



ASH (*Fraxinus excelsior*)



Ash is one of the most widely distributed trees throughout the British Isles, and is especially common on chalky, limestone or alkaline clay soils.

It is a characteristic tree of ancient woodlands.

In an open setting the tree forms a very broad crown, whereas in woodland it forms a very tall upright tree with a tall straight trunk. The tree can live up to two hundred years or more depending on the soil and location.

The black buds of the ash are very distinctive, and are opposite on the twig. The flowers appear in early spring long before the leaves, and each tree is either male or female. The leaves are made up of four pairs of leaflets, and appear in May.

Ash was used extensively in the past by the Anglo-Saxons for making spears and shields, and more recently for horse drawn machinery and farm implements including the spokes of wheels, and cart frames. It was also used for making tool handles, bar-hurdles and furniture. The wood makes excellent charcoal and firewood.

Ash was also used in construction of spar webs in the wing of the famous de Havilland Mosquito.

ENGLISH OAK (*Quercus robur*)



English oak is one of the longest-lived native trees in the British Isles, and probably one of the best known. Some trees are reputed to be at least one thousand years old or more.

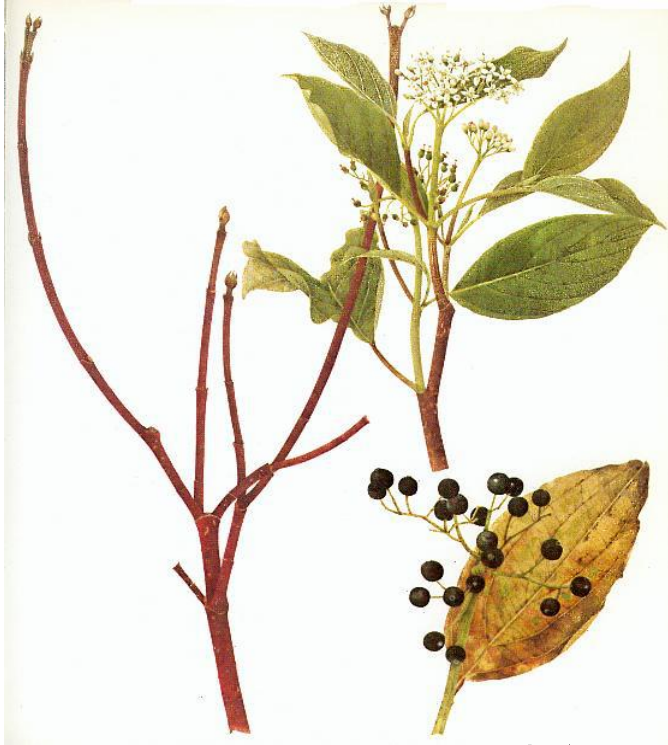
It is very common throughout the whole of the British Isles, and is a characteristic tree of lowland England. It grows on most well drained loam soils and heavy clay soils.

English oak also grows alongside the sessile or durmast oak more so in the north and west, where it frequently hybridises with it. True English oak has no stalks to the leaves, and stalks to the acorns. Durmast or sessile oak has stalked leaves and stalkless acorn cups.

English oak is easily recognisable by its dense twiggy nature, and characteristic lobed leaves that appear in May. The tree forms an impressive crown in an open situation, but is much taller and narrower in woodland where competition is more intense. The uses of English oak timber are legendary. It was used in the construction of all the early battle ships, and many fishing boats. The wood has had many uses including building construction, furniture, farm machinery, gates and fencing. The bark was used for tanning leather.



DOGWOOD (*Cornus sanguinea*)



Dogwood is a common shrub on chalky and heavy clay soils. It can be found as part of the understorey in ancient woodlands, in hedgerows or as a small tree. It forms a multi-stemmed bushy shrub, with blood red twigs when young. It suckers freely and also layers itself so that it often forms dense thickets.

The opposite leaves are oval and deeply veined, and show leaf in early March. The flowers are white in clusters, and the seed a green berry turning to glossy black when ripe. It was used for making skewers-the name 'dog'- a sharp spike.

SPINDLE (*Euonymus europaeus*)



Spindle is a shrub or small tree often found on chalky soils and heavy boulder clay soils in hedgerows and ancient woodlands. When young it forms a multi-stemmed or single leader plant with bright green square twigs that become rounded as the plant gets older. The buds are arranged opposite on the twigs.

The leaves vary from oval to lance-shaped with a finely toothed margin to a pointed tip. In autumn they fade from green to yellow, russet and to crimson. The greenish white flowers are inconspicuous and produced in June. The seeds are bright orange in a vivid pink seed pod.

The name is derived from its past use in the production of spindles for spinning wool by hand.



