



NATURE'S CALENDAR

Autumn analysis 2025

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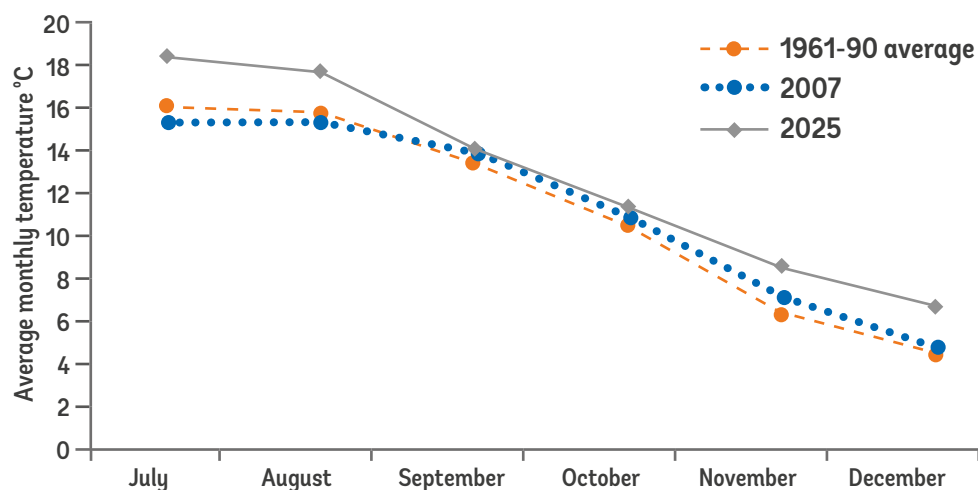
**WOODLAND
TRUST**

Summary

Overall, autumn 2025 was warm, wet and sunny, leading to record-breaking high fruit scores, early leaf tinting and early leaf falling dates for several tree and shrub species.

TEMPERATURE

Figure 1: Average monthly temperatures 2025 (Central England Temperature^{*1}) compared with 30-year average (1961-90) and 2007 benchmark^{**} year.



- September 2025 was similar in temperature to the 30-year average (1961-1990) but all months of the season were warmer than the 30-year average by some degree.
- The greatest difference in temperature was in July, November and December, which were all over 2.0°C warmer in

2025 than the 30-year average, with a variance of 2.4°C, 2.0°C and 2.2°C respectively. August was close behind with a 1.9°C difference.

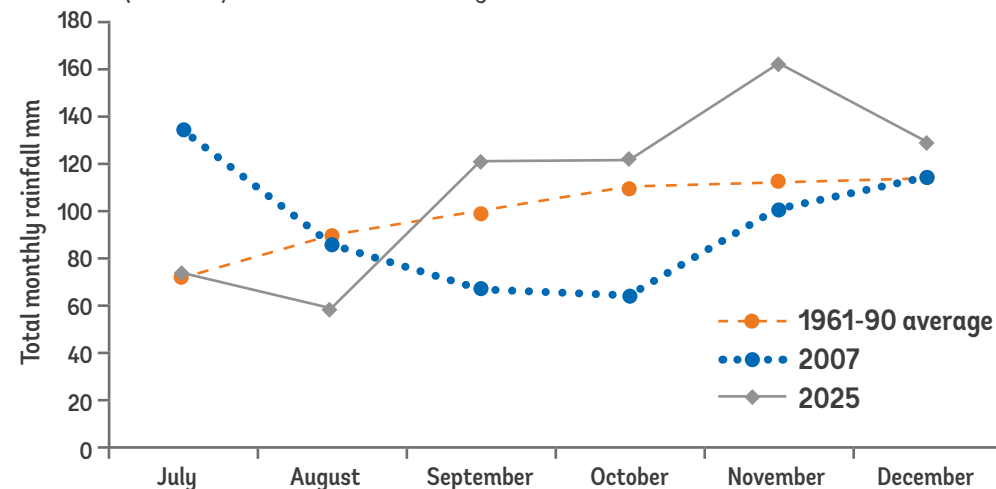
- It was the ninth warmest July in the 366-year Central England Temperature record, with an average of 18.4°C.

