

Discover Anagach Woods Important Plant Area

Enjoy a variety of walks through historic pinewoods, an important landscape for a range of rare wild plants, lichens and mosses.

Green trail

A gentle walk on well-made paths with some minor gradients.

Distance: 1¼ miles. Allow 50 minutes.

Blue trail

A gentle walk on well-made paths with some minor gradients.

Distance: 2 miles. Allow 1 hour.

Red trail

A longer walk mostly on paths and tracks with some minor gradients.

Distance: 5½ miles. Allow 2½ hours.

All abilities trail

A short walk for all abilities.

Distance: 1 mile. Allow 45 minutes.

Where to start

Anagach Woods car park and information board. From the town square, go to the end of Forest Road, Grantown-on-Spey (Grid reference NJ 035 275).

Refreshments and WC

Cafes and public lavatories are available in the town centre (¼-mile walk).

We are Plantlife Scotland

Plantlife is the charity that speaks up for Scotland's wild flowers, plants and fungi. From the Cairngorms to the corridors of Holyrood, we're here to raise their profile, celebrate their beauty and protect their future.

HRH The Duke of Rothesay is our Patron



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Thank you

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"The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas".



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Plantlife Wild flower walks



The wild plants of Anagach Woods

Explore the flora of these majestic pinewoods, which form part of the Cairngorms Important Plant Area



Discover Anagach Woods

Part of the Cairngorms Important Plant Area and a hotspot for plant diversity

Throughout history, these pinewoods have changed, from ancient boreal forest to moorland to forest plantation. Underneath the statuesque pines, nestling among heathers and blaeberry, lies a rich diversity of wild plants, mosses and lichens of international importance.

Along the trails, you'll find twisted spires of juniper and trees festooned with a diverse range of lichens. On the forest floor live delicate spring flowers of wood sorrel and chickweed wintergreen, and rare plants such as intermediate wintergreen, creeping lady's tresses, twinflower and stagshorn clubmoss.

Bog woodland

Anagach Woods is also home to a unique community of species known as bog woodland, a rare and valuable habitat. A 1768 map of the area shows that there used to be a loch here; once open water, the area is now a 'floating forest' consisting of a carpet of sphagnum mosses, sedges, cross-leaved heath

and bog cotton, on which grow spindly yellow pine trees. The pines are old but stunted because their roots cannot reach the mineral soil, surviving only on the minerals in rainwater. The inaccessible nature of this intriguing forest makes it a hotspot for wildlife – and there's a great view across this Tolkienesque habitat from the trails.

Eskers

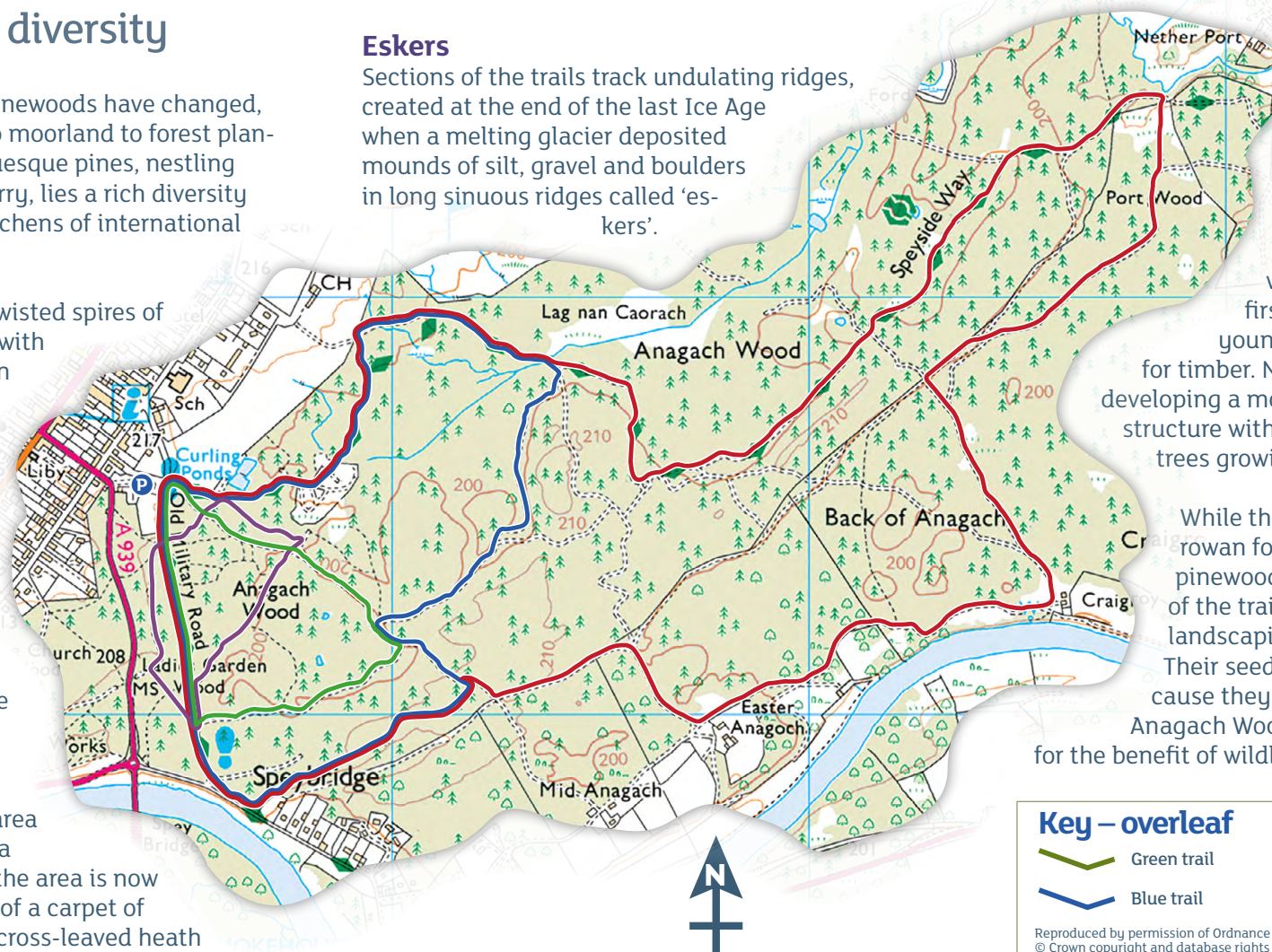
Sections of the trails track undulating ridges, created at the end of the last Ice Age when a melting glacier deposited mounds of silt, gravel and boulders in long sinuous ridges called 'eskers'.

