

ALDER



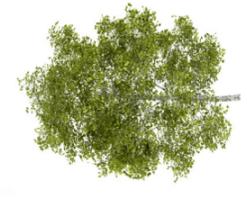
ASH



BEECH



BIRCH



LARCH



GUIDE to BRITISH TREES

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OAK



SCOTS PINE



SWEET CHESTNUT



WILLOW



YEW



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 be 40-45m tall and up to 400 years old. Ash is late coming 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 500 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 Pedunculatae 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 been planted in large quantities in South East England 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, but it is difficult to know which due to their 'pendant' 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 soil types, though it is more common on chalk in the South East and limestone in the North.