

# HABITAT

## **Traditional Orchards**

Traditional orchards were once a common feature of the Vale of Evesham, including Evesham itself and they were an important part of the town's economy.

However, as a result of the loss of commercial viability many have been destroyed or left neglected.

Those remaining are threatened by agricultural intensification, conflict between commercial and conservation objectives and a lack of appropriate skills and knowledge of some owners.

Some are on the edges of the town and are vulnerable to development.

The habitat structure of traditional orchards is very different from modern orchards. They comprise a group of fruit trees planted on permanent grassland. They have been managed without the use of modern agricultural chemicals or machinery. Over several centuries of fruit production many cultivars of apples and plums, some of which originate in Worcestershire, have been created. Historic cultivars are an important part of the biodiversity and heritage of the area.

Traditional orchards are of high ecological importance. They are included as a UK BAP priority habitat and are listed under s.41 NERC Act 2006.

The loss of traditional orchards has had an adverse effect on many species, including the lesser spotted woodpecker, bullfinch, wryneck, noble chafer and stag beetle.