



## Location

### Devizes

Postcode SN810 4QS  
Grid Ref SU038574

**Access** - Unsuitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Dogs on leads are welcome.

### Directions

**If driving** - From Devizes, head towards Andover on the A342. Turn right for Urchfont at Lydeaway. Take second right after Urchfont village sign, signed to Potterne Wick Park at village pond. Follow road round to left, and turn right into Peppercombe Lane - signed No Through Road. Follow road downhill (public footpath). Reserve is at bottom of hill on left.

**If using bus** - Bus X72 Devizes to Bath stops in Urchfont at The Croft. Walk west on B3098. Turn right into High Street and walk to village pond. Follow directions as above. Visit [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets)

**If cycling** - Visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**Nearby reserves** - Jones's Mill, Morgan's Hill

## About Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Our vision is to create a county rich in wildlife and help people live sustainable lifestyles that protect the environment for the benefit of everyone.

We have about 18,500 members, look after almost 40 nature reserves, are supported by hundreds of volunteers, and work with local communities, schools, businesses and public bodies to achieve our aims. To do all this we rely on the support of our members.

If you would like to join us, or to find out about how you can help the environment, please visit [www.wiltshirewildlife.org](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org)

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 Join us on [Facebook.com/WiltsWild](https://www.facebook.com/WiltsWild)

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Registered charity no. 266202.



Front cover: Blue tit, Darin Smith

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Nature reserves

# Peppercombe Wood



## Peppercombe Wood

0.62 hectares

Peppercombe Wood is a strip of picturesque ancient woodland on the edge of Urchfont, only a five-minute walk from the village centre.

The reserve lies on steep slopes next to a small stream and is well-hidden at the end of a sunken lane.

Parts of the wood are occasionally coppiced — where hazel is cut to ground level to allow sunlight to reach the woodland floor. This stimulates woodland wildflowers. The cut hazel re-grows from its stump.

### Wildlife

Visit during February to see the **snowdrops** and later spring for a colourful mix of wildflowers.

Peppercombe was once full of elms but they died from Dutch elm disease and were removed in 1979. The following year we replanted trees, mostly oak and ash. Wych elm regenerated from the stumps of the dying trees and this combination, in addition to hazel, give the wood its character.

The disease is caused by a fungus carried by a wood-boring beetle which can only bore into an elm tree of a certain size and age.

The fungus blocks the water-conducting channels of the tree and brown, dead-looking leaves appear in the tree canopy during the summer, signalling the onset of the disease.

The rotting stumps in the wood provide valuable habitat for beetles, bugs and other insects as well as fungi.

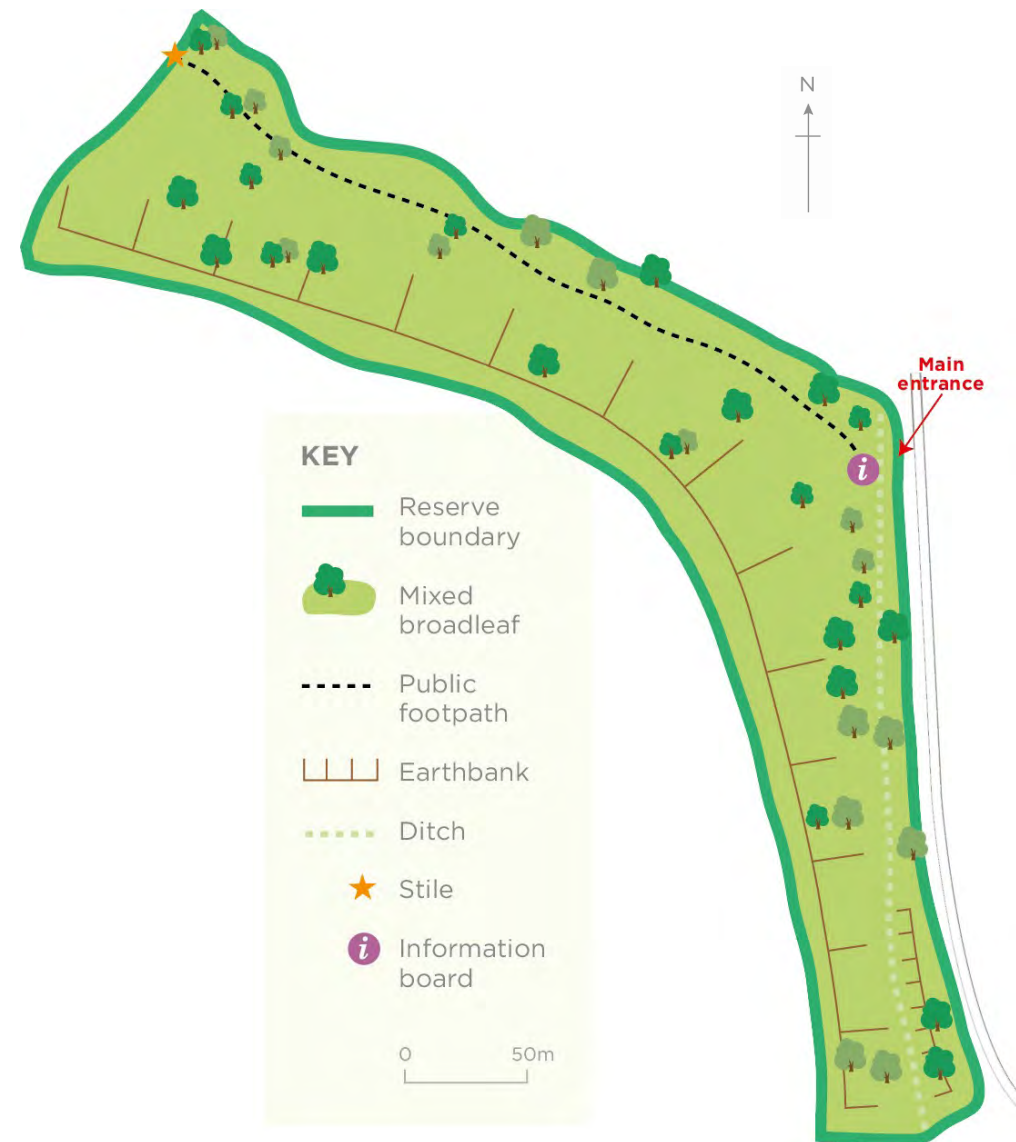
In spring you can find bluebell, pignut and wood anemone. Carpets of **opposite-leaved golden saxifage** brighten the wet areas around the stream and springs, where you can also find ferns.

On the drier woodland floor look out for moschatel. This is known as town hall clock because it has four florets facing outwards (and a fifth facing upwards).

In the summer you may see Solomon's seal, with its row of creamy flowers hanging from a bowed stem.

In autumn look for **horseshoe fungi** - its brackets protruding from branches and trunks.

Peppercombe is full of spring birdsong - listen for chiffchaffs, **wrens**, black caps, and **tits**. You might hear woodpeckers hammering as they look for insects in the bark.



Peppercombe path, Owain Shaw WWT. Snowdrop, Graham Coules  
Opposite-leaved golden saxifrage, Philip Precey. Horseshoe fungi, Owain Shaw WWT. Wren, David Kilbey

