

Trees

Ash



Fraxinus Excelsior is one of our most beloved trees. Ash is one of the most common trees in the UK, but as ash dieback sweeps through, is it set to be erased from our countryside? When fully grown, ash trees can reach a height of 35m. Tall and graceful, they often grow together, forming a domed canopy. The bark is pale brown to grey and fissures as the tree ages. The tree is easily identified in winter by its smooth twigs that have distinctive black, velvety leaf buds arranged opposite each other. The leaves are oval, pointed and paired up either side of the stem with a single leaf at the end.

Silver Birch



Betula Pendula is a striking, medium-sized deciduous tree. When mature they can reach 30m in height, forming a light canopy with elegant, drooping branches. The white bark sheds layers like tissue paper and becomes black and rugged at the base. As the trees mature, the bark develops dark, diamond-shaped fissures. Twigs are smooth, and have small dark warts. Leaves are light green, small and triangular-shaped with a toothed edge, which fade to yellow in autumn.

Buckthorn



Rhamnus Cathartica is prickly and comes with the ability to purge. This plant's common name of Purging Buckthorn harks back to its purple-blackberries use as a laxative.

It is a small, spiny tree native to England and Wales and throughout Europe. Mature trees can grow to a height of 10m, with grey-brown bark and spiny branches. The leaf buds are conical and black-brown in colour, and form on long stalks.

Guelder Rose



Viburnum Opulus is a flamboyant, romantic, wildlife beacon. The guelder rose brightens woods with spring blossom, autumn colour and vibrant berries.

Guelder rose is a spreading, deciduous, upright shrub. It can reach up to 4m high and can spread from 2–5m. It has greyish, hairless stems.

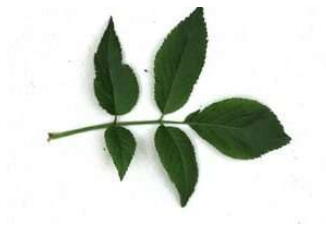
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Horse Chestnut



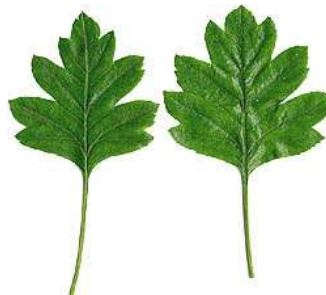
Aesculus Hippocastanum has spiky cased gleaming seeds, celebrated by many for their mahogany-bright conkers inside and are the very essence of autumn. Mature horse chestnut trees grow to a height of around 40m and can live for up to 300 years. The bark is smooth and pinky-grey when young, which darkens and develops scaly plates with age. Twigs are hairless and stout; buds are oval, dark red, shiny and sticky. Leaves come as five or seven to a single stem.

Elder



Sambucus Nigra is famously feared by the devil but favoured by foragers. Elder is the very essence of summer with its fragrant flowers that can be made into elderflower cordial and soot-dark fruits. It was said that an elder planted by your house would keep the devil away. Mature elder trees grow to a height of around 15m and can live for 60 years. Elder is characterised by its short trunk (bole), and grey-brown, corky, furrowed bark. It has relatively few branches.

Hawthorn



Crataegus Monogyna is also known as May after the month in which it blooms and a sign that spring is turning to summer. The pale green leaves of this hedgerow staple are often the first to appear in spring, with an explosion of pretty pale-pink blossom in May. It simply teems with wildlife from bugs to birds. Mature trees can reach a height of 15m and are characterised by their dense, thorny habit, though they can grow as a small tree with a single stem. The bark is brown-grey, knotted and fissured, and twigs are slender and brown and covered in thorns. It often hybridises with the UK's other native hawthorn, Midland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*). Both species are similar and can be hard to tell apart.

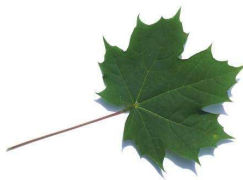
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Hazel



Corylus Avellana has catkins resembling lambs tails, and late-summer nuts. Hazel is one of the most useful trees for its bendy stems and as a conservation saviour. And its nuts are loved by people, squirrels and hazel dormice. Hazel is often coppiced, but when left to grow, trees can reach a height of 12m and live for up to 80 years (if coppiced, hazel can live for several hundred years). It has a smooth, grey-brown, bark, which peels with age, and bendy, hairy stems. Leaf buds are oval, blunt and hairy. Leaves are round but with a pointy end and serrated edges.

Norway Maple



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Acer Platanoides was introduced in the 17th century; the handsome Norway maple is known for its hardy timber. Its leaves are a favourite with caterpillars and its seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals. Norway Maple is a deciduous broadleaf tree and can grow to 25m. The bark is grey with fine ridges, and the twigs are slender and brown with tiny white spots.

Oak



Quercus Robur is the ruling majesty of the woods; the wise old English oak holds a special place in our culture, history, and hearts. It supports more life than any other native tree species in the UK; even its fallen leaves support biodiversity. A large, deciduous tree growing up to 20–40m tall. Also known as common oak, this species grows and matures to form a broad and spreading crown with sturdy branches beneath.

