

Beech

About beech

This is a large tree that can grow to more than 40m tall. Young trees are easy to spot as they keep their old, copper coloured leaves throughout the winter that stand out against the dark branches.

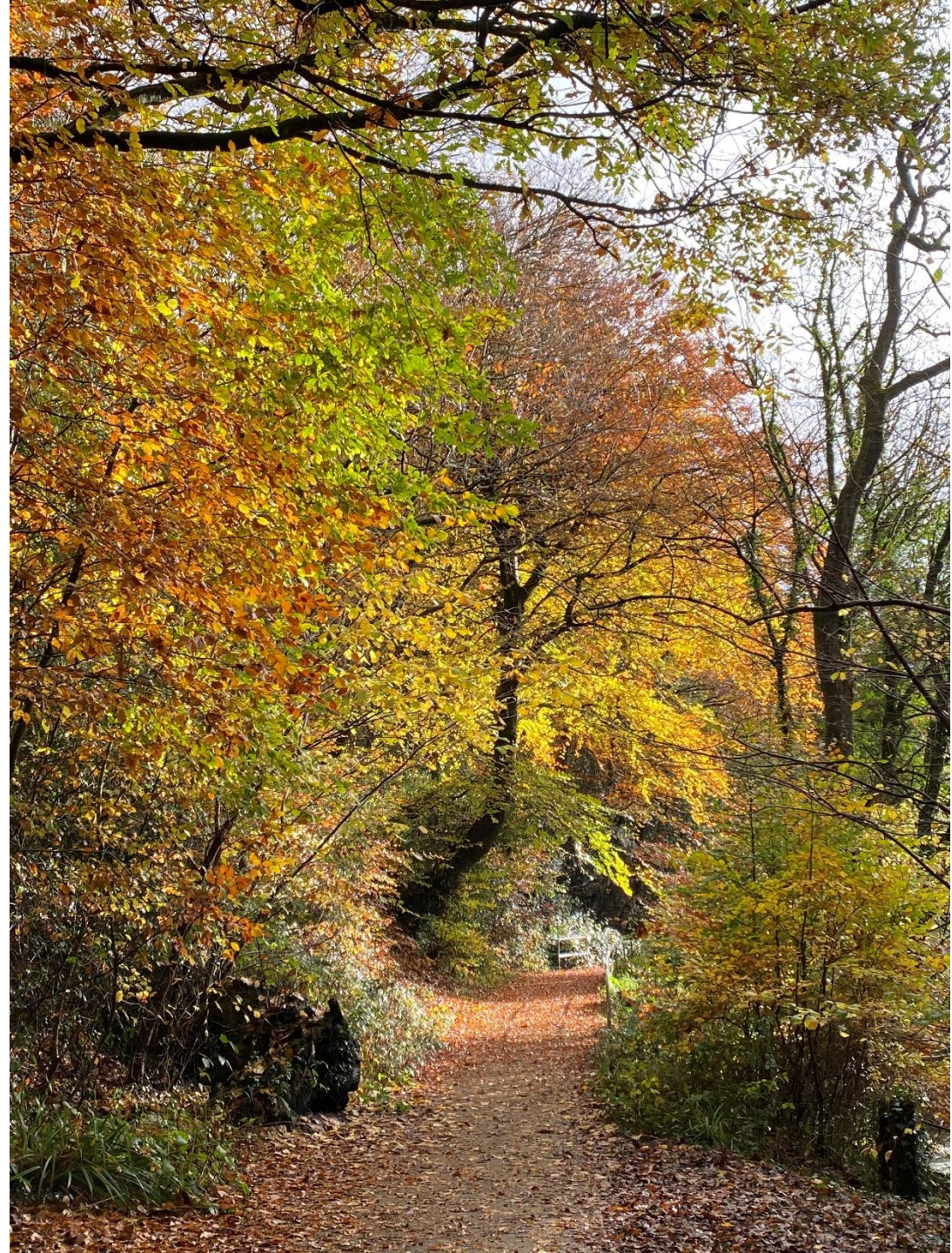
Beech woodlands are shady and have a dense carpet of fallen leaves and mast husks that prevent most plants from growing. You will often find bluebells and orchids in beech woodlands, including the helleborines. Native truffles are also associated with beech woodland.

The leaves of beech trees are eaten by a variety of moth caterpillars and the seeds by mice, voles, squirrels and birds.

The bark often supports a range of fungi, lichens and mosses.

As the beech is a long-lived tree, it also supports insects reliant on deadwood.

Beech in autumn



Identifying beech

#1 Location - beech trees are found in woodlands and hedgerows as well as single trees in fields; younger trees hang onto their leaves.



Buds

#2 Buds and seeds – the buds taper to a sharp point, large and copper coloured; beech ‘mast’ are the cases of beech nuts and can be found under a beech tree – crunching underfoot. Squirrels and other animals eat the nuts so you may only find the empty mast.



Nut and casing (mast)

#3 Bark is smooth and grey, developing ridges and furrows as it gets older

Where to see beech trees in Torfaen
The British, Talywain; Lasgarn Woods;
Pontypool Park

Mature beech tree

