

## VETERAN TREES

*'A veteran tree is more than a single old organism. It is home to a wealth of interdependent plants, animals and micro-organisms that interact with and can contribute to the longevity of the tree.'*

Veteran trees have such a variety of unique habitats in a small space. Many are cut down for safety reasons when the tree could be managed for many years in to the future. Churchyards are home to many veteran and ancient trees.

### Magnificent veteran tree features include...

- Holes in branches and loose bark.
- Dead wood under and on the tree.
- Sap runs.
- Epiphytic plants (plants growing solely on a tree).
- Crevices and water pools.
- Fungal fruiting bodies.
- Short wide trunks and low wide crowns mean they survive bad weather better than younger trees.



The more features, the higher the wildlife value.

The fact that a tree looks a bit worse for wear does not necessarily mean it should be cut down. Non intervention is by far the best approach. The following options should only be considered after consulting a specialist,

- restoration of pollarding to keep the overall crown height and spread to a minimum, re-

introduced over a period of time.

- removing ends of very long branches
- pole thinning (remove selected pollard stems)
- truncation (severe cutting of major stems)
- pruning and bracing
- deadwood cutting
- felling

Refer to many of Natural England's publications including 'Veteran Trees; a guide to good management'.

### Timber

If a tree is felled then the wood may have a value to local craftspeople, or make a wood pile (see section on hedges).

### Useful contacts

#### Natural England

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Protect and improve England's natural environment. Provides information on veteran trees in their publication section.

#### Publications

A series of 12 leaflets on aspects of tree care and management is available from the Arboricultural Association, listed at the end of Fact Sheet 11 - Tree Management Information

Field Studies Council (FSC) foldout guide to trees is excellent for beginners.

