

Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

A programme of woodland, grassland, wetland and water quality improvements

This project has enabled the planting of hundreds of trees and thousands of other plants across the borough

Elmdon Ward Tree Planting

A series of wildlife habitat enhancements were carried out across the borough's parks and open spaces through Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements Project 2017-2020, with thousands of new plants included.

As part of this programme hundreds of trees and shrubs were planted in parks and open spaces within the Elmdon Ward – at Elmdon Park, Elmdon Nature Park, Damson Lane Park, Rowood Drive and the play park next to Elmdon Coppice.

Native trees and shrubs were planted, with some ornamental and fruit trees, to create and strengthen a range of habitats. As well as their value for wildlife, the trees enhance the landscape by adding structure, variety of form and seasonal change. Many are also characteristic of the local area.

The Elmdon Ward tree planting created new habitat for wildlife by adding 450 trees, 690 metres of hedgerow and 2,000 square metres of thicket.

Damson Lane Park

Avenues

Avenues of trees have been planted alongside the path. As the trees grow, the avenues will provide shade to the paths and shelter on a rainy day. They will give seasonal variety with blossom in spring and colourful leaves and fruit in autumn. They have been chosen to provide food for pollinating insects, birds and animals.



Hedgerows

The large oak trees in the park indicate the lines of former hedgerows which can be confirmed on old maps. New hedge planting has been carried out to serve to support wildlife movement and also reconnect these old landmark trees. Additionally new native hedgerows have been planted along park boundaries which will enable wildlife such as hedgehogs to move around under cover of the plants.



Damsons at Damson Lane Park

To celebrate the name of the park, damsons and other fruit trees – crab apple, plum and sweet cherry – have been planted. Local varieties such as Farleigh damson, Pershore plum and Shropshire prune will also provide foraging opportunities for people and animals such as badgers and wood mice.

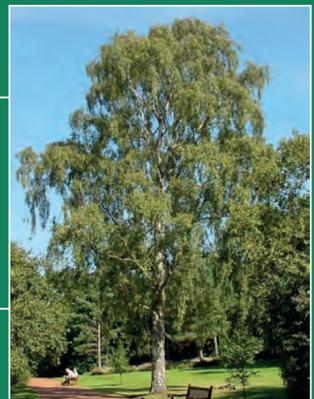


Some species of animals and trees found in Damson Lane Park



Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) is a spectacular and large tree offering spring blossom, bright red cherries and red-orange leaves in autumn. The latter part of the Latin name *avium* refers to birds – such as blackbirds and thrushes – which help spread the tree through eating the cherries and dispersing the seed in their droppings. It makes an excellent tree for a park.

Silver birch (*Betula pendula*) is a native tree which is highly valuable to wildlife. It provides food and habitat for more than 300 insect species. The leaves are also a food plant for the caterpillars of many moths. Birch trees are particularly associated with fungi such as fly agaric. Woodpeckers and other hole-nesting birds often nest in the trunk, while the seeds are eaten by siskins, greenfinches and redpolls.



The **European hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is covered in spines which are actually modified hairs. The average hedgehog has about 7,000 of them. It is one of the UK's most familiar wild mammals, most commonly spotted in parks and gardens, where shrubs provide daytime shelter. It is known as the 'gardener's friend' due to its diet of slugs, but they also eat all kinds of invertebrates, as well as amphibians and birds' eggs.



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