

Trees in Battle Cemetery

Brief descriptions of a selection of our wonderful trees

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Height: up to 35m Lifespan: 400 years (more if coppiced) Dioecious

Ash is the third most common tree in Britain, but is currently being affected by Chalara ash dieback, a disease caused by a fungus.

The leaves comprise 6-12 opposite pairs of light green, oval leaflets with a terminal leaflet at the end.

Although ash is dioecious (male and female flowers grow on different trees) they can have male and female flowers on different branches. Male and female flowers grow in spiked clusters. After pollinated by wind, female flowers develop into winged fruits and fall from the tree to be dispersed by birds and mammals.

Aspen (*Populus tremula*)

Height: up to 25m Lifespan: Dioecious

Deciduous broadleaf tree native to the UK, known as Trembling Aspen because the leaves flutter and move in the slightest breeze.

Leaves are round and have large, irregular blunt teeth. Young leaves are copper coloured before becoming green, then turn a vibrant yellow or occasionally red before falling in autumn.

Male and female flowers are catkins. After pollination, female catkins ripen and release tiny fluffy. However, Aspen can also propagate itself by suckers.

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

Height: more than 40m Lifespan: 100s of years, but 1,000s if coppiced Monoecious

Native deciduous tree.

Young leaves are lime green, becoming darker green as they mature. They are oval and pointed at the tip, with a wavy edge.

Beech is monoecious (male and female flowers grow on the same tree). Male flowers are catkins and female flowers grow in pairs, surrounded by a cup. After pollination by the wind, the cup encloses one or two beech nuts.

Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea*)

Height: more than 40m Lifespan: up to 300 years Monoecious

Deciduous tree, that appeared as natural mutant of the common beech in various parts of Europe, as early as the 15th century.

The oval leaves are copper to deep purple in colour.

The male flowers are tassel-like catkins, while female flowers grow in pairs, surrounded by a cup. After pollination by the wind, the cup encloses one or two beech nuts.

Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)

Height: up to 30m Lifespan: up to 70 years Monoecious

Native deciduous tree.

Small, light green leaves are ovate with a toothed edge and fade to yellow in autumn.

Light green leaves are small and ovate with a toothed edge, which fade to yellow in autumn.

Male flowers are long, yellow-brown catkins that hang in groups like lambs' tails. Female catkins are short, bright green and erect. After pollination by the wind, female catkins thicken and become dark crimson. Masses of tiny seeds are produced and dispersed by the wind.

Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Height: up to 28m Lifespan: 300 years Hermaphrodite

Deciduous broadleaf tree, introduced to Britain in the 1600s.

The leaves comprise five to seven pointed, toothed leaflets spreading from a central stem.

Flowers are large spikes, which are white with a pink flush at the base. After pollination by insects, each flower develops into a brown conker inside a green, spiky husk, which falls in autumn. The first recorded game of conkers was in 1848.

Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*)

Height: up to 35m Lifespan: 700 years Monoecious

Deciduous broadleaf tree, probably introduced to the UK by the Romans.

Leaves are oblong and toothed with a pointed tip.

Male flowers are long, yellow catkins and female flowers are found at the base. After pollination by insects, female flowers develop into brown fruits inside a green, spiky husk. The chestnuts can be roasted and eaten.

Holly (*Ilex*)

Height: up to 15m Lifespan: 300 years Dioecious

Native evergreen tree.

Leaves are dark green and glossy with spiny edges.

Flowers are white with four petals. After pollination by insects, female flowers develop into scarlet berries.

Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*)

Height: up to 40m Lifespan: up to 800 years Hermaphrodite

Native deciduous tree, which was once a dominant woodland species, but is now only occasionally found in woods.

Leaves are heart shaped with a pointed tip.

Flowers are greenish-yellow and have five petals, and hang in clusters. After pollination by insects, flowers develop into round to oval, smooth fruits with pointed tips. Flowers can be harvested, dried and infused to make tea.

Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)

Height: 20m

Lifespan: up to 350 years

Hermaphrodite

Native broadleaf deciduous tree.

Leaves are small with five lobes and rounded teeth. They are dark green and shiny, turning golden yellow in autumn.

The small flowers are yellowy-green, cup-shaped and hang in clusters. After pollination by insects, flowers develop into large, winged fruits and are dispersed by wind.

English Oak (*Quercus robur*)

Height: 20-40m

Lifespan: up to 1,000 years

Native deciduous tree.

The leaves grow in bunches and have 4-5 deep lobes with smooth edges and have almost no stem.

The fruit, commonly known as the acorn, are borne on lengthy stalks and held tightly by cupules. When the acorn ripens, it loosens from the cupule and falls to the ground. Most acorns are eaten, so don't germinate and become saplings.

Oaks grow quickly when young, but slow down after about 120 years. They don't produce acorns until they are about 40 years old.

Acorns are poisonous to horses and cattle.

Evergreen Oak (*Quercus ilex*)

Height: 20m

Lifespan:

Monoecious

Evergreen broadleaf tree introduced to Britain in the late 1500s. Holm oak differs from most oaks as its leaves are spiny, like holly, and it keeps its leaf throughout the year.

Leaves are oval and dark green to black. Young leaves and leaves on young plants are spiny, like holly leaves, but older leaves and leaves on old plants have smooth edges.

Male flowers are yellow male catkins. After pollination by wind, female flowers develop into small green acorns, which turn dark brown before falling.

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Height: up to 35m

Lifespan: 400 years

Monoecious

Deciduous broadleaf tree, probably introduced to the UK in the Middle Ages.

The leaves have five lobes.

Flowers are small, greeny-yellow and hang in spikes. After pollination by insects, female flowers develop into winged seeds, which can be used for playing 'helicopters'.

Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Height: up to 50m

Lifespan: up to 300 years

Deciduous tree introduced to the UK from North America in the 1600s.

Leaves are indented into lobes, usually with two on each side of the leaf.

Flowers are yellowy-green and cup-shaped. The inner petals have an orange band near the base. After pollination, female flowers develop into a cone-like fruit.

Walnut (*Juglans regia*)

Height: up to 35m Lifespan: up to 200 years Monoecious

Deciduous broadleaf tree native to south-east Europe.

Leaves are shiny and feather-like, with 5-9 paired oval leaflets and one leaflet at the end.

Male flowers are long yellowy-green catkins and the female flowers appear in clusters. After pollination by wind, female flowers develop into a walnut inside a green husk.

Yew (*Taxus baccata*)

Height: up to 20m Lifespan: over 600 years* Dioecious

Native evergreen conifer.

Leaves are small, straight green needles with a pointed tip, which grow in two rows on either side of each twig.

Male flowers are globular and white-yellow female flowers are like green buds when young, becoming brown with age. Seeds are enclosed in a red, berry-like structure called an aril and birds disperse the seeds.

Yew trees have long been associated with churchyards. *Ten yew trees in Britain are believed to predate the 10th century.

Yew trees are highly poisonous

Irish Yew (*Taxus baccata fastigiata*)

Height: up to 7m Lifespan: Dioecious

Evergreen conifer originally discovered in County Fermanagh in 1780, thought to be a mutant form of common yew, and cultivated for its different foliage and more upright growth.

Leaves are small, curved dark green needles with a pointed tip, which grow all around the twig

Male flowers are globular and white-yellow and female flowers are like green buds when young, becoming brown with age. After pollination by the wind, the female flowers develop into red fruits.

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Why are trees so important?

Trees support aphids, which provide food for insects and birds.

Fungi thrive on tree trunks and on leaf mould beneath trees.

Caterpillars and micro-moths eat leaves and mammals eat the fruits and nuts.

Birds and small mammals eat the seeds.

The flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and birds.

Trees provide cover for birds to nest and bats to roost.

Fallen leaves provide cover for hibernating hedgehogs.

Trees lift the human spirit!

Battle Cemetery is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)

