



Book Information

The Woodland Year

By Ben Law

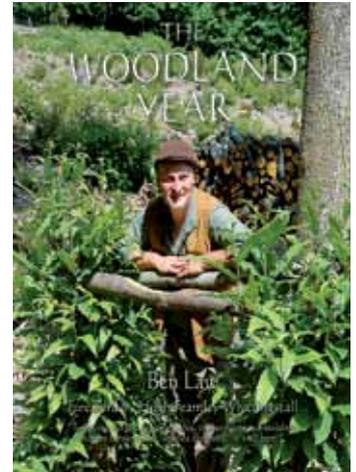
Packed with stunning colour photographs, *The Woodland Year* is an intimate month-by-month journey through Ben Law's yearly cycle of work, his naturally attuned lifestyle and his deep understanding of the wood in which he lives. Each month includes guest contributions from woodlanders in other parts of England and Wales.

The Woodland Year provides a fascinating insight into every aspect of sustainable woodland management; the cycles of nature, seasonal tasks, wild food gathering, wine making, mouthwatering and useful recipes, coppice crafts, round pole timber frame eco-building (pioneered by Ben in the UK), nature conservation, species diversity, tree profiles and the use of horses for woodland work.

This is a profound book that is both practical and poetic. It describes a way of life that is economically and ecologically viable and sets a new standard for managing our woods in a low impact, sustainable way. As such, it holds some of the fundamental keys to how we can achieve a lower carbon society.

“In the end it is Ben's absolute passion for woodlands, as well as wood, which is the mark of the man. His deep understanding of them is now opening up many regenerative possibilities for the British landscape and would-be woodlanders alike. By training others in woodland skills, by using his woods and house to educate many, by writing books such as *The Woodland Year*, by putting himself in the media spotlight – a place that by his humble nature isn't the most comfortable place for him to be – Ben has dedicated his life to showing that looking after our woodlands is essential for our future wellbeing.

“Ben is a true pioneer and is, by example, quite simply creating a woodland renaissance in Britain. Read *The Woodland Year*, and you will surely want to be part of it.” Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, broadcaster, chef and smallholder, in the Forward.



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What people are saying about THE WOODLAND YEAR

The Woodland Year is a triumphant celebration of the re-emergence of our traditional woodland culture. With his usual modesty and good humour, The Woodland Year provides a kaleidoscopic insight into the woodsman's life. Amidst the background narrative of Ben's seasonal tasks at home in the beautiful woods, immortalised by Channel 4's Grand Designs, appear wildfood recipes (must try the Party Squirrel), homemade drinks (beech leaf liqueur anyone?) greenwood crafts, building with local timber, profiles of our indigenous trees and fascinating vignettes by another dozen woodlanders. In their own words, each describes his or her experience of making woodland work a viable and rewarding option. Images of working horses on a winter's dawn, elfish children stoking the fire and sunlight glancing through dappled bluebell woods are realistically balanced with the physical and mental rigours and realities of sustaining a livelihood from wood, woodlands and related activities. If like millions of others your imagination was entrapped by Ben's beautiful, quirky, homemade woodland house as it appeared on television, then this book is equally captivating. At once realistic, practical and alluringly tactile it should become a springboard for those seeking a sustainable livelihood from the woods. At the same time it is a fascinating book for the uninitiated to dip into: an introductory trove full of inspiration, colour and wonder.

Henry Dowell, Permaculture magazine

Ben Law has written a wonderful account of life as a woodsman taking the reader through the natural cycle of a calendar year. As I read I found the connection that Ben has with nature almost hypnotic and strangely calming. I could almost feel the surroundings he described. This is a beautifully presented book with inspiring ideas and Permanent Publications should be proud of what they have produced. If you buy this book for someone this Christmas just make sure they agree to lend it back to you. Or better still get yourself a copy at the same time.

Richard Barnett, New Forest Transition

It is not only the beauty of the photographs that brings this book to life. It is the intimacy of the writing and Ben Law's extraordinary, wide-ranging knowledge about woods. This is not a 'how to' book for a trainee woodsman. It is more of a lyrical call for readers to work more in harmony with nature, and to appreciate the resources that lie around them. As such it works. I, for one, will be walking in my local woods with my eyes newly attuned to my surroundings.

Review by Clare Reddaway on www.greenprophet.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ben has always had a passion for healthy, biodiverse farms and woodlands. He has worked on a smallholding, growing fruit and vegetables and looking after livestock.

Having gained an Advanced National Certificate in Agriculture, he became a shepherd and set up a conservation landscaping business, specialising in ponds and wild flower meadows. Woodlands were a natural progression and after seeking out a few experienced coppice workers, he began work in the woods and in associated coppice crafts.

Ben endured a 10 year struggle to obtain planning permission to build a house in his own woods, made mainly out of materials from the woodland itself.

Ben's appearance on Channel 4's Grand Designs is the most watched in the series' history, is the host's and public's favourite episode and was one of the 25 programmes chosen to represent Channel 4's 25th anniversary. The show, and his Grand Design's Revisited episode, are repeated constantly in the UK and worldwide. Ben has also appeared on the BBC's Countryfile and The Green Team. In America, Ben has featured on The World's Greenest Homes, The World's Most Extreme Homes (HGTV) and Nightline (ABC), and various shows worldwide including Japan's El Mundo (the equivalent of their One Show).

Ben visited the Amazon in the late 1980s looking for positive solutions to deforestation and on his return set up and directed the charity, The Forest Management Foundation, working primarily with community forestry in Papua New Guinea. He has also worked for Oxfam as a permaculture consultant.

Ben was a founding member of the Forest Stewardship Council and has lived and worked at Prickly Nut Woods in West Sussex, UK, for 20 years; training apprentices and running courses on sustainable woodland management, eco-building and permaculture design. He runs a specialist eco-building company The Roundwood Timber Framing Company Limited.

