



# Gwent Wildlife Trust

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## Yew

### Taxus baccata

Join us

Protect local wildlife



- Wildlife
- Trees and shrubs
- Yew



### Species information

**Common name**  
Yew

**Latin name**  
Taxus baccata

**Category**  
Trees and shrubs

**Statistics**  
Height: up to 20m

**Conservation status**  
Common.

### About

Yew is a medium-sized, evergreen tree commonly found in churchyards - more than 500 churchyards in England and Wales alone contain Yew trees that are at least as old as the church itself. This association with Christian religion (and possibly even older beliefs) and its ability to reach extreme old age have ensured that Yew is now surrounded by many myths. In fact, the dead were sometimes buried beneath Yew trees to 'protect' them. Wild Yew is mainly found on well-drained chalk and limestone soils, so the prevalence of old trees in churchyards in south-east and central England, Wales and the Lake District mirrors this fact.

### How to identify

Yew is easily recognised by its dense, glossy, dark green needles and bright red berries with a single dark seed.

### Where to find it

Widespread, particularly in churchyards.



Grassland



Heathland



Towns and Gardens



Upland



Woodland

## When to find it



## How can people help

Many ancient Yews are found in churchyards which can be great places for wildlife: their old stone walls and gravestones harbour lichens and mosses, Yews and hedges provide food for birds and mammals, meadows are nectar sources for butterflies, and their peaceful atmosphere is good for wildlife and people alike. The Wildlife Trusts help local churches to look after the habitats they shelter through a variety of projects - get in touch with your local Trust today to find out more or volunteer to help.

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