

Woodland Margins

Even in limited space, it is possible to create an area reminiscent of a woodland margin. Grow smaller trees such as Birches, Hawthorns, Wild Cherries and Crab Apples interspersed with a lower-growing layer of shrubs. Don't be too tidy in a woodland area as it's an ideal habitat for invertebrates and small mammals.

Evergreen Trees

Ilex aquifolium – the Holly – comes in a wide range of green-leaved and variegated forms. We particularly enjoy *I. aquifolium* 'Argentea Marginata' with its silver-edged leaves.

Deciduous Trees

Acer palmatum – the Japanese Maple can be grown in a sheltered glade and provides good autumn colour.

Amelanchier lamarckii – we love this tree with its white flowers opening against fresh bronze leaves in spring, green leaves over summer and rich red autumn colour. Doesn't thrive on poor or alkaline soils, but tolerates drought and full sun.

Betula pendula and *Betula utilis* 'Jacquemontii' – the white-stemmed birches are ideal for creating small groves of trees which provide all-year interest.

Crataegus monogyna – the Hawthorn – and *Crataegus laevigata* – the Midland Hawthorn. Our favourite is the red-flowered *C. laevigata* 'Paul's Scarlet'.

Malus – the Crab Apples. We recommend *M.* 'Red Sentinel' which holds onto its small, glossy, red fruit well into the autumn

Prunus avium – the native Wild Cherry with its single, white flowers, red fruits and good autumn colour.

Sorbus aucuparia – the Rowan or Mountain Ash gives white flowers in spring and its divided green leaves turning bright red and orange in autumn. Among our favourites is *Sorbus cashmiriana* – the Kashmir Rowan – a beautiful Rowan, ideal for a smaller garden, whose white berries hang on well into the winter as they're a bit too large for birds to eat – good autumn leaf colour. We also like *Sorbus* 'Eastern Promise' which has rosy-pink-berries Rowan and green leaves which turn purple then fiery red in autumn.

Evergreen Shrubs

Buxus sempervirens – the Box – tolerates a wide range of soil pH, including very alkaline soils

Mahonia x media 'Charity' for their yellow racemes of flowers during winter

Pieris japonica – amongst the large Pieris we like *P.* 'Mountain Fire', with its brilliant red young foliage, but our real favourite is *P.* 'Debutante', which makes a compact bush growing to 1m plus, producing its white flowers over a long period

Skimmia japonica for their red buds and red berries

Deciduous Shrubs

Callicarpa bodinieri 'Profusion' – with its wonderful, tiny, round, purple berries which persist well into winter.

Cornus alba varieties, such as *C. alba* 'Red Selection' whose scarlet stems come into their own in winter.

Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire' for its flame-coloured stems in winter.

Cornus mas which bears a haze of tiny yellow flowers on the bare stems in very early spring.

Corylus avellana – the Hazel Nut, with its edible nuts

The Witch Hazels are plants with a long period of interest, flowering on bare stems over winter and whose leaves turn vivid reds and yellows in autumn and are slow to fall. *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Arnold Promise' with its upright habit and golden-yellow flowers is a real gem.

Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight' is a new cultivar. Bright, lime-green blowers appear from midsummer, fading to cream and turning pink by autumn, so flowerheads of different colours appear on the plant at the same time. Flower colour is unaffected by soil pH.

Magnolias such as *M. stellata* and *M. x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel' for their beautiful early spring flowers borne before the trees are in leaf. *M. stellata* 'Royal Star' flowers later and for a prolonged period from April on.

Sambucus nigra – in a sunny spot one of the striking black-leaved forms such as *S. nigra* 'Black Beauty' could be tried.

Viburnum opulus, the Guelder Rose and *V. lanata*, the Wayfaring tree, are both natives, bear white flowers, red fruits and sometimes have good autumn colour.

Like the Japanese Acers, *Viburnum plicatum* 'Maresii' is another excellent plant to use as a specimen in a sheltered glade. In spring it bears white flowers on the upper side of its tiered branches.

Climbers

Clematis armandii – the Evergreen Clematis can be grown as a scrambler as well as a climber

Hedera helix and *Hedera colchica* – the Ivies – come in many varieties and both climb and make good ground cover

Hydrangea petiolaris – the climbing Hydrangea – good in shady situations and will grow round large trees

Lonicera periclymenum – the Honeysuckle