These are special places to look out for wildlife, like red squirrels and the rare, endangered capercaillie. This elusive bird feeds on insects, pine needles and pinewood plants, such as blaeberry. To help protect these rare birds, please follow any signage in the woods, keep to the paths and your dog on a short lead, especially between April and August when the birds are breeding.

Trees through time

Look out for the old gnarled 'granny pines' that have survived among the tall straight pines towering above them. These pines hint at part of the forest history. The plantation forest dates to 1765 when Abernethy tree stock was first planted. Those trees and their younger generations were managed for timber. Nowadays, Anagach Woods is developing a more natural character and varied structure with young saplings of broadleaved trees growing among the mature pines.

While the self-seeded birch, willow and rowan form a natural component of pinewoods, the beech trees at the start of the trails were planted as part of the landscaping of 'Lady's Garden Wood'. Their seedlings are less welcome here because they shade out other plants so the Anagach Woods Trust look to manage them for the benefit of wildlife.



Key – overleaf

- Green trail
- Blue trail
- Red trail
- All abilities trail route

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Important Plant Areas (IPAs)

The Cairngorms IPA is one of 47 IPAs in Scotland. IPAs are internationally recognised hotspots for wild plants and lichens. Go to www.plantlife.org.uk/scotland to discover more about IPAs.

These pinewoods are managed by the Anagach Woods Trust for the benefit of the environment, health, recreation and tourism. Plantlife would like to thank them for their advice and support in producing this guide. To find out more about the work of the Trust visit www.facebook.com/Anagach-Woods-Trust

Plants of Anagach Woods

These wonderful pinewoods are home to a diverse range of wild plants, lichens and fungi. Look out for:

Wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*

Look out for this spring flower. Its clover-shaped leaves, which taste like apples, are lime green. The delicate white flowers have lilac veins. Both leaves and petals fold shut as night draws in.



Creeping lady's tresses *Goodyera repens*

Caledonian pinewoods in the Cairngorms are one of the strongholds for this orchid. It has broad-stalked, oval, evergreen leaves with conspicuous cross veins and slender spikes of cream flowers that can be seen in late summer.

Twinflower *Linnaea borealis*

This rare pinewood plant, with two bell-shaped pale pink flowers, can be hard to spot. It needs semi-shade and not too much competition from other plants to thrive.



Chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*

The Gaelic name for this plant is 'Reul na Coille' meaning 'star of the wood'. With its papery white flowers held at the top of slender stalks, it is clear why it is called this.



Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*

This pretty yellow flower with its four petals can be found in pinewoods and grasslands. It has roots that have been used to dye leather red. The dye is called 'tormentil red'.

Intermediate wintergreen *Pyrola media*

Look out for this rare pinewood plant on the red trail, where it can be found in clumps at the side of the tracks. It has round evergreen leaves and a spike of modest, round, white flowers with a straight, protruding style.



Bearded lichens *Usnea* sp.

Hanging down like long, tassled beards from branches of trees, lichens (not strictly 'plants' but instead part-algae and part-fungi) are a sign of clean air. Ancient Caledonian pinewoods are an important habitat for many rare and beautiful species of lichens.

Stagshorn clubmoss *Lycopodium clavatum*

This creeping evergreen plant likes open ground, such as track sides. It produces spores rather than seeds on erect cones, or 'strobili'. These spores have been used in the past to create magicians' flash powder.



Juniper *Juniperus communis*

Look out for juniper, a shrub found in ancient Caledonian pinewoods, which can sometimes grow as tall as a small tree. Juniper has blue-green needle-like leaves and small cones that look like berries (green at first then dark blue). The berries are used to flavour gin.

Cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*

This dwarf evergreen shrub has oval leaves and red berries. While the berries are edible (sometimes called lingonberries), they are very tart and so are best cooked.



Blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*

This dwarf shrub has serrated edges to its leaves, which turn flame-red in autumn before they are shed for winter. The blue berries are delicious raw and are enjoyed by people and wildlife. It is especially important in Anagach Woods for two rare moths – the Cousin German and the Rannoch Looper – and the Green Hairstreak butterfly, which only feeds on blaeberry in the Highlands.



Hard fern *Blechnum spicant*

This small leathery fern has two types of leaves or fronds. The fertile fronds are narrow and stick up straight; there are spores on the back of them. The sterile fronds are larger and arch outwards.

