

Bulky Deadwood Fungi

Oak Polypore *Piptoporus quercinus*, **Coral Tooth** *Hericium coralloides*, **Bearded Tooth** *Hericium erinaceus*.

Other BAP species: **Tiered Tooth** *Hericium cirrhatum*

Areas and status: Oak polypore *Piptoporus quercinus* is restricted to oak and is estimated to be occupying the heartwood of 200-250 trees in England with just a few occupied oaks in E. Wales and S. Scotland. The world stronghold, over 100 occupied trees, is likely to be in Windsor Great Park and Forest, Berkshire. The remainder of the English population is scattered wherever the habitat is suitable. The toothed *Hericium* species have a wider distribution and are found on old trees within and outside of the high forest habitat. The majority of records are from beech. The New Forest is a nationally important site for dead wood fungi specialists on beech, including the *Hericium* species. Bearded tooth is virtually restricted to old deciduous woodland in southern and south-western England.

Woodland type: Lowland Broadleaved Woodland, Plantation Woodland, Wood-pasture and Parkland

Preferred habitat niches: Oak polypore is usually seen fruiting in July and August in open-grown mature and/or ancient English oak woods (maidens or pollards) in parkland, wood pasture, or former wood pasture, where trees have exposed heartwood and branches are allowed to fall and decay *in situ*. It is restricted to deadwood, living in the dead central heartwood core of oak (always *Quercus robur*) and fruiting where heartwood is exposed or overlying sapwood has died. Most frequently seen fruiting on veteran oaks with hollow trunks and fallen main branches on large diameter limbs. Oak polypore occupies the same habitat as the two much more familiar oak-associated bracket fungi: chicken of the woods *Laetiporus sulphureus* and beefsteak fungus *Fistulina hepatica*, but the latter two are far more widespread and can be found on sweet chestnut as well as oak. The *Hericium* species fruit in late summer to autumn and are saprotrophic on standing or fallen dead parts of trunks and large branches of broadleaved trees, most notably beech. Bearded tooth's preference is for damaged areas of old standing beech trees (wounds, branch stubs etc), but may also fruit on fallen limbs. They may be found on trees deep within the forest, including PAWs sites.

Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Loss of woodland and wood pasture habitat
- Large gaps in age structure of oak and beech
- Other trees (holly, maiden oak) outcompeting occupied oak pollards
- Removal and destruction of occupied heartwood and dead wood
- Fragmentation of fallen branches during mechanical bracken management and forestry operations
- Fires
- Health & Safety concerns

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
Manage the woodland with fungi in mind	Refer to the generic woodland fungal community management guidelines.
Allow occupied wood to produce fruit bodies (brackets)	Leave all standing and fallen dead wood in situ, with main large diameter fallen branches uncut and in situ where they fall. Do not remove large dead branches still attached to the tree. Do not create wood piles on top of fallen limbs. Control surrounding trees if necessary by removing those which are crowding the host tree, thus creating a "halo" around the oak or beech. Removal of surrounding dense stands should be by gradual phased felling. Any operational machinery needs to avoid damaging the ground and the fallen tree limbs.



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Prolong life of oldest trees on site to lessen effects of age gap	For oak polypore, bring lapsed pollard oaks back into pollard cycle or at least reduce canopy weight.
Woodland continuity	Ensure the woodland is regenerating and thus providing a range of age classes amongst the oaks and beeches. Planting should be a last resort. Protection of young trees from deer browsing may be needed. Ensure some mature healthy trees are left during harvesting operations to develop into future veterans.
Grazing	Where grazing is present as a management tool in wood pasture it should keep surrounding vegetation down and prevent overgrowth of occupied fallen branches, but oak and beech regeneration may need protection.
Fires	There should be no fire sites near to old trees.
Managing public pressure	Wherever possible, divert footpaths away from veteran trees rather than making the tree safe.