

TREES THROUGH THE SEASONS

Sycamore -

Acer pseudoplatanus

Sycamore is a common tree in Britain and can grow up to 35 metres tall. It was introduced from Europe perhaps as early as Roman times. The palmate leaves are often blotched by 'Tar Spot', a black fungus. The pairs of winged fruits, which hang in bunches, are popular with children.



Corstorphine Sycamore - *Acer pseudoplatanus corstorphinensis*

The original corstorphine sycamore, named by the Forestry Commission as one of Scotland's most historic trees, stood beside the dovecot in Dovecot Road, Corstorphine, for 4 centuries until it was blown down in 1998. It dates back, possibly, to the 16th century.



Common Oak - *Quercus robur*

Common oak is long lived, slow-growing and variable in size and shape. The Vikings used the strong wood for their ships and weapons. The wood is durable and lasts for centuries. Oaks were sacred to the Druids. Oak bark is used as a tonic and antiseptic.



Scots Pine - *Pinus sylvestris*

Scots pine is the only large conifer native to Scotland. It can be distinguished by its rusty red bark of the upper trunk and branches. The needles are in pairs. It is thought that clumps of Scots pine were used as ley line markers in the past, to denote potent currents of flowing earth-energy.



Ash - *Fraxinus excelsior*

Ash is a native tree which thrives in damp, base-rich soils. The bark is grey, becoming ridged with age. A tree of legend, thought to have magical powers, it was burned as the Yule Log. Its tough, elastic white wood has many uses, including walking sticks, tool handles, boats and oars.

Wych Elm - *Ulmus glabra*

Wych elm is a common woodland tree which has shown some resistance to dutch elm disease. The trunk often forks near the ground. The winged fruits, with the seeds set centrally, appear before the leaves. 'Wych' is from an old word meaning supple - referring to the twigs.



Larch - *Larix decidua*

European larch was introduced into Scotland in the early 17th century. It is both coniferous and deciduous. The soft, needle-like leaves turn golden in autumn when they are shed.



Yew - *Taxus baccata*

All parts are poisonous. The yew has dark green needles and bright red berries and is believed to be a survivor of the Ice Age. It commonly grows in graveyards and is associated with renewal and regeneration. Some trees can live to be over 1000 years old.



Variegated Sycamore

Beech - *Fagus sylvatica*

The beech was introduced into Scotland. It has smooth silver grey bark, ascending branches and a dense dome. Its buds are slender, long-pointed with many scales, opening into fresh green leaves with silky white hairs darkening later. It has male and female flowers. The fruit, known as 'mast' is four-lobed, containing triangular nuts.

Copper beech



Horse Chestnut -

Aesculus hippocastanum

Horse chestnut is an introduced species cultivated in parks. Its leaves have 5, 6 or 7 broad sessile leaflets. Its spectacular flower spikes or 'flambeaux' produce a spiky 'conker' containing a shiny nut. Its wood is fragile and easily broken. Its sticky buds are well known.



Elder, Bourtree - *Sambucus nigra*

The elder grows freely all over the hill. Its flowers are small creamy-white, and can be made into tea. The fruit grows in large clusters, turning from green to black. It can be made into jam or wine and is rich in vitamin C. The hollow stems were once used as whistles, leading to the name 'pipe tree' and 'bour tree' as it known in Scotland.



Hawthorn -

Crataegus monogyna

The hawthorn is a small tree of the rose family. The blossom is strongly-scented and the red berries are eaten by birds, who then disperse the seeds. The bark was once used to dye wool black and the leaves, blossom and berries have many herbal properties.

