

Trees for Wimborne

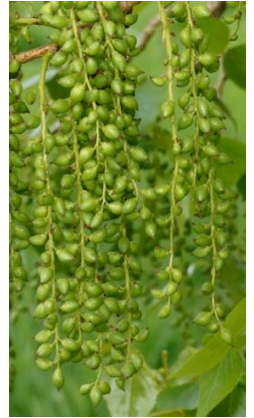
Native Black Poplar Newsletter

April 2026

Key Points about Native Black Poplars



- Native Black Poplars are our rarest timber trees.
- Like their cousins, the willow they like riverine habitat
- There are only 7000 mature trees left nationally.
- In the last 200 years their numbers have reduced to such a point that even with the ideal habitat there are so few left that they are unlikely to reproduce.
- Across Dorset there is probably no more than 75 trees, but so far we have only found 50.
- They are under threat from insufficient numbers, insufficient diversity, insufficient habitat



Diversity is a problem because most of the trees originated from the Victorian Era when nurseries produced large numbers of black poplars from the same parent tree and sold them widely across the country. We now have a little more than 200 different genetic profiles across the UK

What about locally

- Between Blandford and Throop we only know of 2 mature trees on the Stour. Both are males. The best known is at White Mill and is the result of a cutting taken 40 years ago.
- We haven't yet located any mature trees on the Allen.
- We have located 4 mature trees on the Tarrant which may be cuttings from White Mill. All are males.
- The nearest mature black poplars to Wimborne are probably around Sturminster Newton



Young black poplar at WhiteMill

A light at the end of the tunnel

There is now increased interest in this abandoned tree, along with a recognition of the importance of wetlands to other wildlife and as a way of preventing flooding.

Trees for Wimborne are doing our bit by increasing numbers of this nearly lost tree. We grow black poplars at a tree nursery. We are putting a genetic diverse, importantly, of both sexes back onto suitable sites.



What have we been up to during the Winter of 25/26?

We distributed over 70 trees to landowners in Dorset, along the Stour catchment and into Somerset. A proportion of these trees have been planted in publicly accessible spaces in Wimborne along the river Allen, on our riverside SANGs and in the Woodland Burial Ground, where we hope that as they develop character they become much loved. A little further away we have planted trees near White Mill and near Shapwick on National Trust

We have given a further tree to the [Friends of Coy Pond](#), where it was planted to celebrate National Tree Week.

Others will become visible in future years from roads and footpaths.



One of three new trees on the Riverside SANG

A big thank you to Upton Tree Specialists who provide the space to grow our trees and to Forest Research who have confirmed that the trees we use to provide our cuttings are Native Black Poplars.

Last but not least thank you all the landowners who have planted our trees on their land.



Cuttings receiving some TLC

We also had a number of trees tested and some have proved to be new clones in Dorset. We are especially pleased that 3 seedlings grown from seeds gathered below a tree in the Cotswolds have proven to be black poplars. We are very proud to have 3 individuals that have new genetic profiles. We have 6 more seedlings which we plan to get tested this coming year. So, fingers crossed. They are still very young, but we hope that they will find a "forever home" in the perfect Dorset riverine habitat one day.

We have also spent the winter preparing for future years, our existing cuttings have had a good rest over the winter and are now about to get a spring feed and TLC to encourage strong growth over the summer.



Black Poplar seedlings

Please let us know if you would like to be involved or if you know landowners in the surrounding areas who would like to have native black poplars on their land

Following on from the results of last years testing we have taken in the region of 500 cuttings. This will give us a good stock so that they are available for projects which we hope are going to come to fruition in E. Dorset. This is a step up for us and we have been able to do this because, the owners of the trees give the cuttings freely, many landowners have kindly given donations and because of funding from the Dorset Community Tree Fund.



Planting a TfW Black Poplar at Carymarsh Nature Reserve

We think its important to work with other people across the country as we believe this is the only way to ensure that the tree is reinvigorated across its whole range, exchange information and be part of a wider network. We are lucky in Dorset to have access to a range of material to grow trees from. This year we supplied 7 trees to [The National Forest](#) where we hope they will be very happy in their new Midland home. We also gave and a pair of trees to Carymarsh Nature Reserve in Somerset. We also gave trees to the [National Clone Bank](#) at the Killerton Estate, this is ongoing to ensure there is a library of all the clones in the UK.

We cannot supply many trees across the country, but we have found that sending cuttings in the post is a great way to help other projects and the recipients have the joy of growing them on. They travel well during the winter months. We have also had this reciprocated and received cuttings from a group in London.

- [Stump up for Trees](#), we supply females to this group so that they can partner the males they have already planted. They have taken their cuttings from the iconic trees in the Usk Valley, one tree near Crickhowell which was sadly lost in a storm and is a lesson to us all. We have a special relationship with this group as they provided us with our first cuttings and the inspiration to embark on our own project.
- We have also supplied cuttings to projects in Sussex, Lancashire, Cumbria and Gloucestershire.



From Stour Valley to Usk Valley. Cuttings growing on for planting



Give us your thoughts by emailing us treesforwimborne@gmail.com