

# Ivy, Friend or Foe?

The sun is now starting to look tired as the shadows also start to yawn, the autumn colours become deeper and more defined as our late afternoon stroll begins. Then as we start to walk through the many aged and weathered trodden paths, unattended undergrowth complements the bountiful colourful woodland vista. We discover the many species of trees and flora during phases of their own life. Some scarred from time itself, some simply full of young life and expectation.

The countless trees have a journey through life in their own right, nature their guardian over time. There are many parallels to our own lives, good and bad times, in the sapling years its speedy growth, vitality is its watchword. In the immediate seasons that follow, the life and nature that surrounds us becomes ever bold, or even brave. Like us, we are oblivious and unaware of possible challenges and perils to come. Then as many seasons pass, knowledge within the surroundings is gained. Encountering troubled or stressful periods the trees start to protect, this in turn allows them to gain wisdom, having extra strengths to deal with the passage of time.

As the trees age, ivy takes hold. Seen as an enemy to most, it can be beneficial in maintaining the health within the woods and its fellow occupants. Local thrushes and blackbirds take advantage of the berries, in addition insects begin feasting too, before their own hibernation starts in earnest. As with kindness which is a form of self-preservation the ivy ensures protection and survival.

Like ourselves we need protection and kindness from the bad times, needing a hug or comfort, and energy from others. The ivy hugs the tree tightly ensuring reassurance from the elements and potential predators. Of course, like us this affection if mismanaged can be mistaken and cause harm. But in the main it gives reassurance and security. At this point like the ivy. it is helping to maintaining everyday life, and then our own growth and the woodland can continue to flourish.

So ivy, so often associated with mournfulness indeed finality is in reality one of strength, reflection and protection. It does it by helping to keep the treasured safe and secure. For us its protection of our memories and thoughts. it's surely the ivy's endurance, longevity and permanence not to be removed which makes it such an important piece of nature's completed jigsaw.

