

Wet woodlands are often very species-rich. The wet conditions encourage ferns and mosses, whilst decaying wood supports fungi and insects. Wet woodlands can be affected by agriculture, development, drainage and invasion of non-native species.



Wet woodland

General guidelines for the management of wet woodland:

Management should aim to encourage a diverse range of native species.

Non-intervention management, i.e. choosing not to undertake any management work in all or part of a woodland is a recognised and acceptable form of management for wildlife, particularly for wet woodland.

Woodland with high structural and age diversity provides habitat for a greater number of species. Coppicing can be used as a method to increase diversity.

Management of alder woodlands can often be achieved by coppicing. Rotation lengths of between 10 and 20 years (depending on growth rates) are recommended. Stools should be cut to about 25cm to ensure enough living wood for the tree to re-grow. Coppicing opens the ground flora and provides sheltered spots particularly valuable for insects including butterflies.

Retaining some standard trees within coppiced areas reduces the rate of growth of the coppice stools and retains a diverse woodland ground flora.

If coppicing is not practical “artificial windblow” (i.e. felling mature trees to open the canopy) can be used as a management technique to ensure a diverse structure.

Willows can be pollarded (pruning the upper branches of a tree, usually repeating the process every two or three years) to increase the levels of light reaching the ground.

Standing or already fallen dead wood is an excellent habitat for insect and the birds that feed on them, so leave in place wherever possible rather than removing, and resist over-tidiness (where safety allows).



Marsh marigold

Notes: Some of the recommendations on this leaflet may not be permitted under Countryside Stewardship. Contact your local Natural England Adviser for further advice if required.

Permissions may be required to carry out the land management advice given (e.g. tree felling licences). DBRC advise that you check with your Local Authority and Forestry Commission before commencing any works



Devon
Wildlife Trust



Bog beacon fungus

Sources of further information and funding may be available from:

Forestry Commission: Grants towards woodland planning and the Woodland Carbon fund (new woodland and permissive access options). Web address:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844836/Woodland_grants_and_incentives_overview_table_-_Nov._2019.pdf

Email: southwest.fce@forestrycommission.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 067 4960

Natural England: *Countryside Stewardship management options/capital works grants*

Web address: <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>

Email: devon@naturalengland.org.uk
Tel: 0300 0601110

Devon Wildlife Trust

Website: www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Email: contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org

Tel: 01392 279244

Devon Biodiversity Record Centre (DBRC)
Cricklepit Mill, Commercial Road, Exeter, EX2 4AB .
W: www.dbrc.org.uk — T: 01392 274128
E: DBRC@dbrc.org.uk

Timber extraction should be carried out with great care as the constant wet conditions could result in the ground flora being heavily disturbed.

Encourage natural regeneration of native species where possible. Managing stock access and ensuring breaks in the canopy will allow young trees to develop.

When thinning or felling (e.g. for fuelwood), select non-native and invasive species such as sycamore and rhododendron. Rather than burning unwanted trimmings/branches from felling/thinning or coppicing they can be stacked to rot down; providing important refuge sites for insects and small mammals.

Linking woodlands within your landholding with ditches, hedgerows, lines of trees and beetle banks allows wildlife to move from one woodland area to another.

No further drainage works should be carried out within the woodland or the adjacent land.



Wood horsetail