

# Five Flowers for Fownhope

## November - December - January

The greatest variety and number of wild plants in Fownhope grow in the woodland and grassland on the Silurian limestone ridges. Many wild plants also grow along the river bank, roadside verges, hedgerows and in old orchards.



**Yew** – woodland, particularly on limestone; often in former quarries and disturbed ground; near churches and close by old cottages. Yew lives ‘in two households’ – trees are either male or female. Female trees produce the pinky-red bell-like berries called arils, with brownish-purple seeds inside. Thrushes feed on the berries unharmed by the poisonous seed as the coating on the seed is resistant to the birds’ digestive enzymes.



**Mistletoe** – hedgerow and orchard trees. The bunches of yellow-green stems and leaves are either male or female. The female plants produce the greenish-white, translucent berries in groups of three to five. The seed inside the berry is heart-shaped. Mistle thrushes defend chosen bunches with their football rattle calls. Within twenty miles of Hereford the semi-parasitic mistletoe has been recorded on over thirty host tree species.





**Dog Rose** – hedgerows and woodlands. The rapidly growing sharp-thorned stems arch over hedgerows and up into woodland trees. The leaves are shed in early autumn leaving bright red, smooth, shiny hips on bare stems. Birds are reluctant to feed on them until they become softened by late winter frosts. Rich in vitamin C.



**Butcher's Broom** – dry woodlands and hedgerows. Remarkable to find the shiny red berries set against dark green foliage in wintery woods. They take twelve months to mature and so berry and flower are present at the same time. The dark green, evergreen, sharply pointed foliage are not leaves. They are leaf-like flattened stems.



**Holly** – hedgerows and woodlands. Trees are either male or female. In most, but not all years, female trees produce the wonderfully brilliant red shiny berries densely packed in clusters, strikingly contrasting with the dark green glossy leaves. Berries will often be suddenly and totally consumed by winter flocks of blackbirds, fieldfare, redwings and other thrushes. Truly, the mystical tree of winter and Christmas.