* The Central England Temperature (CET) dataset is a record from a roughly triangular area of the UK, enclosed by Bristol, Lancashire and London.

** 2007 is used as a benchmark year because the mean monthly temperatures in autumn were similar to the 30-year average (1961-90) temperatures.

RAINFALL

Figure 2: Monthly rainfall totals 2025 (HadUK-Grid²) compared with 30-year average (1961-90) and 2007 benchmark year.



- Monthly rainfall totals in September, October and December were 10-21mm greater than the 30-year average.
- July was slightly above the 30-year average for total rainfall, while August was the driest month with 31mm less rainfall than the 30-year average.
- November was the wettest month with

49.9mm more rainfall than the 30-year average, making it the 19th wettest November in the series since 1836.

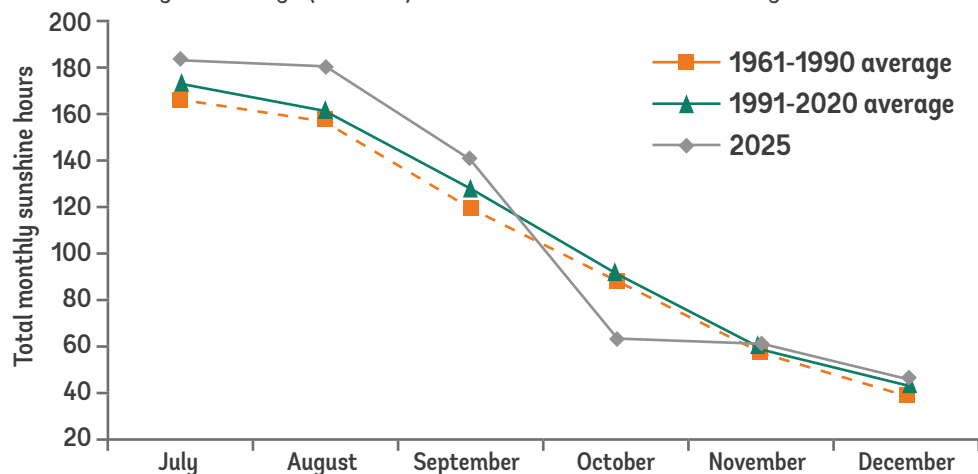
- 14 November saw exceptionally heavy rain across central and southern England as well as parts of Northern Ireland as Storm Claudia, named by the Spanish Meteorological Service, swept through.



Sessile/durmast oak

SUNSHINE

Figure 3: Monthly UK bright sunshine totals in 2025 (HadUK-Grid²) compared with 30-year average (1961-90) and the 1991-2020 benchmark year.



- Monthly sunshine totals in July, August and September were 17.1, 23.9 and 21.1 hours greater than the 30-year average.
- November and December were slightly above the 30-year average for total sunshine, while October was the duller month with 24.3 fewer sunshine hours than the 30-year average.

NATURE'S CALENDAR RECORDS

There are 85 different seasonal events that can be recorded for the Nature's Calendar project in autumn. During autumn 2025, our volunteers recorded 7,317 observations. The most popular events recorded were **'bramble first ripe fruit'**, **'ivy first flowering'** and **'silver birch first leaf tinting'**.

For each species and event, all the records are combined and a UK average date is calculated. These average dates are compared to the average dates in the benchmark year of 2007.

Below, we discuss some of the most fascinating findings from autumn 2025.



Bramble fruit BEN LEE/WTML



Ivy flower BEN LEE/WTML



Silver birch first tint BEN LEE/WTML

AUTUMN FRUIT

The Nature's Calendar 'amount of fruit' scores provide an indicator of winter food availability for wildlife, as well as an indicator of the seed source available for natural regeneration of trees and shrubs.

