



West Wales Coppice Collective.



The West Wales Coppice Collective is made up from a group of local coppice and greenwood workers who want to promote the local coppice industry, best coppice practice's, its products and the regeneration of local coppice woodlands.

Mission Statement

- To promote the practice and products of local coppice woodlands
 - To encourage the exchange of information.
- To encourage and promote the highest standards within the group.
 - To seek opportunities for education and training.
- To help promote the groups activities and the products of its members
 - To observe high environmental standards at all times.
 - To help source woodlands for members to work in.

What is Coppice and Coppicing?

History

Coppicing is a form of Woodland Management dating back thousands of years. Our Neolithic ancestors discovered that when some trees were cut down to the stump, the stump would sprout a multitude of stems that were smaller, fast growing and easily utilised. These people used the small poles primarily to make track-ways over wet ground.

Coppicing continued in its growth, and by the mid 13th century, most of our woodlands were being managed as coppice woods. Coppicing remained an important rural industry in Wales and the rest of Britain until the start of its decline in the 1850s, when a decrease in the demand for traditional products came about. This decline increased dramatically after the First World War when major industry started to manufacture products that were once supplied from the woods by coppice workers, now that we have all reached what is called peak oil and the emergence of the transition town movement it is time to bring things back to a more local scale. This in turn will bring back an important supply of local coppice products for the home and garden in the local area.

Economic Importance

The economic value of coppice woodland is slowly increasing as more derelict coppice is brought back into rotation and worked once again. There are now grants available to help pay for the restoration work that is needed in order to return the coppice back to its former glory and levels of productivity. Good quality coppice is now much sought after and for many years a hazel coppice auction has been held annually

Conservation

Coppice Woodlands can support a wide range of different species of trees, allowing various degrees of light to reach the woodland floor, they also contain a vast range of flora and fauna, most notably bluebells in spring. Many plants and animals including the dormouse have adapted to coppice management and have become dependent on it for their survival. The dramatic decrease in coppicing in the 1920's has meant a major loss of our flora and fauna. It is because of this that many wildlife trusts all over the U.K are actively promoting the re-introduction of coppicing on their woodland sites.

Uses

Coppicing is a highly sustainable method of producing rapid re-growth of useful wood without the need to replant. Most of our native Hardwood Trees in Britain will coppice freely. The most frequently used species are hazel, ash, oak, willow, field maple, a very popular coppice wood although not a native tree, is sweet chestnut.

Coppice Wood has many different uses, ranging from firewood to woven fence panels, gate hurdles to charcoal depending upon the species and age. Varying the ages of the coppice growth in woodlands allows for a constant supply of wood. Seven year old hazel is ideal for hurdles while fifteen year old growth is more suitable for hedge stakes. The list of products that can be made from coppice material is almost endless.

Hazel: Woven hurdles, thatching spars, bean and pea sticks, walking sticks.

Ash: Tool Handles, Sheep hurdles and gates, tent pegs,

Oak: Laths, fencing materials, hurdles and gates, tiles and small timber, milled timber

Sweet Chestnut: Fence posts, cleft rails, post and rail fencing, stakes and walking sticks.

All of these woods can also be used for charcoal and rustic furniture.



More information for local coppice workers, coppice woodland and land owners on the work of the West Wales coppice collective please contact;

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