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Cherry Plum



Prunus Cerasifera is often planted as a street tree, early spring flowerer and ancestor of the domestic plum. Cherry plum is one of the first trees to blossom in the UK. Cherry plum is a broadleaf deciduous tree and one of the first *Prunus* species to flower in spring. It can grow to 8m. Its bark is dark grey and develops fissures with age, and its twigs are green and covered in a fine down when young.

Dog Rose



Rosa Canina is a familiar, scrambling beauty that adorns hedgerows with its pale pink flowers. Dog Rose clasps on to other shrubs with curved spines to grow. A thorny climber, dog rose has strongly hooked, or curved prickles, to gain a purchase as it weaves in between other shrubs and uses them to support its growth. It can grow up to 3m tall when well supported. Its leaves can be affected by the gall wasp, which makes them into fibrous red threads. The flowers are large pink or white with five petals and a faint sweet smell. Rose hips are the fruit; striking red, oval, berry-like.

Rowan / Mountain Ash



Sorbus Aucuparia is the bane of witches, diviner of the future and producer of jam, rowan is an elegant tree with a mystical history. Its leaves and berries are a favourite for wildlife in woods and towns alike. Mature trees can grow to 15m in height and can live for up to 200 years. The bark is smooth and silvery grey, and leaf buds are purple and hairy. Fruit are numerous bright red berries.

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Spindle



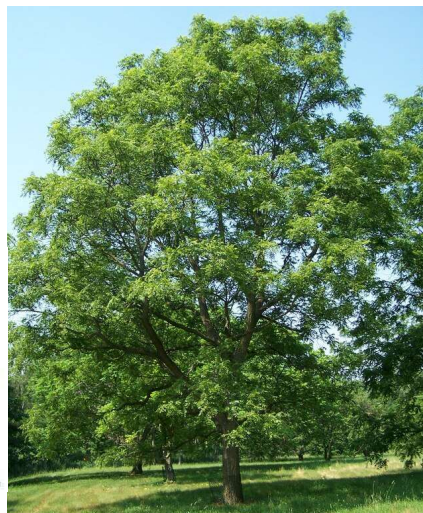
Euonymus Europaeus is industrious, delicate, colourful. The spindle is at its loveliest in autumn when its leaves turn russet and its pink and orange fruits ripen. Wildlife loves its leaves and fruit, and aphids flock to it, bringing with them an array of their predators. Spindle is a deciduous native tree, and mature trees grow to 9m and can live for more than 100 years. The bark and twigs are deep green, becoming darker with age, and have light brown, corky markings. Twigs are thin and straight.

Spruce



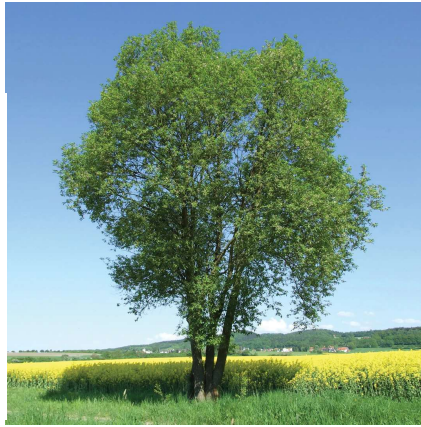
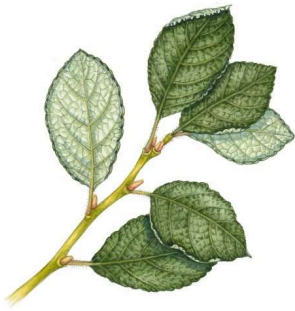
Picea Abies is a festive tree made popular by Prince Albert. Norway Spruce is a familiar non-native fast-growing evergreen conifer, with friendly winter colour and a value to native wildlife. It can reach 40m and live for up to 1,000 years. They are tall and straight and of a triangular appearance, with a pointed crown. The young bark is a coppery grey-brown and appears smooth, but is rough with papery scales. Mature trees (over 80 years old) have dark purple-brown bark, with cracks and small plates. Twigs are orange-brown, grooved and hairless. Long fir cones hang down from the tree and have overlapping scales with jagged tips.

Walnut



Juglans Regia provides walnuts, food of the gods, medicine for the people. Walnut was first introduced by the Romans who, like much of our native wildlife, valued its nuts. Walnut is a deciduous broadleaf tree which can grow to 35m. They typically have a short trunk and a broad crown, though can be narrower if grown in a woodland situation. The bark is smooth and olive-brown when young, developing fissures and fading to silver-grey with age. Twigs are stout, green and curving. The leaves when crushed smell like polish.

Goat Willow



Salix Caprea is also known as the Pussy Willow because the male catkins of the Goat Willow look like a cat's paws. It supports lots of wildlife, including the elusive and regal Purple Emperor butterfly. Mature trees grow to 10m and can live for 300 years. The bark is grey-brown and develops diamond-shaped fissures with age. Twigs are hairy at first but become smooth, and can appear red-yellow in sunlight.

White Willow



Salix Alba is a silvery leaved waterside and fenland dweller. White Willow feeds and shelters native wildlife and has been a source of natural remedies for centuries. The White Willow is the largest species of willow, with mature trees growing up to 25m. They often have an irregular, leaning crown. The bark is grey-brown and develops deep fissures with age, and twigs are slender, flexible and grey-brown.

✓ Also seen in the 1950-58 Dernford Fen survey by Bishop's Stortford School's Natural History Society