

British Trees

There are many different types of trees that appear throughout Britain. They have familiar features that make them easy to identify across the country.

Ash



Ash trees are most commonly found in the woods. They grow to around 35 metres in height. Surprisingly, older ash trees tend to be shorter in height than younger ash trees. These trees can also be found growing in parks and fields. Ash trees usually have grey or pale brown colour bark while having bright green leaves. Many creatures thrive in an ash tree's environment, including woodpeckers, owls and dormice. Ash trees can live for around 200 years or possibly longer!



Oak

Oak is considered one of the most well-known trees in Britain. The two types are the English oak and the Sessile oak. The tree's bark is a rough texture and the leaves are smooth with rounded edges. While living to be around 1000 years old, oak trees can grow to a height of around 40 metres. The main uses for oak wood are in building homes, furniture and ships. Major Oak is a tree located in Nottingham that is known as one of the largest and oldest oak trees in the UK. Its **canopy** measures approximately 28 metres wide!



Lime

Around Britain, three types of lime trees grow naturally. These are short-leaved, long-leaved and common lime trees. Interestingly, the lime tree's leaves have a distinctive heart shape while the bark is grey. They can grow to around 40 metres in height. Lime trees typically grow in parks and on streets. Bees can often be found near lime trees as they enjoy the sweet smell of the tree's flowers.



Alder

Alder trees mainly grow best in a wet, cool environment and can be found near streams, rivers and lakes. They can grow to around 25 to 28 metres tall and live to be around 60 years old. The bark on the tree is rough and grey. Interestingly, they produce flowers that can look similar to a pine cone. They also produce fruit that is dangerous when eaten.

Beech

Beech trees are easy to spot in a woodland environment because not many living things can grow below them. They cast a huge shadow that prevents plants from growing. The leaves are shiny and green and the bark is a smooth grey. Beech trees can grow up to around 40 metres and live to be around 400 years old. Sometimes, older beech trees' roots can be seen above the ground!

Sycamore

Surprisingly, sycamore trees were not originally **native** to the UK. It is thought that the Romans might have been responsible for transporting them to British soil when they invaded. However, this is not known for certain. They may have possibly planted them for practical and decorative purposes. Since their arrival, sycamore trees have grown successfully in Britain and can grow to around 35 metres in height. They are well known for their wing-shaped seeds. Young sycamore trees have smooth bark, which becomes rougher as they age. They also live to around 400 years old.

Glossary

canopy: A layer of overlapping leaves and branches of a tree.

native: To exist naturally in one place.

Questions

1. Which tree is described in the text as living to around 1000 years? Tick one.

- beech
- oak
- lime
- sycamore

2. Number the trees from 1-4 to show the order of how long they live, from shortest to longest.

- alder tree
- beech tree
- ash tree
- oak tree

3. Look at the section called **Beech**.

Find and copy one word that tells us where something lives.

4. Fill in the missing words.

There are many _____ types of trees that appear throughout Britain. They have _____ features that make them easy to identify across the country.

5. Name **two** trees that can grow up to around 40 metres in height.

6. Look at the section called **Sycamore**.

Compare this type of tree to another tree mentioned in the text. How are they similar and different?

7. Which tree do you think is the worst type to grow in a park? Explain your answer.

8. Summarise what you have learnt about alder trees in 30 words or fewer.