'Amount of fruit' is a subjective assessment of fruit crop, recorded since 2001, where a fruit score of 1 represents no fruit and a fruit score of 5 represents an exceptional crop.

It's often linked to climate variables in preceding seasons. Generally, plants need sunny, warm and wet conditions to produce lots of fruits in the summer and early autumn, preceded by good pollination conditions in the spring. According to the Met Office Climate Summaries³, 2025 was the sunniest and hottest year on record for the UK since 1910, and the warm, dry spring would have been ideal for both wind and insect pollination.

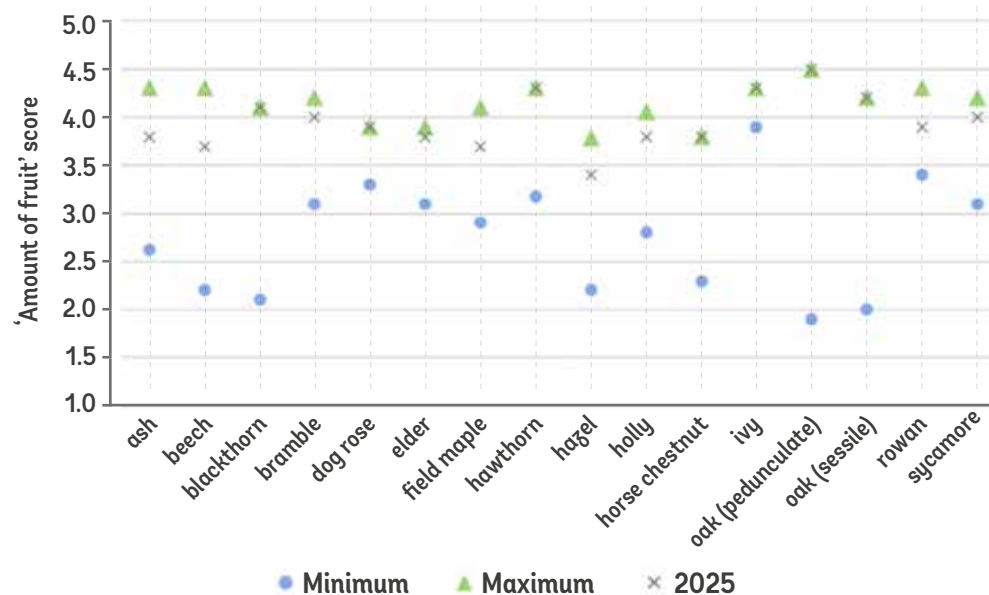


Dog rose hips

BEN LEE/WTML

Fruit production in 2025 was above 3.5 for all species except for hazel, which was 3.4, as shown in Figure 4 – which compares the 2025 scores for each species with the minimum and maximum scores recorded since 2001. Several species had their highest fruit score on record, including blackthorn, dog rose, hawthorn, horse chestnut, ivy, pedunculate oak and sessile oak.

Figure 4: Minimum and maximum UK average 'amount of fruit' scores from the dataset 2001-2025 compared to the 2025 score.



MIGRANT BIRDS

Winter arrivals

- Fieldfare and redwing 'first recorded' dates were on average 11 and 10 days later, respectively, than during the benchmark year. Their average 'first recorded' dates were 4 and 5 November. Both of these species' events received fewer than 100 records and would be good species to look out for this autumn.

Summer departures

- House martins, swallows and swifts departed 9, 8 and 10 days earlier, respectively, than during the benchmark year. As expected, swifts departed first with an average 'last recorded' date of 3 August, while house martins and swallows departed more than a month later (both on 11 September). Swifts depart first because they have a very short breeding season (producing just one brood as opposed to 2–3 broods for swallows and house martins) and they feed on aerial insects which decline in number as the summer ends and days become cooler.

