Berries on Portsdown Hill

A berry is a many seeded fleshy, indehiscent (non-splitting) fruit. The seeds are distributed after the fruit has been eaten by an animal. The hill's scrub contains about 30 species of plant that produces berries. Some are native, some are introduced.



Apple

Malus sylvestris

Widespread trees growing from apple cores



Black Bryony

Tamus communis

Scrambling herb, distinctive heart-shaped leaves



White Bryony

Bryonia dioica

Scrambling herb with tendrils. The matt red berries contain a strong laxative.



Blackthorn

Prunus spinosa

Thorny shrub with blue/black fruit that are known as sloes and used to flavour gin.



Buckthorn

Rhamnus cathartica

Shrub characteristic of chalk landscape. Historically the berries were used as a purgative.



Dogwood

Cornus sanguinea

The bitter and inedible berries were once a source of lamp oil

Himalayan honeysuckle

Leycesteria formosa

Alien species that is spreading on the hill. The fruit is a soft purple-black berry





Elder

Sambucus nigra

Shrub with pungent leaves. Fruits and flowers make wines and jam and are rich in vitamin C



Holly

Ilex aquifolium

Birds especially thrushes are fond of the fruit



Juniper

Juniperus communis

Berries are green in the first year and dark purple in the second, also used to flavour gin



Privet

Ligustrum vulgare

Shrub with blue-black berries that were once used to produce dyes



Dogrose Rosehip

Rosa canina

Scrambling woody stems armed with vicious prickles



Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna

Each dark wine-red fruit has a single seed



Butcher's broom

Ruscus aculeatus

Red berries on a clump of stems producing dark pointed 'leaves'. A plant of shade.



Sweet briar Rosehip

Rosa rubiginosa

Like dogrose hips but with hairs



Bramble

Rubus fruiticosus

No fewer than 2000 varieties have been recorded



Guelder rose

Viburnum opulus

A generally poisonous plant. The leaves resemble those of a maple



Yew

Taxus baccata

Evergreen tree



Cotoneaster

Cotoneaster sp.

Birds love the brilliant red berries. Different species of this introduced plant are spreading on the hill.



Wayfaring tree

Viburnum lantana

Shrub with red berries that fade to black.



Whitebeam

Sorbus sp.

Shrub or tree with red berries.



Woody Nightshade

Solanum dulcamara

Low growing scrambling shrub. The leaves often have holes



Spindle

Euonymus europeaus

Shrub with pink berries containing orange seeds.