

Fraxinus excelsior, roses *Rosa* species, with traveller's-joy *Clematis vitalba*, privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, black bryony *Tamus communis* and a variety of calcicolous (chalk-loving) species. The scrub communities vary greatly in age from a few years to a number of decades.

The woodlands vary according to the underlying geology and contain both ancient*² and more recent sites. Areas on the deposits overlying the chalk are dominated by ash, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* standards, downy birch *Betula pubescens*, field maple *Acer campestre*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, and sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*. The ground flora is dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* but includes a variety of other woodland species such as bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon* and giant fescue grass *Festuca gigantea*.

The scarp slope woods are mainly beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodlands which grade into ash-field maple woodlands at the foot of the scarp. The stands contain a range of tree species including yew *Taxus baccata*, ash, field maple, whitebeam *Sorbus acuparia*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, wych elm and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The open canopy produced by the storm of October 1987 has encouraged a ground flora dominated by bramble with traveller's-joy, ivy *Hedera helix*, wood false-brome grass *Brachypodium sylvaticum* and other woodland species.

The variety of habitats support outstanding communities of woodland and chalk grassland invertebrate species. Amongst the nationally scarce*¹ species present are moths: plumed prominent *Ptilophora plumigera* which feeds on field maple and *Eudonia delunella* which feeds on lichens and mosses on the trunks of ash, apple *Malus* species and occasionally on elms *Ulmus* species. A scarce hoverfly *Cheilosia soror* is present, found on the chalk downs visiting umbels in glades of woods. It has been reported to breed in truffles.

*¹nationally scarce: species recorded from between 16 and 100 10 × 10km squares in Britain.

*²ancient woodland site: A wooded site believed to have been wooded since before AD 1600.