COMMON ALDER  *Alnus glutinosa*

Alder belongs to the same family as Birch. It rarely grows to more than 20m or lives longer than 150 years. It grows quickly and is short lived, typical of pioneer species. It fixes nitrogen and generally improves the soil.

COMMON ASH  *Fraxinus excelsior*

Often large trees, mature specimens may attain 35m tall and 400 years old. Ash is one of the first to come into leaf and one of the first to shed leaves in Autumn. Related to the Olive, Jasmine and the Lilac.

COMMON BEECH  *Fagus sylvatica*

Beech may grow to form beautiful, stately trees (up to 40m tall). It is a relatively fast-growing species that is to be found on well-drained soils. Its root system is shallow and the tree is therefore susceptible to high winds and also to drought.

BIRCH  *Betula spp.*

They are relatively short-lived trees which are quick to colonise open areas. They are a pioneer species and after the last Ice Age they were amongst the first species to colonise the UK. Dried pieces of the paper bark are excellent for lighting fires.

EUROPEAN LARCH  *Larix decidua*

The flattened, soft, needle-like leaves are arranged radially around the tips of young shoots, or in rosettes (of 30 to 40 leaves) on older wood. In spring, the new leaves are a bright, fresh green but in autumn they turn a yellow, golden colour.

OAK  *Quercus spp.*

Oaks are long-lived trees, many being 300 or more years old. Oak wood is good to work with, as it cleaves well but younger wood can stain the hands (due to tannins). There are two main species, Sessile Oak and Pedunculate Oak which readily hybridise.

SCOTS PINE  *Pinus sylvestris*

Probably the most widely distributed conifer in the world. It is one of the UK’s three native conifers – the other two being Yew and Juniper. Sometimes described as an ‘honorary hardwood’, as it grows slowly and produces a good quality, hard timber.

SWEET CHESTNUT  *Castanea sativa*

The leaves on a mature tree can be very long indeed – they are probably bigger than the leaves of any other wild tree in the UK. The Sweet Chestnut has long been planted in large quantities in Britain, generally for charcoal manufacture. Often planted alongside oak, as an understory.

WILLOW  *Salix spp.*

Various willows were present in the UK after the last Ice Age. They are a ‘penchant’ for hybridisation. Willows are generally plants of wetter areas/soils. They have long been associated with the making of baskets, hurdles, plant supports, and of course cricket bats.

COMMON YEW  *Taxus baccata*

The Yew is slow-growing and can be of great longevity. Some Yews are thousands of years old. It is to be found naturally on many salt lagoons, though it is more common on chalk in the South. East and lime stone in the North.

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