



## Crab Apple - *malus sylvestris*



The best times to spot Crab Apple are in late spring (early May) when the tree is in blossom or in the autumn when the apples form and drop to the ground around the tree.

The Crab Apple is a wild native tree from which cultivated orchard apples have been developed. There are several Crab Apple trees in Selsdon Wood, including one beside the car park (below left 21/4/12), one in Addington Border close to the junctions with Langford's way (below centre 21/4/12), one in the southerly section of Beech Grove (below right 27/4/12) and one in The Wend between Noakes Way and Langford's Way close to the Noakes Way end (not shown). The warty appearance of the tree in Addington Border makes it a clear landmark at all times of year. In spite of appearances, this tree is still alive and bears the characteristic blossom on the upper branches in the springtime.



The Crab Apple has a rugged appearance with crooked branches and a brown, flaky bark with fissures and cracks. The pretty pink and white blossom is borne in late spring (April/May) at the same time as the leaves open.



The leaves are oblong with toothed edges and may be bronze tinged and downy on the lower surface when young. The fruit is smaller than the cultivated apple and green in colour. Crab apples are edible, although rather bitter tasting. They are most commonly used to make jam or jelly.

Spot the Crab Apple in the car park. Take a spring walk along The Wend and look out for the pink blossom of the Crab Apple beside the path. Look at the warty tree in the Addington Border. In the autumn and look for the ripening apples and the fallen ones beneath the tree near the car park.

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