Worcestershire's *Ancient Trees*

Surveying and recording guidance pack

March 2008

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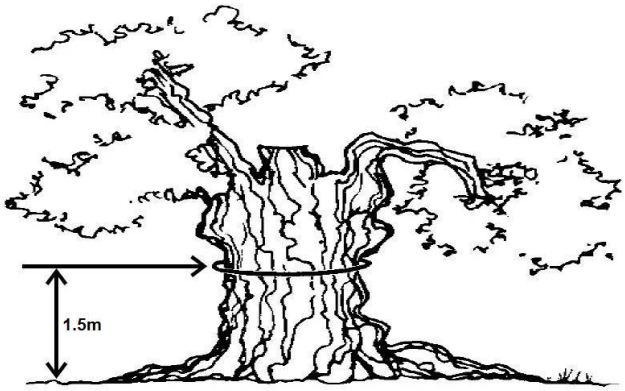
Type of tree

This is a list of the species that the tree Register will currently accept, along with a guide as to the size at which each species becomes potentially interesting.

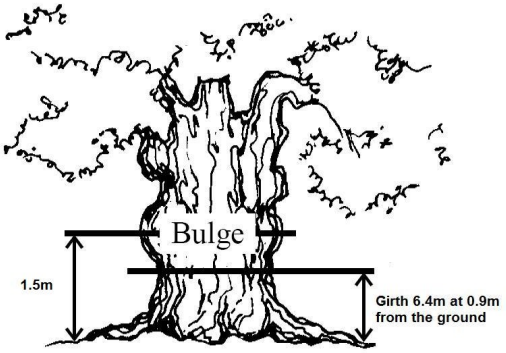
Exceptions include pollarded trees and coppice stools with a large base girth - please record these whenever you come across them.

Species	Girth (m)	Species	Girth (m)
ASH	3.00	LIME (LARGE LEAVED)	All
BEECH	3.00	LIME (SMALL LEAVED)	All
BIRCH (SILVER)	2.50	OAK (PEDUNCULATE)	3.90
COMMON ALDER	2.00	OAK (SESSILE)	3.90
ELM (SMOOTH-LEAVED)	All	OAK (TURKEY)	3.90
ELM (WYCH)	1.50	POPLAR (BLACK)	3.50
FIELD MAPLE	2.00	POPLAR (GREY)	3.00
HAWTHORN	1.00	SWEET CHESTNUT	3.00
HOLLY	2.00	SYCAMORE	3.00
HORNBEAM	2.50	WALNUT	2.00
LIME (COMMON)	3.00	YEW	3.00

Measuring the Girth

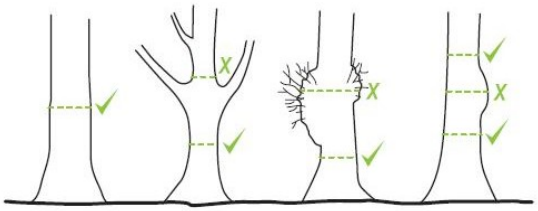


The girth of a tree should be measured, as near as possible, 1.5m from the ground. This is approximately chest height on an adult male.



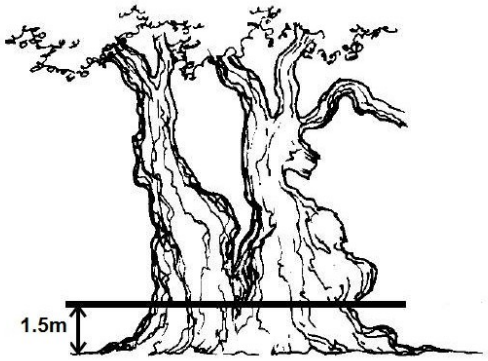
Dealing with irregular features on the trunk

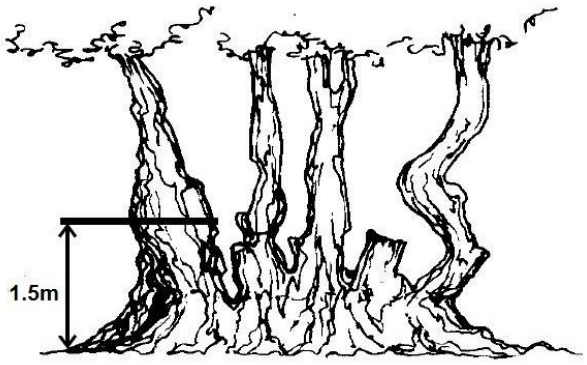
Old trees often develop quite significant lumps and bumps on the trunk. Avoid these irregular features when measuring the girth - measure either above or below them at the natural 'waist point' of the tree, even if this means straying outside of the chest height rule. Always record the height at which you measure the girth if it deviates from chest height.



