

Post 28

YEW WOOD

To the left of the path is a row of mature yew trees.

Yews were often planted in lines to mark property or parish boundaries.

These trees have seeded out and formed almost pure yew woodland further down the slope. Once a yew tree has established itself, it casts such a dense shade that virtually nothing will grow under it except for its own seedlings.

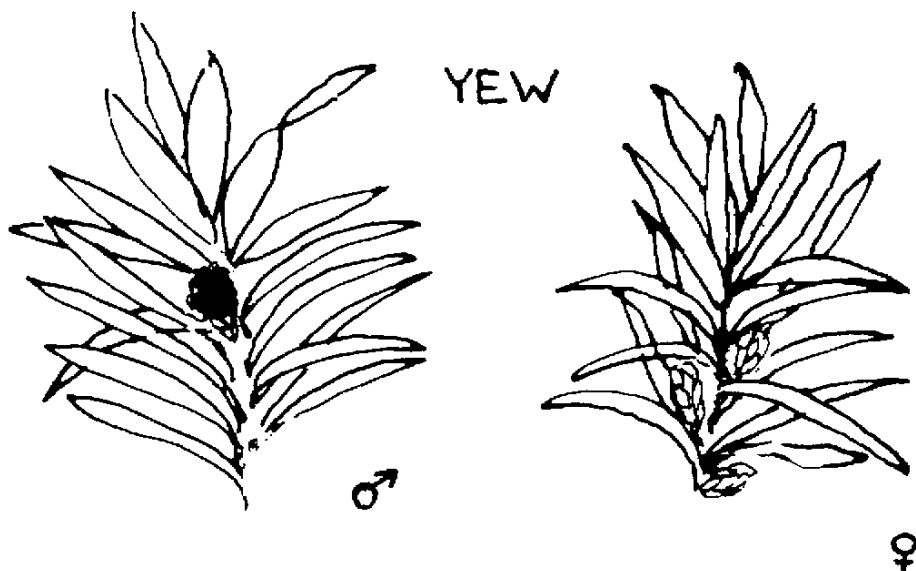


Yew grows very slowly and lives to a great age; estimates range from 1000 to 5000 years.

Because of its long life it was a sacred tree in pre-Christian times and was planted on pagan religious sites. It is thought that Christian churches were later built on these sites, and that this is one reason why yews are found in churchyards today.

Another suggestion is that in the 12th century, yew had to be planted in every parish by law for the purpose of making longbows. It is thought that it was planted in churchyards to keep it away from grazing animals, as most parts of the tree are poisonous.

There are male and female trees. The female trees bear pinkish-red fruits which are sweet and sticky but contain poisonous seeds. Male trees will produce clouds of pollen if knocked in early spring.



Follow main track up to the field gate and post 29 (see map below).

NATURE TRAIL MAP

