

# The OPAL tree guide



Ready to start your  
OPAL **Air Quality** Survey?

Want to know what trees to look for?

The OPAL top 3 are Sycamore, Oak and Ash.



Turn over to find out about these and  
6 other common trees.



## Sycamore – *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Leaf has 5-lobes and a toothed edge.

Look for paired, winged 'keys' (often called helicopters) hanging from the tree in the summer and autumn.

Black spots on leaves are likely to be the Tar Spot fungus.



## Oak – *Quercus* species

Look for acorns on the tree and on the ground under the tree.



## Ash – *Fraxinus excelsior*

Paired 'leaflets' with uneven edges on a **green** stalk.

Big black buds on the twigs.

Look for bunches of single-winged 'keys' on the tree from autumn to spring.



## Cherry

– *Prunus* species

The brown or red bark has papery strips that peel horizontally.



## Beech

– *Fagus* species

Look for triangular nuts or their prickly cases on the tree or on the ground underneath it.



## Rowan (Mountain Ash)

– *Sorbus aucuparia*

Paired 'leaflets' with toothed edges on a **red** stalk.

Pale buds on the twigs.

Look for red berries in the autumn.



## Lime – *Tilia* species

Heart-shaped leaf that usually bulges more on one side of the leaf stalk than the other.



## Birch – *Betula* species

Look for smooth bark, usually white or grey (rarely brown) – on older trees there will be dark splits and cracks in the bark.



## Horse Chestnut

– *Aesculus hippocastanum*

Fat, often sticky buds paired on twigs

Look for conkers in the summer and autumn.

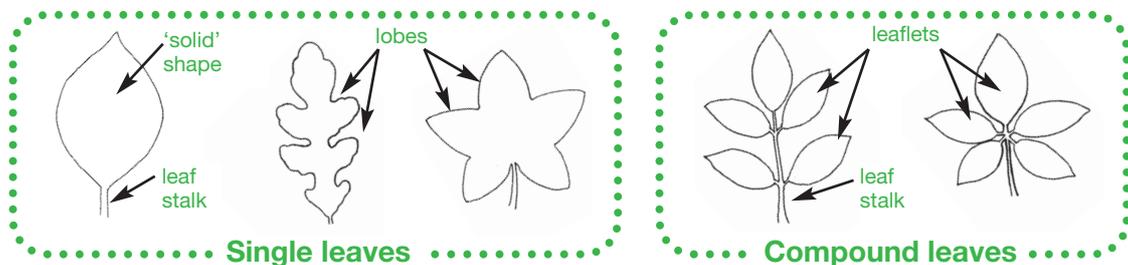


# More about tree identification

Trees can be divided into two main types – those with flat and wide leaves (broad-leaved) and those with needle-like leaves (like Christmas trees). Most broad-leaved trees lose their leaves in autumn and grow new ones in the spring.

One of the easiest ways to identify a tree is by its leaves and twigs. To use this guide, look at the leaf and twig shape on your tree and see if you can match it to the pictures.

**Start** by looking at the shape of the leaves. Is it a single 'solid' leaf, is it lobed, or is it divided into a number of leaflets, all attached to the same leaf stalk (a compound leaf)?



Look at the twigs and compare the shape and colour of the buds to the pictures. Look out for fruits on the tree or on the ground underneath it, as this can help you confirm your identification. If your tree looks different to the pictures and you do not know its name, just enter the tree name as 'unknown'.

To complete your survey don't forget to enter your results on the OPAL website:

[www.OPALexploreNature.org](http://www.OPALexploreNature.org)



**Learn more about trees** – download a free bumper tree pack stuffed with over 50 ideas and activities at the Woodland Trust's **nature detectives** website:

[www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/trees](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/download/trees)

This guide was developed by the Natural History Museum and Field Studies Council in partnership with the Woodland Trust.

Photographs of leaves and twigs supplied by the Woodland Trust, fruits by FSC.

