

Species to look for on York's Green Routes

In this section we are going to look at learning to identify some of the common species that you might find on York's Green Routes.

1. Lime Tree

There are lots of different trees in York. Some of them are more easily recognisable than others, such as an Oak tree with its acorns, or a Horse Chestnut tree with its conkers. Lime trees, despite being probably one of the most common trees in the city, are less well known.

Lime trees are full sized trees, like an Oak tree or Horse Chestnut. They are commonly planted in towns and cities as an avenue of trees, along the roadsides. They are a deciduous tree, which means that they lose their leaves over Winter. In Spring they burst into life with bright lime coloured leaves. These are heart shaped and are commonly the size of an adult's palm. In Summer they have white flowers which once pollinated develop into small spherical fruits, about the size of a large pea. Both the flower and the fruit dangle beneath a special kind of leaf called a 'bract'. These are thin and light coloured. It sometimes makes the tree look like it has short pale green ribbons tied to the ends of its branches. The flowers smell sweet and are loved by insects so sometimes you can smell or hear the tree and the bees before you see it.

There are photos of Lime trees below. Help with identification can also be found on the [Tree Guide UK website](#).

Good examples of Lime tree avenues in York are Racecourse Road, Terry Avenue and along the riverside cycle path to Nun Ings.





2. Teasels

Teasels are another great species to know how to identify as they are very distinctive and can be seen in all seasons.

Teasels are a tall flowering plant. They are known for their flower or seed head that is a kiwi fruit sized spiky oval shape. In Summer they flower as a purple ring of tiny flowers around the centre of the seed head. Over the following weeks the ring splits into two; one ring of flowers heads upward and one ring heads downwards. The seed head is spiky, as is the stem. The leaves join together and cup around the stem.

They are loved by birds, especially Goldfinches. Finches have beaks which are specially adapted to get seeds out.

There are photos of teasels below:



3. Tansy Beetles (and Dock Beetles)

If you've read our overview of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan or LBAP then you will have seen the mention of Tansy Beetles.

Tansy Beetles are small iridescent green beetles, which preferentially eat Tansy plants. Tansy grows by the river and is a knee to shoulder high plant that has clusters of yellow button flowers with no obvious petals in Summer. Take a closer look at the leaves and stems and you might see a flash of metallic green. Take your time as sometimes it takes a while for your eye to adjust and then once you've seen one, you often see many! The beetles are about 1 - 1.5cm long and their body has a domed shape. In Winter they are buried in the ground underneath the plant so wait until Spring to look for them.

They can be confused with Dock Beetles which are exactly the same colour. Dock Beetles preferentially eat Dock plants so make sure you are looking at Tansy rather than Dock. Dock Beetles are slightly smaller and are less rounded than Tansy Beetles (unless pregnant!) Their middle section, or thorax, is smaller compared to their abdomen. On a Tansy Beetle this is the same width as the abdomen.

There are photos of Tansy Beetles below and a Dock Beetle for comparison (last photo):



