

# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

### Village Farmlands with Orchards

#### Landscape Type Description

A distinctive planned low-land agricultural landscape with a notably dominant orchard land use. This is an intensively cultivated landscape characterised by a nucleated pattern of expanded villages surrounded by large cultivated fields.



#### Key Characteristics

##### Primary

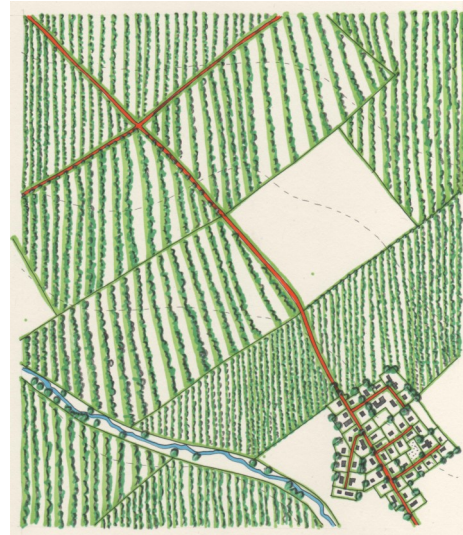
- Extensive apple and plum orchards on south facing slopes

##### Secondary

- Nucleated settlement pattern

##### Tertiary

- Gently undulating topography
- Planned enclosure pattern of medium- to large-scale fields
- Cereals and field vegetables



#### Current Concerns

These landscapes tend to be located in areas of very slightly pronounced topography, where the south facing slopes provide ideal conditions for fruit growing. As the name suggests, orchards are a primary land use, apple, plum and gage being particularly notable, covering extensive areas of land. The characteristic traditional orchards of standard trees are disappearing in certain areas, with many old traditional fruit tree varieties being lost as a result. The economic worth of certain types of orchard – such as damson and plum – appears to be in decline and could hamper prospects of replacement once the old trees have declined. New orchard planting/restoration, notably of apple, often uses bush stock, the smaller stature of which has an impact upon the scale of the landscape.

Opportunities to improve the structure and wildlife potential of this landscape should focus on restoring good linear tree cover along watercourses and streams, encouraging new tree planting in and around villages, encouraging the establishment of wide field margins and the appropriate management of roadside verges and other non-productive land.

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### Guidelines for Land Management

#### How to use this sheet

The aim of this information sheet is to provide *general guidelines* about the priorities for land management activities - focusing on relevant landscape features - within this Landscape Type. However, Landscape Types are generic descriptions of landscape character and any advice **must** be interpreted within the context of the site in question. Please also visit the Landscapes of Worcestershire mapping pages <http://qis.worcestershire.gov.uk/home/wcc-lca-maps> to click on your area and read the more specific ecological and landscape descriptions.

In the case of any habitat work, specialist advice should be sought from the County Ecologists and/or the appropriate agency (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Defra) to ensure that the work is appropriate, is carried out at the right time of year, in the correct manner and in the best possible location. Surveys may need to be carried out to assess the sites for presence of protected species or existing habitat. With this in mind, please read on for opportunities for land/habitat management activities appropriate to this Landscape Type...

#### Trees and Orchards

The general guidelines for trees and orchards in Village Farmlands with Orchards are to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** tree cover along watercourses
- encourage opportunities for tree planting in and around villages
- **conserve** and **restore** old orchards around villages, with emphasis placed upon the locally distinctive fruit type and varieties
- **conserve** and **restore** lines of hedgerow fruit trees

Woodland is not characteristic of these landscapes but tree cover is provided by hedgerow trees (previously notably elm), watercourse trees and fruit trees. Opportunities to improve the structure and wildlife potential of the landscape should be concentrated on restoring good linear tree cover along the watercourses and streams and encouraging new tree planting in and around the settlement nuclei to enhance village settings. Orchards are a notable feature, occurring throughout the area on a domestic scale, with lines of fruit trees, usually damson, a distinctive feature in certain localities. Traditional and local varieties of fruit tree represent an important part of the County's heritage and should be perpetuated wherever possible.

#### Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Village Farmlands with Orchards is to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** hedgerow structure, with emphasis on the primary hedgelines

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerows, **restore**, strengthen or protect existing hedgerows and their patterns, and promote appropriate management – in terms of maintenance regimes and protection from stock. The species composition of existing primary (long established) hedgerows should be noted and used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows.

#### Field Margins and Verges

The general guidelines for field margins and verges in Village Farmlands with Orchards are to:

- promote the development of wide field margins
- promote management of roadside verges for wildlife benefit

In addition to tree planting and hedgerow management opportunities described above, opportunities to improve the structure and wildlife potential of these intensively farmed landscape could focus on encouraging the establishment of wide field margins and the appropriate management of roadside verges (e.g. suitable mowing regimes) and other non-productive land, contributing to a linked network of habitats.

For more information visit our website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca) or contact the Worcestershire County Council Environmental Policy Team on 01905 766038