

Tree wardens report



The Tree Council

The Tree Council began the tree warden scheme in 1990. They have established a tree warden network in many parts of Britain. They organise meetings and activities, and arrange for the dissemination of information through the network of volunteers.

I look forward to attending the agm next week at Densham near Eye where there will be talks about projects undertaken by other tree wardens, woodland management and an update control of tree diseases.

My tree warden activities overlap with other groups in the village and are summarised as follows:

Tree warden activities in the past year in Waldringfield:

- Advising the Parish Council on planning applications affecting trees including those with Tree Preservation Orders
- Advising on and taking part in tree and hedge care and maintenance on publicly owned sites – the school, the playing field and Church Field.
- Advising residents on problems relating to trees on their land.
- Many tree wardens are involved with countryside planting schemes for hedges and trees and other projects involving habitat creation such as pond creation and road verge management. In Waldringfield I have been involved in the village verge project (Wildlife Group), school grounds management, playing field management, the Scattered Orchard Project (WALGA) and also the hedgerow survey now completed.

There follows some advice updated from previous reports which remains relevant:

Chalara disease of ash

Once again I have not seen it in Waldringfield parish but please let me know if anyone has found it. I have been checking up on ash trees I know of and they show no signs at present. However I have seen it at Campsea Ashe. The forestry commission continue to monitor the situation. Advice is not to plant ash at present and if the disease is found to report to the forestry commission but not cut down the tree as it may lead to further distribution of the spores.

Dutch Elm disease

The advice continues to be to keep all hedges down to below 2m as they become infected at 3m or above, depending also on stem thickness. Dead elm should be cut low down near the ground. They can then be allowed to regrow as a hedge.

Other diseases

There are now more strict controls in place for the importation of plane trees, pines and sweet chestnut to prevent further spread of diseases from other countries.

Tree and hedge removal

Again, the past year has seen removal of some large trees including losses from storm damage and instances of hedges being replaced with close board fencing. The Tree Council regrets the tendency for larger species too be replaced with smaller ornamental species. Where possible and sensible, larger trees should be fitted into residential areas as they contribute enormously to the character of a space and also are of great benefit regarding pollution filtration and adding improving air quality.

In Waldringfield, hedges and trees contribute to the appearance of the village, the atmosphere of which is improved by their foliage. They also benefit an abundance of wildlife including all the creatures which need them to shelter and find food and nesting sites.

Fences can help if they support climbers but a small gaps of 13.5 cms or 5" should be provided for hedgehogs to roam around.

If planting a new hedge I would avoid laurel as it grows extremely fast needing much cutting and the leaves contain cyanide so are no good for your compost heap.

Watering of trees (advice from the Tree Council)

Especially if newly planted, trees need to be watered where there is drought as this can lead to their death or to severe stress where diseases can then take over. Grey water from washing is quite good enough for trees, distributed around where the roots are growing, not directly over the trunk. At least a

whole can of water should be given each time – about a gallon- or more. If trees show signs of stress such as drooping leaves, start watering at least once a week – the Tree Council recommends three per week.

Planting times

Plant deciduous bare rooted trees and hedges in autumn before Christmas to get the best start. However planting can continue through the dormant season to February. More watering may be needed if it is delayed.

Evergreens are supposed to be moved in May. Container grown plants can be planted at other times but will then be more liable to dry out as their roots will have to develop during the summer months.

Christine Fisher Kay, Waldringfield Tree Warden

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