



Gwent Wildlife Trust

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Gwent Wildlife Trust helps UK tree seed project.

Friday 18th January 2019

Protecting the future of Gwent's trees at Kew's Millennium Seed Bank

Between May - November 2018, we collected seed from 12 different species of tree - including willow, Hazel and scarcer species like Alder Buckthorn and Bird Cherry - throughout south-east Wales, as part of a national project to protect the UK's trees.

Gwent Wildlife Trust is a partner in the UK National Tree Seed Project, a project set up by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, with funding from players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Tree seeds collected as part of the project are safely banked in the underground vaults of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank – forming the UK's first national collection of tree seeds.

These collections play a vital role in conservation work to protect UK trees and woodlands, including against pests and diseases such as ash dieback. The collections, and associated data, are available to researchers working on solutions to tackle the many threats facing our woodlands.

Gwent Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Sites Officer Andy Karran said: "The collecting trips were great fun, getting out into some of the nicest parts of the Welsh countryside, doing the important work of the seed collection, but also seeing so much other fantastic wildlife at the same time. Collecting the various willow species was a challenge as the species hybridise readily and we only wanted pure bred seeds. Timing was crucial to ensure they were ripe but not leave it too late so that the wind blew all the catkin fluff away together with the seeds!

"Timing was also crucial to ensure the birds didn't beat us to all the berries, and the squirrels and Dormice to the Hazelnuts. We are most grateful to the landowners who granted access to their woodlands and volunteers who helped us to collect the seeds."



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or volunteers.

Clare Trivedi, UK National Tree Seed Project Co-ordinator at Kew Gardens, said: "Building up our seed collections of the nation's favourite and most important tree species is a vital step in combating the multiple challenges, including pests and diseases, which threaten to alter our landscape dramatically. We are delighted that Gwent Wildlife Trust is supporting this project to help us ensure that seeds from across the UK are collected and conserved."

The UK National Tree Seed Project launched in May 2013 with the aim of securing genetically diverse collections of UK native trees and shrubs. The species target list takes into account factors such as conservation status, prevalence in the landscape and vulnerability to pests and diseases. The target species include many which underpin the UK's wider plant and animal diversity, as well as supporting woodland industry, tourism and recreation, such as ash, juniper, Scots pine, alder, beech, hazel, silver birch and yew. To date, the project has collected more than 12.5 million seeds sampling from over 8,000 individual trees across the UK.

If you would like to volunteer and be involved in future seed collecting and conservation work with Gwent Wildlife Trust then please contact Andy: akarran@gwentwildlife.org or call GWT on 01600 740600.

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