

Blackthorn or Sloe

There are many examples throughout the park this one on the allotments near Hixberry Lane.

Latin/Botanical Name: *Prunus spinosa*

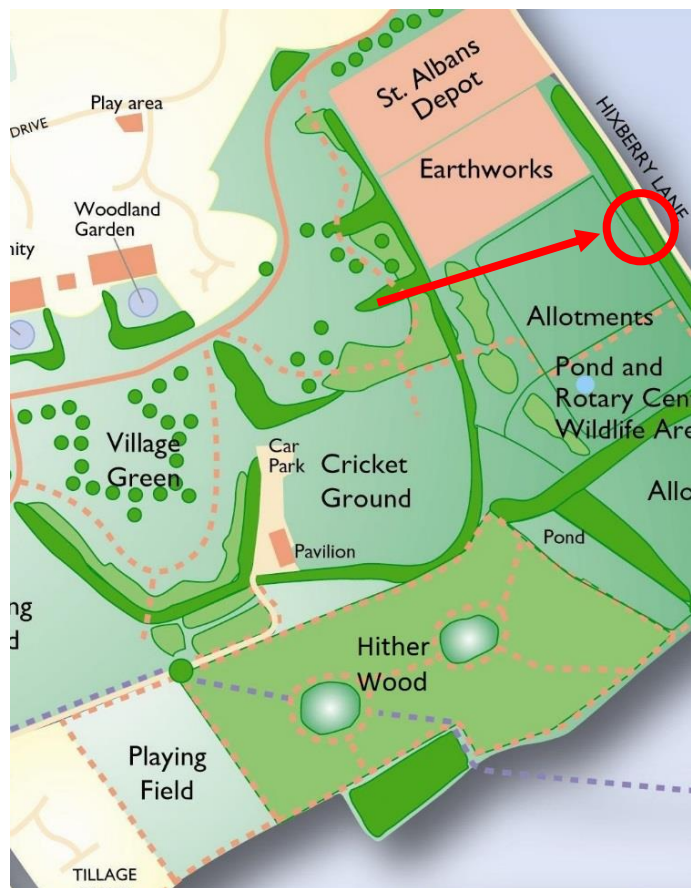
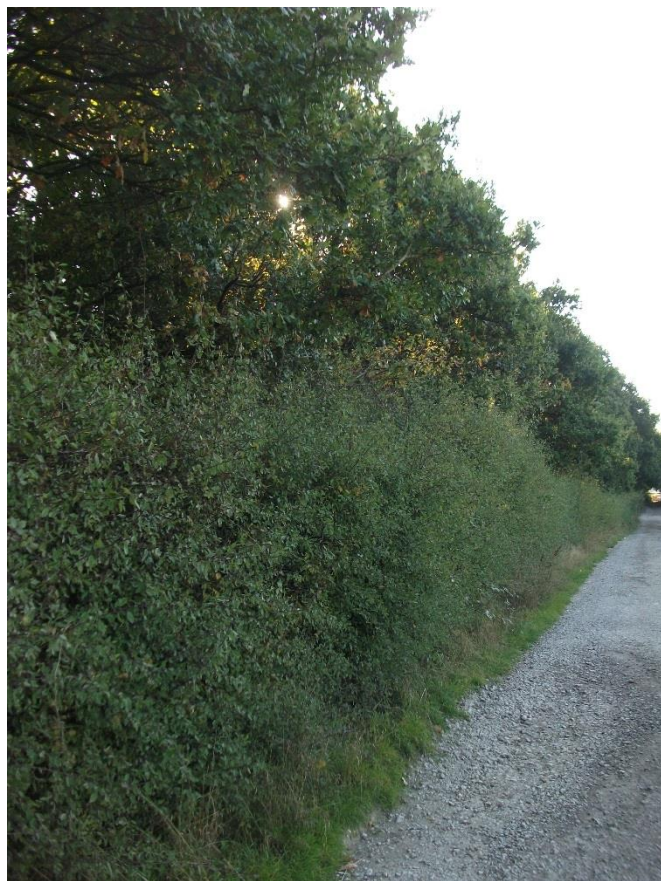
Range: Native throughout the UK and Europe especially in hedgerows and scrub

Height: up to 6m

Uses: It is widely used as a hedging shrub, the sloes are used for wine making and preserves, and of course for flavouring gin. The timber is hardwearing and was traditionally used for making walking sticks (including the Irish shillelachs) and tool parts. It also burns well so is often used as firewood.

Description: A thickly branched spiny deciduous shrub with numerous suckers. Bark dark brown, leaves ovate 2-5cm long dull green and smooth above and downy on the veins below. Flowers are solitary produced just before leaves in March-April. Fruit is globose, the well known blue-black sloe.

Interesting Fact: Without leaves it is easily confused with hawthorn. The flowers of blackthorn appear before the leaves and the spines have buds along their length, on the hawthorn flowers emerge from the same point as the buds.



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