Dealing with multi-stemmed trees

If the trunk split occurs above 1.5m measure the girth at chest height as normal. If the split occurs below 1.5m measure the girth of the thickest stem at chest height.





Measuring the height of the tree

A clever trick to measure the height of a tree is to stick a bit of coloured tape onto the trunk at a known height from the ground. Take a photograph of the tree, making sure that the entire tree is visible from top to bottom. When looking at the photograph later you can work out the precise height of the tree because you will have a scale to work to. Remember to remove the tape after taking the photograph!

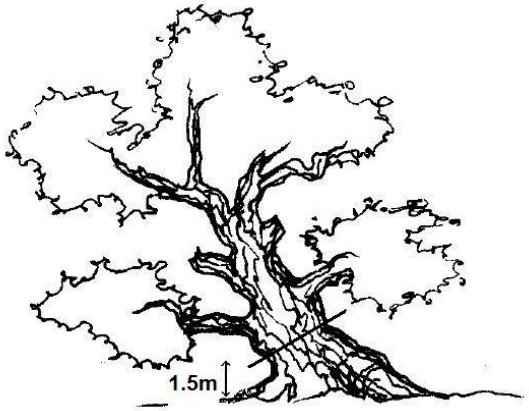
Bole height

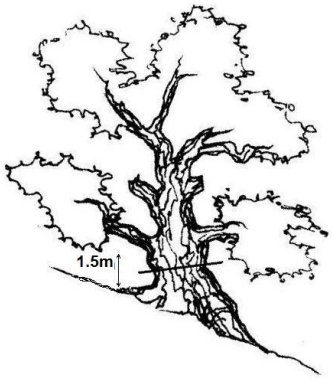
This only applies if the tree you are measuring has ever been pollarded. If this is the case then as well as measuring the total height of the tree please also measure to the top of the bole (where the branches begin). You may be able to do this with a tape measure if the top of the bole is within reach, otherwise use the same method as for measuring the total height of the tree.

A **natural pollard** is where the branches of the tree have all collapsed naturally and re-growth has started. Treat this in the same way as above - you will have to use your judgement as to where you measure to as the exact bole height may be harder to define.

Measuring a leaning tree or one on sloping ground

If a tree is leaning always measure on the 'underneath' side. If a tree is growing on a slope always measure on the highest point of the slope.



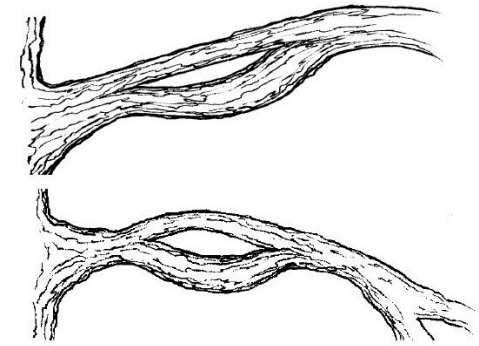


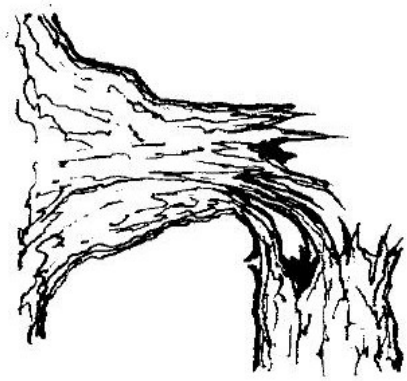
Number of trunks

If the tree you are recording has more than one trunk originating from the same base, please record the number.

