



Tree Frontiers News

A newsletter that helps keep you abreast of interesting facts and information from the world of arboriculture and related industries

The UK's woodlands have faced a turbulent year, with extreme weather driving both challenges and surprising signs of resilience. In a major success for biosecurity, the Forestry Commission announced in September 2025 that the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) has been eradicated from all 13 outbreak sites first detected in 2018. While monitoring and movement restrictions remain in place, warm spring conditions have prompted continued vigilance.

There is also cautious optimism for ash trees. [New research from the Forestry Commission](#) reveals that some specimens infected with ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) are showing signs of recovery. Five trees monitored in East Anglia since 2013 were found to be in significantly better condition in 2025, offering hope for long-term adaptation.

2025 has also been identified as a mast year, particularly for oaks, with reports of record-breaking fruit production. A provisional average fruit score of 4.1 (potentially the highest ever recorded) has been reported, based on volunteer observations from the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar project. The final score is still being calculated, but early data suggests exceptional pollination conditions driven by the sunny and dry spring. The project also recorded the earliest-ever flowering, budding, and leafing dates for oak trees, alongside early ripening of blackberries, elder, and holly berries.

However, this abundance is part of a "false autumn" triggered by the prolonged summer heat and drought. Trees have entered survival mode, shedding leaves early and producing fruit prematurely. While visually striking, this is a sign of deep stress. Premature leaf fall reduces photosynthesis, weakening trees' energy reserves and defences against pests and disease. Fine feeder roots may die off, increasing the risk of branch dieback and instability. Young trees and those in poor conditions are particularly vulnerable, and there are warnings that repeated drought years will erode long-term resilience.

For wildlife, the early fruiting creates a temporary boon, helping birds and mammals build fat reserves. However, early consumption may leave some species without sufficient food later in autumn, jeopardising hibernation. Insect-eating birds may also struggle due to reduced insect populations. The wider ecological stress from false autumn remains a concern.



Have you noticed the signs of a "False Autumn"?

With a record hot summer and dry spring, there have been early signs typically associated with Autumn, such as leaf drop and fruit ripening. This "false autumn" is a direct result of climate stress on trees and plants (reported by the Met Office), meaning that trees shed leaves early to cope with heat and drought, eventually leading to a reduced harvest and less winter food for wildlife.

[Read more](#)



Future Trees Trust receives funding towards new National Centre

The Future Trees Trust has received a major grant from the Wolfson Foundation, supporting the development of the National Centre in Oxfordshire. The contribution brings the project past the halfway mark on its fundraising journey.

The National Centre will be a first-of-its-kind hub dedicated to environmental education, sustainable forestry and public engagement.

Find out more



Call for arboriculture professionals to assist with tree health survey.

Tree professionals working in arboriculture are being asked to take part in a new tree health survey as part of a DEFRA-funded project looking at pathways and practices concerning the tree disease, [canker stain of plane](#).

Scientists at Forest Research would like to find out more about tree professionals' knowledge of the disease, as well as how tree work is carried out in the UK and abroad, particularly in relation to the implementation of biosecurity measures. Scientists are also interested in professionals' understanding of the risks associated with the movement of arboricultural arisings and equipment.

Complete the Survey



ICF launches 'UKFS for Non-Foresters' online course

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) has launched a new online training course designed to bring the best practice principles of the UK Forestry Standard to non-foresters.

The course is based on the technical standard for sustainable forestry in the UK, which is not widely known or accessed outside of the forestry sector – and yet its principles should form the basis for any decision-making involving trees and woodlands.

The one-hour training course delivers, via an engaging and easy-to-use platform, valuable insights and guidance on sustainable forestry practices to forestry-adjacent professionals, including farmers, landowners, conservationists, environmentalists, climate professionals, businesses and investors in natural capital, local authority planners, policy officers, and others whose roles involve the management of trees and woodlands.

[Read more](#)

Careers in forestry and arboriculture

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) have issued a 60 second video showing a career in forestry, and the routes available to become a tree professional.

[Read more](#)



Drones and sniffer dogs used to fight the Spruce Bark Beetle

The government is using drones and sniffer dogs to fight back against a beetle which is threatening to destroy trees across the UK after wreaking havoc in Europe.

The spruce bark beetle, also known as *Ips Typographus*, is just 5mm long and feeds on conifer trees, a move which has left forests across the continent devastated. The species was first detected in the UK in 2018 after being carried across the English Channel by winds.

It claims the new line of defence has been successful so far and that officials have been able to remove the pest from at-risk areas in the east and south east, making the UK the first country to have eradicated the beetle in controlled areas.

[Read more](#)



Minimum age of Sycamore Gap tree confirmed by scientists

Scientists have confirmed the minimum age of the Sycamore Gap tree after it was illegally felled in 2023.

The tree, which stood in a natural gap in the landscape next to Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, was analysed by a team of experts from Historic England – the public body that protects the country's historic environment.

The researchers found the tree to be at least 100 to 120 years old when it was cut down. This means it is

likely to have appeared in the landscape in the late 1800s.

The tree was deliberately cut down overnight in September 2023, prompting a national outcry and a police investigation.

Earlier this year, Daniel Graham and Adam Carruthers were found guilty of its illegally felling and were sentenced to more than four years in prison.

[Read more](#)

Tree Frontiers News

September Planning Consents



A trio of planning consents in September

After many months of hard work, and a range of different tree related challenges on each, we were delighted to hear that three of our projects got consent in the space of a couple of weeks.

- Contemporary Home in Shipton-under-Wychwood
- New Wellness Area & Car Gallery in The Cotswolds
- Extra Care Scheme in Frimley

These schemes demonstrate the breadth of our arboricultural services on development schemes. If you need assistance on any schemes where trees may need to be considered, get in touch (info@treefrontiers.com)

Case Study: Contemporary Home

Case Study: New Wellness Area & Car Gallery

Case Study: Extra Care Scheme



Steve has become a 'Validator'

Earlier this month, Steve completed [VALID](#) training in Sheffield. This is tree risk assessment training course that aims to simplify assessments, focussing on an overarching strategy which determines ongoing levels of assessment.

The system aims to take the *bafflegab* (vague words) and *numberwang* (difficult maths) out of tree risk-benefit assessments, utilising a smart phone app for easy data capture and output.



We're Raising Money for Chipping Norton Theatre

Steve is a glutton for punishment. Last year he walked across hot coals in order to raise money for Chipping Norton Theatre. This year, he has stepped in at the last minute to take a vacant spot in the Oxford Half Marathon.

Not only does he have to get his running shoes on and get training, but he also needs to raise £200 in sponsorship, in just a few weeks.

The funds will go to helping support The Theatre, which is an independent home for arts and creativity in Chipping Norton. The Theatre provides opportunities to access, experience, create & work in theatre and use the arts to address issues of rural poverty, isolation and poor mental health which impact many young people and families in our community.

If you are able to make a donation we would very much appreciate the support.

Donate Here



Lunchtime CPDs

We continue to offer lunchtime CPDs for other companies. Earlier this week Nick had the pleasure of presenting to [Nicholas Pearson Associates](#) on all things trees. This presentation was tailored to veteran trees and potential ecological value.

If your team would benefit from either an in-person or online lunchtime CPD session (which can be tailored to your needs), please get in touch (info@treefrontiers.com)



Tree of the month

Our tree this month is often found growing alongside rivers, or watercourses and it gets its common name from the distinctive sound of its branches breaking.... Surely you can figure this month's tree out. If not, why not just have a crack?!

What Tree?



Share



Forward



Share

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info@treefrontiers.com

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