



## Exploring oak woodland

### *Getting to grips with galls*

#### **Dr George McGavin:**

Galls are a collective name for any growth, unusual growth, over-growth of a plant or any area of a plant. It can be bud, a leaf or root or what have you. And it can be caused by a wide variety of organisms.

A gall is entirely made from the host plant. It can vary hugely from a simple blob, a swelling, inside which there may be an egg or an insect grub.

It can assume a variety of shapes depending on the gall format. We still don't really know how they instruct the plant to make a gall and to make a gall of a particular shape. So there are obviously very precise instructions, saying 'I want a gall of this shape, this size and that's where I will live. And you will give me food as well'. That's a big area that we're only now just beginning to tease apart.