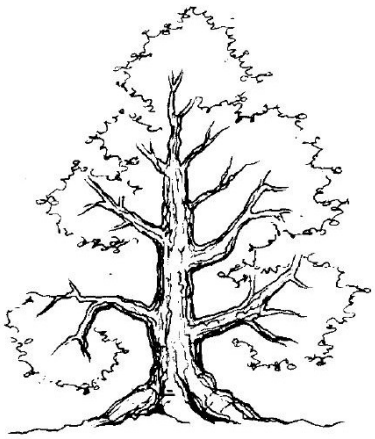
Split limbs

The process of limb loss may start very gradually when stresses develop and the limb begins to buckle and tear. The limb may not completely detach from the tree for many years and may be supported against other limbs for a time before falling. While the limb is still partially attached it may well continue to live and grow as some of the conductive tissues may remain intact. Please record the number of limbs in this state.



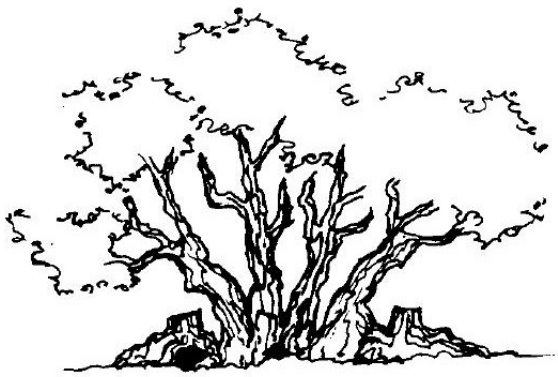


Tree form

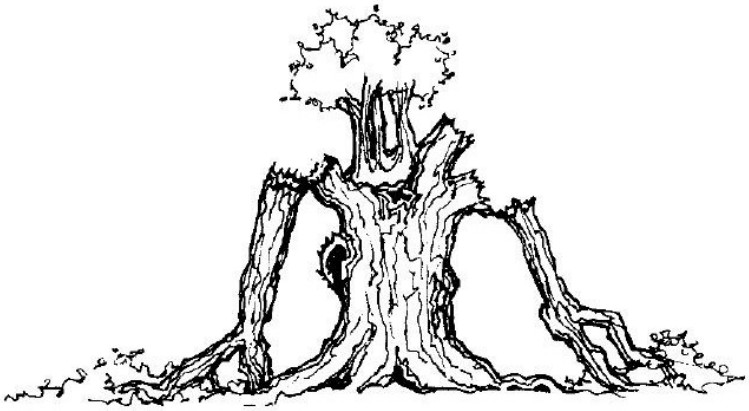


A **maiden** tree is growing in its natural form with no modifications (either natural or man-made) to its shape.

A **multi-stemmed** tree is where the trunk has naturally divided and two or more trunks are growing from the same original base.



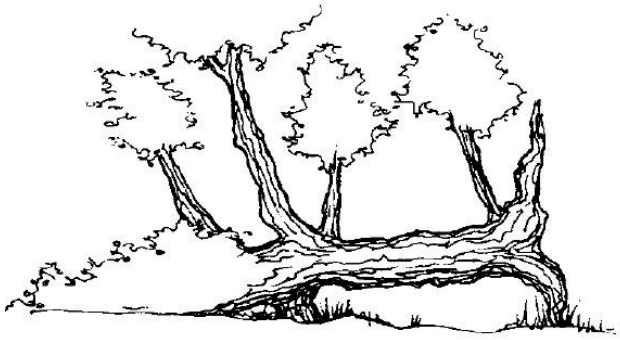
A tree that has been **coppiced** is artificially multi-stemmed - all trunks have been cut near ground level and have subsequently regenerated.

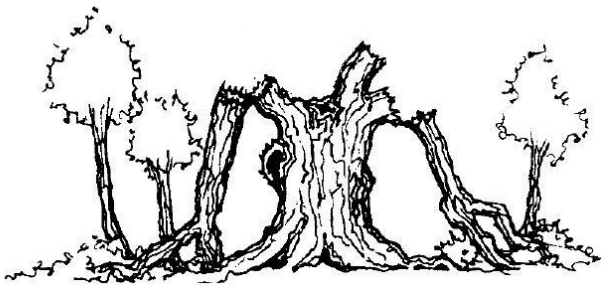


A **natural pollard** occurs when all the branches of a maiden tree collapse naturally and the tree subsequently regenerates from the top of the bole.

