

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

SCRUB MANAGEMENT PLAN

As part of the University of Exeter's commitment to delivery of biodiversity and its Sustainability Action Plan, a schedule of scrub management has been derived.

The Principles of the Scrub Management Plan can be summarised as:

- Management to conserve, enhance and restore biological diversity.
- Identifying sites where the management can improve the quality and effect of natural habitats.
- Link the managed areas with other semi-natural habitats in the Exeter area, to contribute to the local biodiversity network and the overall movement and dispersal of species.

A. Background

The grounds of the University of Exeter campuses represent approximately 153 hectares of land and is a significant contribution to the publicly accessible open space in Exeter and the biodiversity of Devon.

The grounds are a registered Botanic Garden, with plants from every continent in the world, National Plant Collections and 3 arboretums. The campus secured a Green Flag for open space excellence in 2011 and 2012. This displays a continuing commitment to the environment and sustainable practices. It also has 16 habitats, scrub being particularly noted along the boundaries of the campus.

The scrub typically consists of species such as Bramble, an important food and habitat source, and Laurel which tolerates low light levels but can out-compete native species.

The percentage of scrub can vary depending on how it is managed and site development e.g. 'brown field' areas can lead to scrub establishment.

The Scrub Management Plan identifies a cyclical programme to manage the scrub areas by controlling non-native species such as *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Prunus laurocerasus* (Cherry Laurel) and *Symphoricarpos* (Snowberry) in favour of native species such as *Ilex* (Holly), *Corylus avellana* (Hazel), *Rubus* (Bramble) and understorey plants such as *Carex* (Sedge), *Silene dioica* (Red Campion), *Hyacinthoids non-scripta* (Bluebell) and other bulb species.

The purpose of this will be to provide an improved habitat for mammals (such as badgers and bats), birds (such as Dunnock and Thrush) and reptiles (such as grass snakes) through the retention of habitat piles and improved biodiversity.

B. Sites Identified For Scrub Management 2012-2015

1. Duryard / Thomas Hall
2. Hoopern / Taddiforde Valley
3. Junction New North Road / Prince of Wales Road
4. Hope / Lopes Hall grounds, Lafrowda area
5. Surrounds College House / St Lukes

Please see attached map (Appendix 1).

C. Implementation Scrub Management Plan

Areas 3, 4 and 5 were tackled during season 2011/12 using Grounds Team staff exclusively.

Laurel and Snowberry were targeted and pruned before the areas were underplanted with bulbs and Holly.

2012/13 - Target Area 1 Duryard Hall/Thomas Hall (see Appendix 2).

- i. Manage vegetation by cutting and removing invasive species.
- ii. Larger diameter wood to be retained on site as habitat piles of approx 1m³ for over-wintering invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.
- iii. Manage Bramble and other fruit bearing crops by reducing areas by approximately one third, retaining areas for foraging but preventing dominance/over-competition.
- iv. Where gaps appear in the scrub, underplant with bulbs and native scrub.
- v. All works to be scheduled and completed between October and March, to avoid bird nesting season.

2013/14 - Target Area 2 Hoopern/Taddiforde Valley

This is a much larger site. It is anticipated this is tackled on a phased basis with the area of scrub woodland adjacent to the Prince of Wales Road being targeted in the first year.

The same methodology would be applied as outlined in i-v above. This would be viewed in conjunction with the overall Management Plan for Hoopern/Taddiforde Valley.

2014/15 - Target Area 2 Hoopern/Taddiforde Valley

The area adjacent to the cycleway on the opposite side of the Valley from the Prince of Wales Road will be targeted. The same methodology would be applied as outlined in i-v above.

On completion of the 2014/15 programme, the proposal would be to revisit areas 3-5 and continue with the cyclical programme of scrub management.

D. Resource Implications

The Campus Services (Grounds) Management Team will deliver a work programme, using existing Grounds staff resource, to implement points i-v of the methodology. A number of these works will require specialist skills e.g. arboricultural qualifications.

In addition, there may be volunteering opportunities for students and/or staff. A specific volunteer day could be targeted for cutting back vegetation, using hand tools and also for re-introducing bulbs/plants to the scrub understorey. This would have to be subject to relevant risk assessments and supervision.

E. Research/Learning Opportunities

There is an opportunity to survey areas to establish an ecological baseline, prior to works being implemented and a subsequent survey to determine the impact of the management works.

F. Outcomes

The number of man hours/volunteer hours will be recorded for each of the target areas, to help determine the investment in managing, conserving and enhancing the scrub habitat.

The Devon Wildlife Trust and its Record Centre will be used as a source of information to determine the impact of the scrub management on the local biodiversity network and the overall movement and dispersal of species.

The effectiveness of the methodology, resources employed, volunteering and research/learning outcomes will be reviewed annually to permit revision and/or record successes.

DEVON WILDLIFE
CONSULTANTS

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map

Client:	UPP Projects Ltd
Site:	University of Exeter, Duryard Campus
Drawing No:	09/059a-01
Scale:	DNS
Date:	July 2009
Drawn by:	AC
Checked by:	KJ

Key

Code	Feature
Yellow	Amenity grassland
Black	Building
XX	Ephemeral/short perennial
Blue	Hard standing
Green	Hedgerow, broadleaved
++	Introduced shrub
SI	Poor semi-improved grassland
Green circle	Scattered tree, broadleaved tree
Green circle	Scattered tree, coniferous
++	Scrub, scattered
Diagonal lines	Tall ruderal
Red circle	Target note
Green	Woodland, broadleaved

N.B. This map is not definitive

Target Notes:

1. Badger sett
2. Tree identified with potential to support roosting bats
3. Vegetation pile
4. Japanese knotweed

Semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal habitat is suitable for reptile species.
All buildings include potential to support roosting bats

