

The Herefordshire Black Poplar Project

Organised by Herefordshire Tree Wardens (TW are appointed by Parish Councils) to work with the Hereford Wildlife Trust to save this very rare tree from extinction and led by a small group in NW Herefordshire.

Objectives:

1. To identify every Veteran and Ancient Native Black Poplar in the County and record on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory Map.
2. By looking at catkins, identifying the sex of the tree, and by taking samples for DNA testing by Forest Enterprise, identifying the clone.
3. Giving advice to owners of NBP's to appreciate and care for their trees
4. Taking cuttings and distributing them around the county to spread the growing of young trees.
5. Involving the communities in doing these things.

We have identified around 150 NBP's in the county but have already seen 30 of them collapse and die –they are on the cusp of dying out. Just 4 female trees were found in the whole county with one female clone represented by a single very old tree. We have sent over 100 samples for DNA testing (for which we used the grant) and have now identified 7 Male clones – 2 of which were also represented by single trees. It is very clear that action needed to be taken quickly to save the situation.

Over the last 2 seasons well over 1000 cuttings have been taken and with the help of Tree Wardens and Hereford Wildlife Trust they have been distributed and planted on suitable land throughout the county (and beyond) on over 100 farms, fields and small holdings by several hundred people, Training has been given and their importance to wildlife explained. A fully grown NBP can reach 100 feet and weigh well in excess of 10 tons- if half of that is Carbon –that is an awful lot sequestered!



Dead BP at Leominster



Tony Pollarding at Kingsland



BP Cuttings for rooting