A **managed pollard** has had the branches removed artificially and is still under active management—the re-growth will be relatively young.

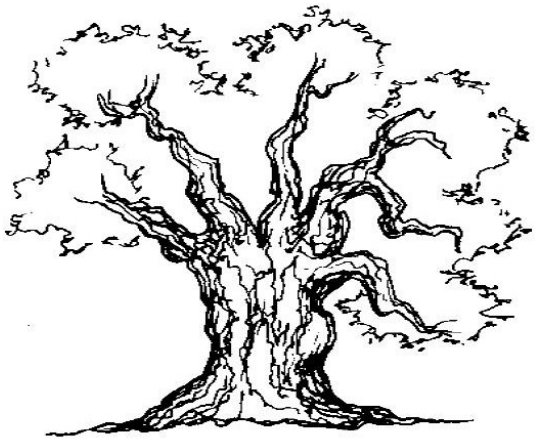
A **lapsed pollard** is one no longer under regular management and regrowth will be old and possibly showing veteran features itself.



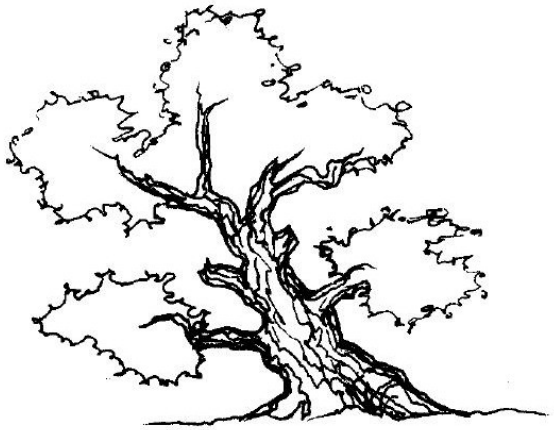


Phoenix regeneration occurs when the tree partially or completely collapses and begins to regenerate, either from the main trunk if lying down or from branches if these have fallen but remain partly attached.

Does the tree lean



Tree is completely **upright**.



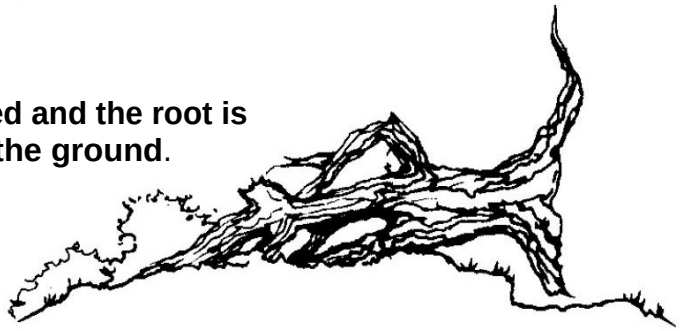
Tree is **leaning but still firmly rooted**.

Tree is **leaning and root is loose**.

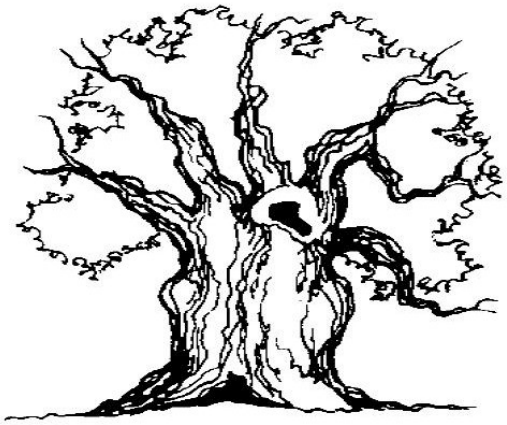
Tree has begun to **collapse but is supported** by either another tree, a building or landscape feature so that the root remains in the ground.

The tree has **collapsed but the root remains partially in the ground**.

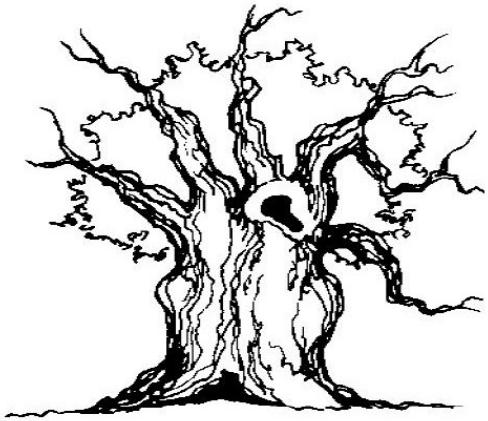
The tree has **collapsed and the root is entirely free of the ground**.



