



Spruce, Norway - *picea abies*

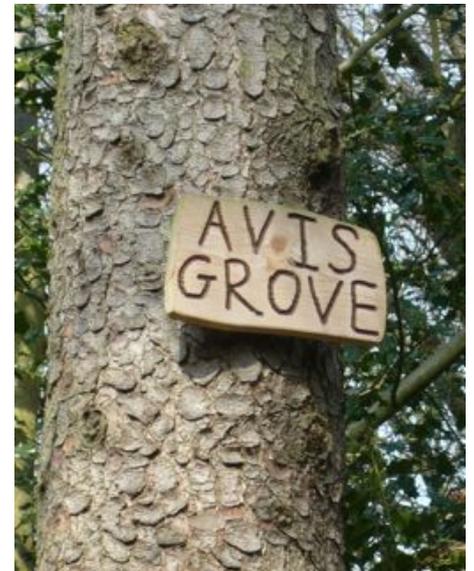


The best time to spot the Norway Spruce is in winter when surrounding trees are not in leaf and the tops are laden with the characteristic elongated cones.

Most of the Norway Spruce in Selsdon Wood are to be found in Greenhill Shaw (many between and Green Hill and the Farleigh Road). However the most accessible specimens form a small group at the field end of Avis Grove, with one of them bearing the Avis Grove name board (below left 23/3/12). The cone-laden tops can be seen from the Great Field peeping over the top of the flowering Blackthorn (below right 2/4/12).



The Norway Spruce is one of three species of conifer in Selsdon Wood (the others being Pine and Larch). It is an evergreen with distinctive scaly bark and short thick needles. The cones are elongated and much beloved of squirrels. All the seeds from one cone in the picture below have been eaten leaving only the woody core.



The Norway Spruce is the classic Christmas Tree, a tradition brought to Britain in 1841 when Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, introduced an old German custom of decorating a spruce tree with lights. Each year the Norwegian capital city Oslo donates a tree to New York, Edinburgh, Washington and London, in gratitude for the support that Britain and America gave to Norway in WWII. London's tree is always displayed in Trafalgar Square.

Take a winter walk past Greenhill Shaw and look West to see the green tops of the Norway Spruce showing amongst the bare trees. In Avis Grove look for cones along the path and around the base of the trees. Have the squirrels left any whole ones?

