



# oakbank

CREATING THE PERFECT HABITAT

## OAKBANK E-NEWS JANUARY 2025



**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR ENEWS SUBSCRIBERS.  
WE HOPE YOU HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2025.**

## STEWARDSHIP REMINDERS

### **CS/SFI - AB1/CAHL1 (POLLEN & NECTAR MIX)**

If you haven't done so already you have until 30th March to cut your nectar flower plots. Lots of customers don't have the facility to cut and remove. If that is you then the best advice is to wait until a dry, frosty day and cut very steadily with a flail mower (not a rotary) as this will smash the woody material and is less likely to leave a carpet of mulch.

### **BE3 (MANAGEMENT OF HEDGEROWS)**

If you have gone for the one in two rather than one in three year cutting option then you can now cut half of your hedgerows up until 28th February.

## WINTER FEEDING

Remember under the **AB12 / AHW2 Supplementary Winter Feeding**, you need to keep feeding until April 30th. However, even if you don't claim for this action, we would urge everyone to undertake some winter feeding for our farmland bird species. Whilst feeding wheat is better than nothing, some smaller seeds such as rape and millet would be far more beneficial for many of our passerines.

## COVER CROPS

It is time to think about terminating your over-winter cover crops. If you have over-winter cover crops under countryside stewardship (SW6) and you plan to plant a spring, cash crop, you can 'destroy the cover crop in late January or February, before it is too well developed'. For SFI2023 (SAM2) or SFI 2024 (CSAM2), you must not destroy the cover crop any more than '6 weeks before you establish the early-sown spring crop'. The cover crop can be destroyed chemically, by grazing, or mechanically, via rolling or crimping on a hard frost.



## WOODLAND & TREES

**Congratulations to Sam Jackson** on passing his Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) interview in December. He can now proudly add MICFor to his list of professional qualifications!

## IMPROVING THE VALUE OF YOUNG WOODLANDS

The winter months are the perfect time to use any spare staffing capacity to prune your young broadleaved woodlands. Pruning trees provides a number of benefits, most notably improved access to your growing woodlands and improving the timber quality long term.

## WOODLAND CAPITAL VALUES UP OVERALL - £95 MILLION WORTH OF WOODLANDS SOLD IN THE UK IN 2024

The value of UK forestry listings was down 55% in 2024 according to a new market report from Tilhill. The report described the sector as "cautious but resilient" and highlighted that the headline figure may not be a true representation of the industry's outlook. Two huge deals contributed £150 million alone to 2023 figures but, in 2024, no deals surpassed £10 million. Excluding the two large-scale deals, 2024 would have seen an 80% increase in the value of forestry coming to the market.

## FOREST RESEARCH LAUNCHES A NEW, AGROFORESTRY, TREE SPECIES GUIDE

The new report, written in conjunction with The University of Reading, identifies 33 species of trees and shrubs suitable for planting on agricultural land. The guide aims to help farmers select trees for planting, ensuring that the right trees are planted in the right places and allowing farmers to reap the many benefits they will provide for future generations. It includes factors such as tree height, canopy cover, growth rate, and resilience to pests, diseases, and climate and site tolerances. Sadly, as is usual with the Forestry Commission, conifers have not been considered sufficiently, with only Scots Pine getting a mention. [Tree Species Guide for UK Agroforestry Systems - Forest Research](#)

## BIG FARMLAND BIRD COUNT 2025

Takes place from 7th – 23rd February. Run by the GWCT this initiative offers a simple means of recording the effect of any conservation schemes undertaken by farmers and gamekeepers on their land. It delivers a vital snapshot of the state of the nation's farmland birds and we would encourage you to get counting and submit your results. For further info please go to [www.bfbc.org.uk](http://www.bfbc.org.uk)

## AHDB NATURAL CAPITAL EVENT

We will be attending AHDB's Natural Capital Event, 'Leveraging Environmental Assets on Farm' at Cinch Stadium at Franklins Gardens, Northampton, on Wednesday 22nd January. Members of the Oakbank Team will be involved in panel sessions and talks throughout the day, along with other industry experts. Details here [Book your space now](#)

Wednesday, 22nd January 2025 10:00am - 4:00pm

The Rodber Bar, Cinch Stadium, Weedon Road, Northampton, NN5 5BG

## AHDB Natural Capital Event: Leveraging Environmental Assets on Farm

- What is Natural Capital?
- Who wants to pay you?
- What does it mean for your farm business?
- What are the challenges and risks?
- When is the right time to get involved?

## INTERESTING FACT

The first fact of 2025 comes from **Dan Small** of the Woodland Team:

English yew (*Taxus baccata*) contains poisonous alkaloids that prevent cell division in mammals. Because of their toxicity, the planting of yew trees has often been restricted, due to health concerns for people and livestock, but research conducted in the 1990's by scientists from Leicester & Manchester Universities, showed that a particular compound, extracted from yew needles, can be lethal to leukemia cells and cancerous tumours in humans, preventing them from growing and dividing.

The compound, called 10-Deacetylbaccatin III, is found at the highest concentration in the new growth needles of yews that are clipped each year. Annual trimming stimulates the production of this compound in greater quantities than can be found in old growth.

There are two chemotherapy drugs, docetaxel and paclitaxel, which are developed using yew extract. They are mostly used in the treatment of breast and ovarian cancer. Both drugs can now be made semi-synthetically in the laboratory, but fresh yew still forms an important part of the manufacturing process.

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

We will be sending out our spring newsletter and product guide in February. If any of your address details have changed since last year, please contact the office to ensure your details are updated and you receive your copy.

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