GUELDER ROSE (*Viburnum opulus*)



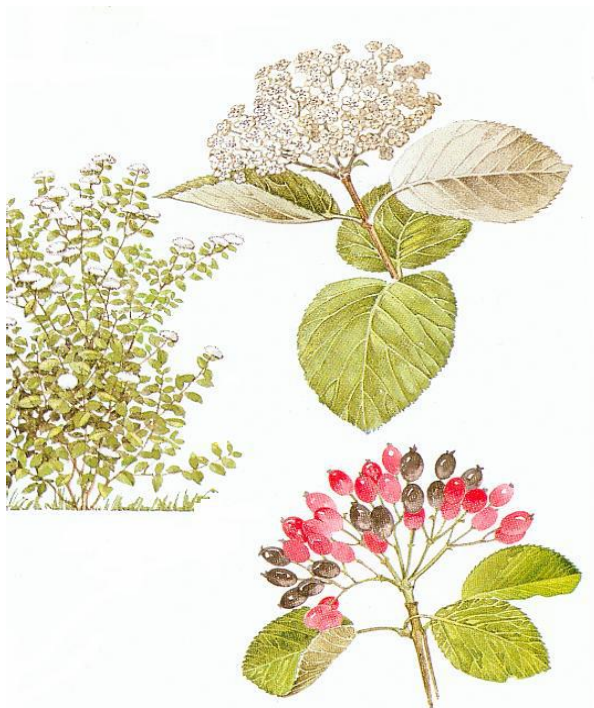
Guelder Rose is a small deciduous shrubby tree up to 10 feet, commonly found on both chalky and acid soils throughout southern and eastern England, but is less common in Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

It is found in hedgerows and in damp woodlands, often forming part of the understorey in the latter.

The large white flower heads are borne in June and July and are insect-pollinated or self-pollinated. These are followed by large clusters of deep scarlet berries that hang down when ripe.

Guelder Rose is not actually a rose at all despite its English name, and is a member of the *Viburnum* family. The name guelder comes from Gueldersland, a Dutch province, where the tree was first cultivated. The berries are used to make flavourings to food in Norway and Sweden and to make a liqueur in Siberia. It is also used in the U.S.A. to make a piquant jelly.

WAYFARING TREE (*Viburnum lantana*)



Wayfaring tree is a deciduous shrubby tree up to 10 feet or more in height, confined mainly to chalky and clay soils in south-eastern and south-western England. Its distribution is approximately south and east of a line from the Wash to the Severn, and extending westwards to Glamorgan and south Devon.

It is a plant frequent of hedgerows, woodland margins and dry downland scrub, often growing with hawthorn.

The creamy white flowers are produced in May and June and are insect or self-pollinated.

The berries are produced in August and September and start off pink, then turn to red and finally black when ripe. Wayfaring tree acquired its name when travellers on foot or horseback saw the plant and named it 'Wayfarer's Tree'.



BLACKTHORN (*Prunus spinosa*)



Blackthorn or sloe, is a very common shrub or small tree of hedgerows and woodland which grows almost everywhere throughout the British Isles. It often forms dense impenetrable thickets, and has vicious black thorns. It grows on almost every soil type, except bogs and waterlogged soils.

In February, blackthorn produces masses of small white flowers that look like snow, and these usually appear before the leaves. Later in the autumn it produces purple-black fruits called 'sloes'. They are used to make sloe wine, sloe gin or sloe cheese.

The sloe is the ancestor of our cultivated plums, and man has been eating them for thousands of years.

Though the tree is too small for timber, stakes and walking sticks are made from it, and was used to make the traditional Irish shillelagh.

HAWTHORN (*Crataegus monogyna*)



Hawthorn is a very common bushy shrub or small tree that grows almost everywhere throughout the British Isles, and makes up the dominant species in most hedgerows. It also grows in most broad-leaved woodlands alongside the Midland Hawthorn (*C. laevigata*) as part of the understorey.

Hawthorn often forms impenetrable thickets known as scrub in woodlands and on the downs on the chalk, and is extremely prickly with large thorns.

The frothy white fragrant flowers come out in May. It is often known as 'May' or 'quick-thorn', and can be made into wine.

The small round fruit known as the 'haw' changes in early September from green to scarlet. There is usually one seed in each 'haw' for *C. monogyna*, and two or more in *C. laevigata*. Wine can be made from these. Hawthorn does not produce timber but the wood was used extensively for making wood-engravers' blocks, mallet-heads and tool handles.



FIELD MAPLE (*Acer campestre*)



Field maple is found throughout the British Isles, and it is especially common on the chalk, limestone and boulder clay soils of southern England. It normally forms a small tree up to fifty feet or more in an open setting or woodland, and is very common in hedgerows.

Field maple is a native tree, characteristic of ancient woodlands, and is often found growing in association with ash and English oak.

The leaves are relatively small, and are arranged in opposite pairs. They turn yellow and crimson in the autumn. The twigs are often corky and winged.

The flowers are male and female together, (hermaphrodite), and are pollinated by insects.

The seeds or 'keys' are found in thick bunches and are green at first turning to brown when ripe.

Field maple produces a dense hard wood that is used for carving and making bowls and plates.

The wood is also used for making walking sticks.

CRAB APPLE (*Malus sylvestris*)



Crab apple is a common native tree of England, but becomes scarce further north. It is a tree most commonly found in ancient or semi-ancient woodlands. It forms a bushy, dense, thickly branched tree with a very broad crown in an open situation, but tends to be taller and narrower when growing in woodland.

