



FACT SHEET – Coppicing



A newly coppiced willow near the Visitors' Centre. The sight of a seemingly 'mutilated' tree can produce a negative reaction but it's all for the good!



In the foreground, one of the products of coppicing. The fencing is one of the uses of cut willow, while the tree in the centre is regenerated growth after several years

Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management. It relies on the fact that some trees like willow make new growth from the stump or roots if they are cut down. This means that trees can be cut repeatedly leaving the tree to regenerate so that the cycle can be repeated, whilst the cut wood can be harvested and put to good use.

Newly coppiced woodland can and does generate questions and even negative comments from visitors. Some see it as the destruction of the natural environment. This is to fail to understand the cycle that is being established and the benefits that accrue from it. Coppicing clears away old vegetation and stimulates new growth. It opens up the soil to light and encourages plants that may have lain dormant for years to spring into life. The revival of orchids in the Nature Reserve is an example of this process.

Coppicing provides the Park with both raw materials and revenue. Felled timber is sold locally and the revenue ploughed back into the Park. It also provides the timber for fencing and for spiling which requires large quantities of willow branches to protect the banks of the lakes. Above all it creates a cycle that benefits the natural environment and facilitates sustainability.