AUTUMN LEAVES

- The average date of leaves first tinting ranged from 2–16 days earlier than the benchmark year. Horse chestnut had the earliest average first leaf tint out of all tree species, at 16 days earlier (22 August) – the earliest average horse chestnut first leaf tint on record.
- Horse chestnut also had the earliest average full tinting date of the year on 26 September. This, too, was the earliest full tint date on record for horse chestnut. Beech, silver birch and sycamore had average full tinting dates that were 0–4

days later than the benchmark year, while rowan's average was a whole 11 days later. All other tree species had earlier than average full tinting dates that ranged between 1–5 days earlier.



Horse chestnut first tint
BEN LEE/WTML

- This early leaf tinting could have been due to the heatwave conditions that were met in parts of central and eastern England from 11–15 August. Mid-August also saw dry conditions for most, with only scattered showers and mist. These conditions may have been exacerbated further for the horse chestnut when combined with the leaf-browning effects of the horse chestnut leaf miner, which may explain the early averages this year.
- 2025 was certainly the year of new records for horse chestnut, with the average first leaf fall date coming in at 22 September, 19 days earlier than the benchmark year and the earliest reported in the Nature's Calendar records.
- In fact, all tree species except for rowan had average first leaf fall dates that were earlier than the benchmark year. Aside for the horse chestnut, other species that had their earliest ever average first leaf fall dates in 2025 included elder (2 October), beech (8 October), hawthorn (10 October), hazel (16 October), field maple (13 October), pedunculate oak (19 October) and sessile oak (20 October).
- The average date of 'bare tree' was variable. Rowan was seven days later than the benchmark year but horse chestnut was eight days earlier. Nine out of 12 tree species had earlier average 'bare tree' dates than the benchmark

year. By contrast, in 2023 all tree species had an average 'bare tree' date that was later than the benchmark year.

LAWN LAST CUT

- The average date of 'lawn last cut' was 26 October, four days earlier than the benchmark year.

IVY FIRST FLOWERING

- 'Ivy first flowering' was seven days earlier than the benchmark year. The average first flowering date of 10 September was the earliest average flowering date since Nature's Calendar began, perhaps because of the warm start to the autumn season.

PROJECT NEWS

Celebrating 10 years of Nature's Calendar led by Judith Garforth

Many of you will have seen or heard from Judith during your time as a Nature's Calendar volunteer, perhaps through reading her newsletters or listening to her on the radio. She recently celebrated 10 years working on the project and we couldn't let this milestone pass without saying a massive thank you to her.



Judith's intimate knowledge of the Nature's Calendar data and the science it has facilitated has been significant. Her most high-profile involvement has been her annual contribution to the State of the UK Climate report – an annual publication

FLY AGARIC FIRST SEEN

- Finally, the average first-recorded fly agaric date in 2025 was 4 October, one day earlier than 2024 but four days later than the benchmark year (30 September).

REFERENCES

- ¹ Parker, D.E., Legg, T.P. and Folland, C.K. (1992). A new daily Central England Temperature Series, 1772–1991. *International Journal of Climatology*, 12, 317–342.
- ² Hollis, D., McCarthy, M., Kendon, M., Legg, T. and Simpson, I. (2018). HadUK-Grid gridded and regional average climate observations for the UK. Centre for Environmental Data Analysis.
- ³ Met Office. (2026). Weather and Climate summaries. [online] Available at: www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/summaries.

which provides a comprehensive assessment of the UK's climate.

We don't think there's a radio station out there that hasn't benefited from Judith's calm, warm, professional and passionate approach to championing this work and explaining what it tells us about how nature is responding to climate change.

Judith is now moving on to pastures new by joining the Woodland Trust's National Volunteering team, where she will be supporting volunteering right across the organisation.

Thank you, Judith, we'll miss you.

Thank you

Thank you so much for your continued support. We hugely appreciate all the time and effort you put into recording.

We're always on the lookout for more volunteers to take part in the project.

Anyone can sign up and find out more at naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk

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