
Layering oaks

JOHN BULMER

During the Austrian Danube tour of June 2006 we were shown a layered oak in the Lednice Chateau Park situated in South Moravia (Czech Republic). At least one of the local foresters remembered the presence of a branch connecting the trunk with the layer but sometime in the last 30 years it had been lost and there is now a 7m gap between the trunk and the layer.

In May 2007 during the IDS Yorkshire tour we saw another example at Settrington House the estate of Sir Richard Storey the tour organiser and Chairman of the Society. Although eight branches were in contact with the ground only one had rooted.

Layering is very rare in this species but Dr Owen Johnson of The Tree Register knew of another example on the Goodwood Estate in West Sussex. Mr Alan Sargent, the Gardens Manager, kindly sent me photographs of this tree. It is clear that there are large branches layering on each side of the trunk.

Quercus robur in Lednice Chateau Park: the layered branch has been severed from the main tree sometime in the past 30 years.

Photograph © John Bulmer





A detail of the only branch of *Quercus x rosacea*, at Settrington House, that has rooted in the ground (see illustration page 5).

Layering can occur in at least 27 broadleaved genera and is especially common in *Aesculus*, *Castanea*, *Fagus* and *Tilia*. At least seven coniferous genera can layer despite, in general, a more upright habit.

Solitary trees are more likely to layer than plantation trees. Cultivation, grazing and pruning usually prevent root formation but a period of human inactivity has the opposite effect.

One can be certain that rooting has occurred if the branch diameter is greater beyond the area of ground contact than before it.

Layering can increase mechanical stability of the tree and does improve longevity.

Reference

- Bulmer, J.H. (2000). Natural tree layering *The Dendrologist* Vol. 10 no 2.
 Owen Johnson – personal communication
 Alan Sargent – personal communication