True Crab apple should not be confused with many apple trees seen growing at the side of roads, since many of these have originated from domestic apple seed. These trees do not have any thorns, and have pink flowers.

Crab apple grows on almost all soil types, but prefers well-drained loam on chalky or clay soils.

The flowers are produced in April and are at first pure white. The twigs always have thorns. The characteristic small apples called 'pomes' are about an inch in diameter, and are very sour. The apples produce an excellent jelly, wine or cheese.

The wood is very hard and tough and is often used for making mallet heads and tool handles and for carving. It is often used for making chess and draught pieces. Crab apple has been eaten by man for thousands of years and has always been a symbol of fruitfulness and love.



DOG ROSE (*Rosa canina*)



Dog rose is a very common and variable plant of woodland margins, scrub and hedgerows. It occurs throughout the British Isles but is rather uncommon in Scotland. It grows on most well-drained loam soils, especially chalk, limestone and clays.

It is a vigorous scrambling plant that forms either a dense bush, or climbs up through trees and hedgerows in search of support, where it can often reach up to thirty feet in height.

Dog rose is known as the 'wild rose', and produces scented single blooms in June and July. These then produce bright scarlet 'hips' in autumn that are rather elongated in shape. The rose hips contain large amounts of vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus and iron and when crushed produce a liquid known as rose hip syrup.

Rose hips have been eaten by man for thousands of years, and seeds have been found in the stomach of a two thousand year old Neolithic woman unearthed in Britain. The rose petals are used to scent water, pot pourris and food, and further uses of the hips are for making wines, jams and preserves.

FIELD ROSE (*Rosa arvensis*)



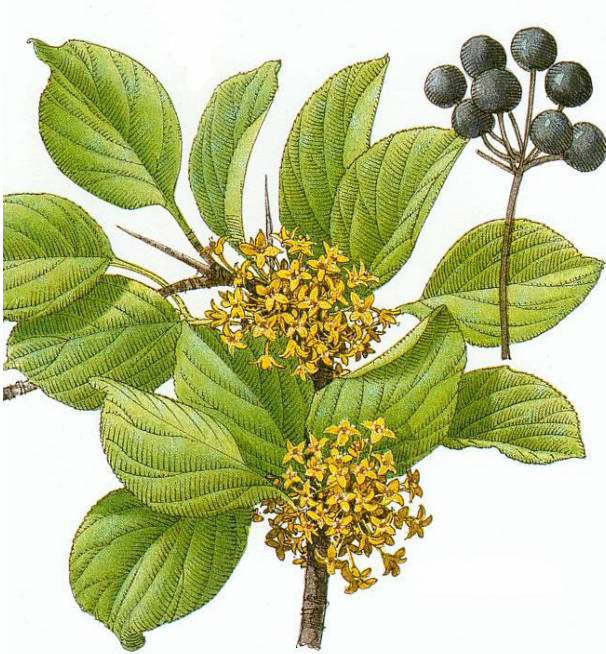
Field rose is less well known than the dog rose, but is also very common and widespread throughout the British Isles. Like the dog rose, it is scarcer further north, and is absent from Scotland except where introduced. It is a vigorous scrambling shrub that grows in hedgerows and along woodland margins and rides. It prefers heavy clay loams and boulder clays, but will also grow well on chalky or sandy soils.

The stems are covered in very long thorns, and the leaves all have seven leaflets. Field rose produces single scented white flowers in June and July, often slightly later than the dog rose.

The 'hips' are scarlet when ripe and are more rounded in shape than the dog rose. These also contain large amounts of vitamin C and other minerals.



BUCKTHORN (*Rhamnus catharticus*)



Buckthorn is a rather thorny native deciduous shrub of Europe and the British Isles. It is found locally on chalky, calcareous clay and fenland soils in southern England, parts of northern England and Ireland. It is often found growing with hawthorn, willow and wayfaring tree. Buckthorn forms a large bush or small tree and is commonly found in ancient or semi-ancient woodlands, and in hedgerows.

The creamy white flowers are borne in May and June, and the male and female flowers are separate.

The fruits are black berries with a single seed produced in autumn.

The bark and berries of buckthorn are highly purgative and has been used for centuries as a laxative. It is not used much for human treatment nowadays, although it is still used in veterinary practice.

WILD PRIVET (*Ligustrum vulgare*)



Wild privet is a semi-evergreen shrub found throughout the British Isles, but is rare in Wales and in the north of Scotland. However, it should not be confused with the arden privet, (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) which is a native of Japan, and commonly grown in the garden as a hedge. Wild privet is commonly found on calcareous soils, and is particularly abundant on the chalk downs. It is a plant found in hedgerows, along woodland edges and rides and often forms dense thickets. It is frequently found growing with hawthorn, dogwood, dog rose and wayfaring tree, and can grow up to a height of twelve feet.

The creamy white flowers are produced in June and July, and are pollinated by a variety of insects that are attracted to their strong smell. The flowers are followed by shiny black berries produced in dense clusters in October. Wild privet does not have any uses, but is often used in landscape plantings, new hedges and windbreaks along with many other species to enhance wildlife and game cover.