

# Ancient woodlands

## *Seann choilltean*

Pronounced: *Shan choiltean*

The Easter Ness Forest, across the water from here, is the only large stretch of semi-natural woodland left along Loch Ness.

The native tree species there have been in the Great Glen for thousands of years. Pollen samples from peat show that birch *beithe* arrived 8,000 years ago. Oak *darach* and pine *giuthas* have been here for at least 6,000 years.

The underlying rock affects what grows above it. Birch grows mainly in the north of the forest, where the rocks are granite and Old Red Sandstone. Blaeberrries *dearcan-fraoich*, wavy hairgrass and bell heather grow underneath. Some areas have lime-based rock and there you can see slender false brome grass, dog's mercury and bugle.

In the south of the forest, where the ground is rockier, the trees are mainly Scots pine, ash and oak with juniper, holly, wood sage and wild strawberries *subhan-làir* growing beneath.

Easter Ness and the nearby Inverfarigaig Forest are both internationally important for their woodlands and otter habitats.



Bell heather  
*Fraoch a' Bhadaìn*



Dog's mercury  
*Lus glinne*



Bugle  
*Stoc*



Otters  
*Dòbhrain*

Red squirrel  
*Feòrag ruadh*



### Did you know ...?

The woodlands on the south side of Loch Ness provide excellent habitat for red squirrels and nowadays there are initiatives to protect the squirrels. Only 60 years ago the Highland Squirrel Club was still paying their members to kill them as vermin!