Crown



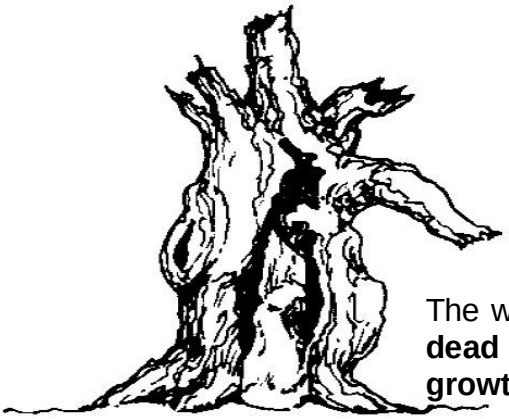
The tree has a **full** or virtually full **live crown**.



The tree has a **partial live crown**.

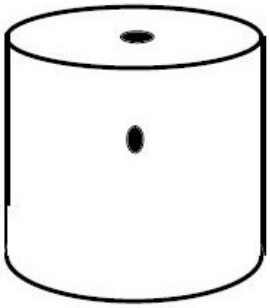
The tree has a **residual crown**.

The tree has a **dead crown** but some live growth from the trunk.

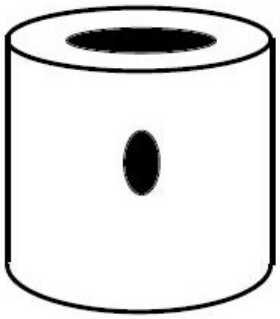


The whole **tree is dead with no live growth**.

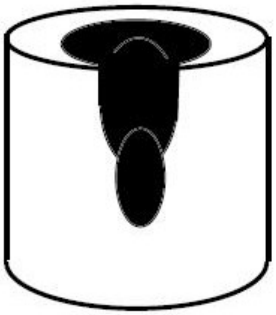
Hollow



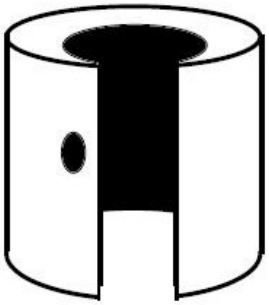
Trunk appears solid.



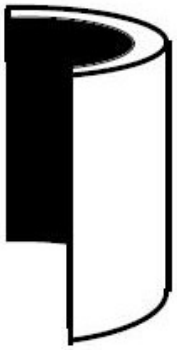
Trunk appears partially hollow with a few small cavities visible.



Trunk appears completely hollow with major cavities visible.

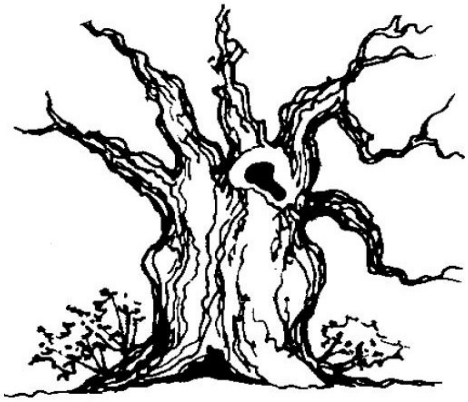


Remnant trunk with section missing.

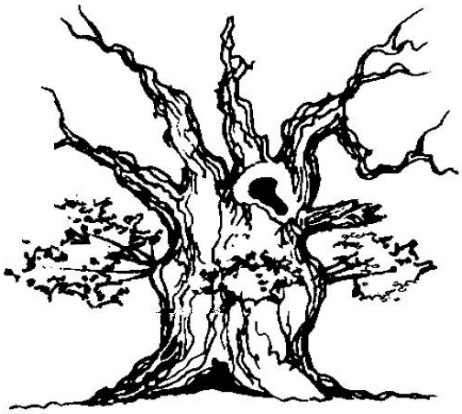


C shaped trunk with major section missing.

