

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST CITATION**

**CARDIFF**

**GARTH WOOD**

<b><u>Date of Notification:</u></b>	1979, 1983, 2001
<b><u>National Grid Reference:</u></b>	ST 125825
<b><u>O.S. Maps:</u></b>	1:50,000 Sheet number: 171 1:10,000 Sheet number: ST 18 SW
<b><u>Site Area:</u></b>	63.8 ha

**Description:**

Garth Wood is of special interest for its semi-natural broadleaved woodland, particularly its stands of beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland, growing near the western limit of its natural range. The site is also of special interest for the nationally rare spider *Porrhomma rosenhaueri*, found within Lesser Garth Cave.

The wood is situated 1km west of Tongwynlais, on the outskirts of Cardiff, on the steep western slopes of the Taff Gorge at the southern edge of the South Wales coalfield. The site lies at an altitude of 30 to 175m and most of the woodland has a northerly aspect. Soils are typically free-draining fine loamy or silty, brown earths over Carboniferous Limestone.

Garth Wood is dominated by mature beech, with a structurally variable shrub layer, mostly comprising hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The field layer is also variable and often sparse under the dense beech canopy; locally abundant species include bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and ivy *Hedera helix*. Bird's-nest orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* occurs here amongst locally frequent sanicle *Sanicula europaea*.

Garth Wood also supports stands of mixed broadleaved woodland with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and birch *Betula pendula*. The shrub layer is well developed, including frequent wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and spindle *Euonymus europaeus*. The field layer includes locally abundant ramsons *Allium ursinum* and hart's tongue fern *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, with bluebell, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and ivy. Also present on the site is a small stand of pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* woodland.

Lesser Garth Cave is one of the two known UK locations for the nationally rare troglobitic spider *Porrhoma rosenhaueri*.

**Remarks:**

The site supports woodland vegetation assignable to the habitat types 'Asperulo-Fagetum beech

forests' and 'Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines' listed on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna).

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