



Doug Lloyd updates us on Herefordshire's black poplars

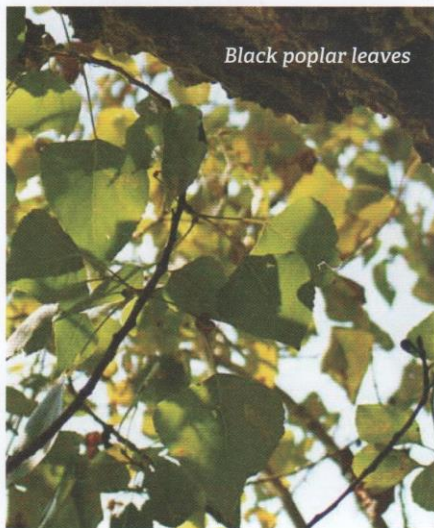
RICHIE COTTERILL

Populus nigra var. betulifolia which is better known as the **native black poplar**, or more traditionally as the **water poplar**, is the western variant of the **European black poplar** and is only found in a geographically limited area in northwest Europe, including Britain and Ireland.

There are only around 8000 of these magnificent trees left in the UK. This number may sound reasonably large but as a population spread over all of lowland England and Wales (it doesn't naturally occur in Scotland), with female trees accounting for only around five percent of this figure and with



The black poplar identification day at Checkley was well attended



Black poplar leaves

RICHIE COTTERILL

its propensity to hybridise with other non-native poplars it should be obvious that this tree faces some difficulties if it is to survive.

The Trust has over the years worked in various ways to conserve the tree in the county. Cuttings from known male and female trees in the county were taken and planted in various locations; phases of survey work have been carried out; management work on old trees has been undertaken to prolong their lives and advice given to owners to help look after their trees.

A continuation of this process to conserve and expand our black poplar population was a joint identification

day carried out with Herefordshire Tree Wardens Network at Checkley on a glorious autumn afternoon this October. The 16 participants included local tree wardens, Trust volunteers and all those with an interest in the conservation of this tree to "root out" as yet undiscovered specimens. Although not literally of course...

Whilst a number of trees have been lost over the years, a significant number have been recently discovered meaning the current county total is 141. The most encouraging sign is that due to past project work through the Trust and many other groups and individuals in the county there are now an additional 28 young black poplars recorded. This

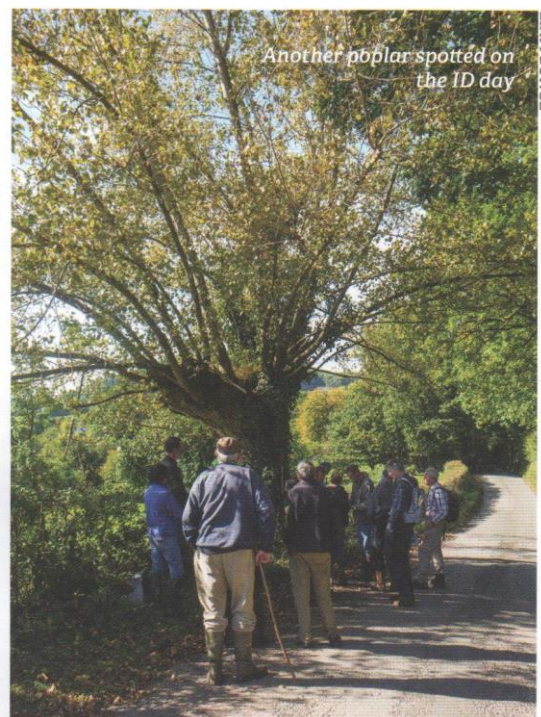
is the first time in over 150 years that there have been any young trees in the population due to the introduction in about 1850 of other non-native poplars which being faster growing were, well, more popular.

The Trust, with the Herefordshire Tree Wardens Network, are trying to get a complete list of black poplars in the county, as on the whole these younger trees haven't been recorded. It is now vitally important to record these as the older trees begin to die off.

If you have planted native black poplars within the county in the last 25 years or think you may have an unrecorded older tree could you please get in touch with Doug at d.lloyd@herefordshirewt.co.uk.

Get Involved! If you are interested in becoming a tree warden for your local parish then please contact the Herefordshire Tree Wardens Network: kingtontrees@live.co.uk / 0777 661252.

Stop press:
Since the walk, ten more veteran black poplars have been spotted and these have now also been verified by Brian Jones, county verifier for the Ancient Tree Hunt!



Another poplar spotted on the ID day

LIAM BUNCE