

Aberdeen Community Trees (ACT) is a local environmental project set up to co-ordinate the Aberdeen Tree Warden Scheme and to 'Promote, Protect and Plant trees in and Around Aberdeen'. The project commenced in July 2004 and is jointly funded by Aberdeen Countryside Project, Aberdeen City Council and Fresh Futures. ACT is also a member of the National Tree Warden initiative co-ordinated by the Tree Council.

The main stay of ACT's work is to recruit new tree wardens and provide wardens with informative training courses and workshops (including tree identification, winter twigs, tree biology, tree law and tree surveys) to enable them to gather information, liaise with their local community and provide practical project support - this networking allows ACT to liaise with the City Tree Officer to highlight threatened or diseased trees etc.

During the tree-planting season (usually November to March), ACT provides practical support for many local schools and community groups to assist in various planting schemes and the creation of small tree nurseries to encourage the planting of local provenance trees.

Finally, ACT is currently undertaking the creation of three tree trail guides for Aberdeen City Council as part of a series of themed trails promoting the City's natural heritage. This is being done through the creation of a Heritage Tree Register, which includes over 60 trees nominated by tree wardens and individuals from across Aberdeen.

The first trail - Old Aberdeen's Heritage Tree Trail guide, consisting of 15 trees with related text and photographs to help with identification has now been completed. The trail starts on Mounthooly roundabout (north end of the Gallowgate) heading east onto Kings Crescent towards Old Aberdeen, finishing at Seaton Park - this guide is due to be reprinted later this year.

Aberdeen's Heritage Elm Trail

My colleague John Malster is currently completing the second tree trail guide - Aberdeen's Heritage Elm Trail which is due to be released in November 2006.

This trail guide looks at Aberdeen's diverse population of mature elms - this is possibly the largest remaining urban population of elms in Northern Europe that has not yet succumbed to the deadly Dutchelm disease (DED). The disease, to date, has destroyed millions of elms across the UK, Europe and other regions of the world.

Note: Dutch elm disease has been found in Aberdeen in the past but appropriate measures have been taken by the local authority to remove the infected trees to prevent the spread of the deadly fungal spores carried by the elm bark beetle.

Aberdeen's Heritage Tree Trail

The third and final trail due to be completed later this year is Aberdeen's Heritage Tree Trail - a city wide trail which is currently at the survey stage and will include 12 tree avenues and scenic tree groups.

If you know of a notable mature tree in your local area and would like to nominate it for the Heritage Tree Register please contact me with the species name, location and any notable features (see back page for contact details).

The printed guides are available from public libraries and information points across the City