oak (native) support more than 300 different creatures. Its wood has been prized since prehistoric times. Until iron came into widespread use in the mid 1800s, oak was the preferred timber for ship building – around 2,000 oaks were needed to build a single warship.