Twig growth



Epicormic growth is significant twig growth coming from burrs on the base of the tree (left), the trunk (right) or the crown (below left).



Major bark loss

Does the tree have significant areas of bark missing, defined as 30%or more bark loss from the tree? If the cause of this is obvious, for example a lightening strike or stock damage, record this in the notes.

Photograph

Taking a digital photo of the tree gives us an image of the entire structure and gives us something to refer back to if the tree is revisited in years to come. The main reason that we encourage tree recording in winter is because without the leaves the structure of the tree can be seen more clearly.

Habitat the tree is growing in

The habitat in which the tree is growing is an important piece of information in determining the age of the tree you have recorded. Trees that are 'open grown' in fields and parkland will put down more wood each year and ultimately reach a bigger size than a tree growing in a woodland that has to compete for space, light and nutrients with the other plants surrounding it. This piece of information is therefore a crucial part of the data needed to estimate the age of the tree.

Health and safety

If possible always take someone with you when out recording: not only is this safer but two pairs of hands will make measuring the trees easier. At the very least, let someone know where you are going, when you expect to be back and take a mobile phone with you.

Be careful when measuring hedgerow trees - ditches, fences, barbed wire and spiky, stinging plants should be treated with caution!

Be careful when entering fields of livestock, particularly if there are young animals around. If taking a dog with you always keep it on a lead if there are livestock about.

Some of the fungi you encounter on ancient trees may be poisonous and the other micro-organisms found in association with decaying plant and animal remains and excreta may also cause upset stomachs and similar ailments. Do ensure you wash your hands thoroughly.

How to send in records

Paper recording forms can be sent to us by post at the following address:

Worcestershire Biological Records Centre
Lower Smite Farm
Smite Hill
Hindlip
Worcs
WR3 8SZ

Where possible we would prefer to receive records electronically and we can email the recording form to you as an excel spreadsheet; you can then email records back to us periodically.

We would like you to take photographs of the trees you record. If these are digital images you can either put them on a CD and post them or email them along with the corresponding forms (but please make sure the file sizes are not too big!). If the photos are prints then post these to us and we can scan them to create a digital file (or you could do this yourself if you have access to the right facilities).

Please give your tree photograph and the corresponding recording form the same unique reference number so we can easily match up the form with the correct photo.

Worcestershire's *Ancient Trees*

Dear Landowner...

The Worcestershire Recorders are a local natural history group whose main interest is the collection of biological records of the species and habitats that we have in Worcestershire. They have recently been awarded a grant to carry out a project to survey ancient trees within the county.

Ancient trees are important for many reasons: historically because they are the oldest living things visible in our landscape; culturally because of the myths and legends surrounding them and because of the local significance that particular trees may have to communities; and ecologically because of the variety of wildlife that is supported by the decaying wood, cracks and cavities found in old trees.

Through the Ancient Tree project we want to raise awareness of how valuable these trees are to wildlife and to the history of our countryside, and to survey and record as many of them as we can.

We would be very grateful if you could support the project by letting one of our volunteer recorders look at the trees on your land and carry out a survey of them. This involves measuring the girth and height of the tree and recording details such as missing limbs and bark, if the tree is hollow and the habitat in which it is growing.

The records collected through the project will be kept at Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. They will also be shared with the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, based at Worcester University, and with the Ancient Tree Hunt, a national project coordinated by The Woodland Trust. The data will be used to give us a better understanding of the distribution and ecology of ancient trees in the county, along with more information about the wildlife that some of these trees support. We hope that by raising awareness of their importance and recording their current ecological status, we can help to ensure these trees are protected and well managed for years to come.

We would be happy to provide you with a copy of all the details recorded for the trees on your land. If you would like additional advice and guidance on how best to manage the trees we can put you in touch with the appropriate organisation or provide you with further information. Having a detailed survey of the old trees on your land may be useful to you in the future if you are thinking about applying for a grant or scheme such as Environmental Stewardship, where there are options for the protection of in-field trees and, in the higher tier of the scheme, for the protection of ancient trees specifically and the creation, restoration and maintenance of wood pasture and parkland habitat. Contact your local Natural England office for up-to-date information about the Environmental Stewardship schemes.

If you would like more information about the Ancient Tree project please get in touch.

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