



**oakbank**  
CREATING THE PERFECT HABITAT

## OAKBANK E-NEWS AUGUST 2024



# STEWARDSHIP REMINDERS

## ELS AUGUST

### 6M BUFFER STRIPS (EE3 AND EE9)

if you have included some wild flowers in your buffer strips (**EE12**) you may now cut the whole 6m strip and remove the cuttings.

## **UNCROPPED, CULTIVATED AREAS FOR GROUND-NESTING BIRDS (EF13)**

from 1st August these can be returned to the normal rotation. If they are sited in an area which could produce a drive or a holding area then you could establish a catch crop asap.

## **EXTENDED OVER-WINTER STUBBLES (EF22)**

from 1st August these can be sprayed off with glyphosate and can return to normal farm management from 15th August.

## **WINTER COVER CROPS (EJ13)**

Drill or broadcast a quick growing cover crop mix by 15th September.

## **MANAGEMENT OF RUSH PASTURES (EK4)**

up to a third of the area of rushes in each field can now be cut.

## **LEGUME AND HERB-RICH SWARDS (EK21)**

as long as the field has been shut up for at least three weeks, you can now cut or graze these.

# **CSS OPTIONS AUGUST**

## **NESTING PLOTS FOR LAPWING AND STONE CURLEW (AB5)**

from **1st August** they can be sprayed off, cultivated and sown with mustard/turnips to provide extra partridge holding cover.

## **ENHANCED OVERWINTER STUBBLE (AB6)**

return to normal farm rotation from **1st August**.

## **FLOWER-RICH MARGINS AND PLOTS (AB8)**

cut (and remove if dense) or graze 90% of the area between **15th August and 31st October** to leave a plant height of between 10cm and 20cm - leave 10% of the area uncut or ungrazed. If you are establishing an AB8 mix for the first time we strongly suggest sowing before the middle of September.

## **TWO-YEAR SOWN LEGUME FALLOW (AB15)**

establish mix as soon as possible after harvest (ideally by the end of August).

## **AUTUMN SOWN BUMBLEBIRD MIX (AB16)**

establish mix as soon as possible after harvest (ideally by the end of August).

## **WINTER COVER CROP (SW6)**

establish a quick growing cover crop by 15th September.





# COVER AND COMPANION CROPS

It's been great to see the combines rolling but it also means we need to start thinking of next year's crops! Post-harvest, instead of leaving the soil bare and baking for the next 8 weeks, why not try and condition it with plants, retain some moisture and keep the soil alive. Use this opportunity to try growing a catch crop (a fast-growing crop between harvest and another autumn sown crop) and see what works for you if you are considering the summer cover crop option in SFI 2024. With a generous payment rate of £163/ha, mounting a seeder box on your cultivator and sowing a crop whilst carrying out an operation you would be doing anyway, could be an easy way to integrate cover crops into your farming system.

Not forgetting over winter cover crops. Drilling date is critical for the biomass of the crop. Even a 10-day difference in August can lead to around 50% reduction in biomass, so think about your options early and maximise the crop's potential. We have various mixes that will suit most situations, so please give us a call to discuss the best option for you.

For those considering companion crops for oilseed rape, we have found that a combination of buckwheat, berseem clover and fenugreek offers the best results. Buckwheat for hiding the crop, berseem clover for its deep root system and nitrogen fixing, and fenugreek, known as the curry plant, using its smell to deter pests.

Harvest is an incredibly busy period, but please do all you can to treat your cover crop as a 'crop' to help maximise its potential.

For more information and seed quotes, please contact the team at the office on 01480 890686.



## STAFF NEWS



### Kirsty Brannan

We are delighted to announce that Kirsty has been promoted to Stewardship & Conservation Division Manager. Kirsty will continue to deliver advice to existing clients but will now combine that with a senior management role within the business.

## STAFF TRAINING

It's been a busy few months for the Oakbank team, with **Ethan Powell** gaining his FACTS qualification, **Sam Jackson** receiving his Postgraduate Diploma in Forestry (with Merit) from Bangor University and five of the Oakbank team gaining their certificates for Mental Health First Aid.

## TREES & WOODLAND

### IPS TYPOGRAPHUS TREE PEST FOUND ON SITKA SPRUCE

Woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry are encouraged to remain vigilant after the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) was found on Sitka spruce trees in the UK for the first time. Previously it was only thought to be a pest of Norway Spruce.

The finding of *Ips typographus*, on a small number of cut and fallen Sitka spruce trees, in close proximity to infested Norway spruce trees, on a site in West Sussex, marks the first time the beetle has been discovered on this species. There is no evidence of spread within the UK and the recent outbreaks are most likely due to natural dispersal of the pest from mainland Europe.

*Ips typographus* is a serious pest of Norway spruce in Europe. It prefers stressed or dying trees but under the right conditions it can attack healthy trees and has the potential to cause significant damage to Great Britain's forestry and timber industries.



**Eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*)**

Following extensive surveillance, further outbreaks have been found in the Demarcated Area (DMA) in Kent and West Sussex, adding to the number of outbreak sites detected this year.

The Demarcated Area covers the South East of England and East Anglia. Within the Demarcated Area, the felling and movement of all spruce material, including trees and wood with bark, isolated bark, and wood chip with bark, is prohibited unless authorised by the Forestry Commission.

See recorded outbreaks on the Ips Demarcated map [Here](#).

## **NEW UK TREE PLANTING HITS HIGHEST LEVEL FOR YEARS..**

21,000 hectares of new woodland were created across the UK last year, which is a modern-day high. This figure falls short of the Government's 30,000-hectare target, but it's nevertheless an improvement for the forestry sector. However, the statistics were not consistent across the four countries. England and Scotland's figures were up from the previous year, with 15,000ha planted in Scotland and 4,550 ha in England. Northern Ireland and Wales sadly saw their figures drop.

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