

SteYning For Trees

Help Fight Climate Change



Welcome to our December 2024 Newsletter

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Around **118,000 MILES OF HEDGEROW HAVE DISAPPEARED** since the 1950's (50%) this correlates closely with **biodiversity loss** since then. These hedges were **ripped out** to make way for intensive farming, (butter mountains etc). **SFT** and our growing number of landowners, farmers, volunteers and supportive residents are trying to **rectify** this. **Hedges** provide **excellent shelter** and homes for invertebrates, birds, and mammals as well as **food**.

We are helping to **REPLACE LOST HEDGEROWS/wildlife corridors**. Many **thanks** to Liam and Angela with their **renaturing**; a 1,000 whips planted.

Many **thanks** to Tom Bower and his mother of Upper Maudlyn Farm Trust, such **majestic landscape**; over 1,000 here as well.

SFT are so pleased that **Guy Sanderson** at **Gatewick House** offered to write this article for us and is doing such **great environmental work** at Gatewick in the centre of SteYning. He has a **great love and knowledge of trees**.

LIFE From OLD WOOD

Traditionally late autumn has always been bonfire month as gardeners seek to tidy away old wood and debris and enjoy the heat of a bonfire with a toffee apple or two.

Over the past month at Gatewick House, behind the parish church, we've been gathering up piles of dead branches, leaves and hedge cuttings to start something that we hope will be much more exciting, more beneficial and enduring than a bonfire.

If you have walked along the edge of Abbey Wood nature reserve recently and looked across (as I hope you might), you'll have seen the start of a long, snaking brown 'dead hedge'. It's not finished yet, but when it is, we hope that it will be a glorious, vertical pile of old branches, dead stumps and twigs which we will regenerate each year with hedge cuttings and any branches from ongoing tree maintenance. Believing that one large pile is better than

several smaller piles, we are creating a continuous 125m pile of dead wood along the edge of the nature reserve.

Over time, the wood at the bottom of the hedge will rot down, aided by tiny fungi, bacteria, slugs (yes, we'll even be encouraging those!), snails, springtails, millipedes, earwigs, woodlice and beetles. We're hoping, in time, to find that we've attracted the musk beetle, the wonderfully named red-necked click beetle, and Britain's biggest, the staghorn beetles, as the hedge settles down. Meanwhile the dry wood at the top of the pile will attract wood wasps and solitary bees which both drill into old dry wood to make homes, as well as overwintering butterflies, moths and ladybirds. All of these are then prey for spiders, hedgehogs (which sadly are less and less common in this country), shrews, frogs, toads, lizards, slow-worms and possibly grass snakes. Small birds like robins, wrens, dunnocks and even blackbirds all like the tangled maze and hideaways in such a hedge and, once it's finished, we'll enhance this by planting honeysuckle along the whole hedge.

To match this dead hedge, we will start next month planting a further 200m stretch of conventional native hedging with holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple, hornbeam, dog-roses along the back of gardens from Shooting Field and Bowman's Close.

Our hope is thus to join the amazing work that's been going on at the Abbey Road nature reserve and the work in the churchyard at St Andrew and St Cuthman's to provide a continuous wildlife corridor and sanctuary that we might all benefit from at the heart of Steyning.

Guy Sanderson

THANKS

We have **so many** people to **thank** for all their **hard work and support**, especially our valiant **volunteers**. We have now completed the **maintenance work** on our many **hedges/wildlife corridors** here over 20 of ours. Plus at least 7 privately owned, that have been planted with a **mixture of species** at our advice, these are looked after by their owners. We are so pleased to see they are all establishing so well, **growing tall and strong**, the one reason to be thankful for the wet summer! Many thanks for everyone's generosity: Mike Wynne paying for another tree as well as providing and looking after our supplies of recycled canes and spirals; Graham Kenward's generous donation; Tom and Christine Aubrey's beautifully renatured garden, hedge and donation; Tina and John Hobbs. **How would we manage without you all?** What incredible progress is being made here.

**We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas.
Best wishes from the Steyning For Trees Committee.**

Remember: Trees are front-line warriors in the fight against climate change.

If you have any enquiries or suggestions please,
Email us at SteyningForTrees@gmail.com
or visit our website at steyningfortrees.com
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Any donations, large or small, will be greatly appreciated and will assist in enabling us to continue our important work. Please make any contributions to the bank account below.

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