



# TREE GUIDE

## PLANTING & IDENTIFICATION

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# Introduction

Welcome to the tree planting advice and identification booklet of the Native Woodland Trust. This booklet leads you step-by-step through the process of planning a woodland or hedgerow, whether large or miniature, urban or rural. From planning at the outset what you want to achieve and what you have space for, through selecting your tree species, ordering your seedlings and choosing your site, this booklet provides the benefit of experience of several professional foresters and environmentalists.

There are photographic examples of the various stages of planting, how to plant correctly, and how your trees will grow and develop into the intended end-result.

The second half of the booklet is a Tree Identification guide. This guide lists thirteen of the most common Irish tree & shrub species, all of which are also readily available from commercial nurseries and grown from seed of Irish provenance. Each page has the English, Irish and Latin names of the trees, along with photographs and detailed illustrations of the leaves, flower and fruit as well as a silhouette of the overall shape of the tree.



# About the Native Woodland Trust

The Native Woodland Trust is Ireland's premier environmental organisation concerned primarily with the preservation and restoration of Ireland's ancient woodlands.\* The NWT is also Ireland's only environmental charity actively planting trees in their own woodland – at Farnaght Wood in County Leitrim.

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\* Ancient woodlands are woodlands which have been in continuous existence since 1600 AD or earlier. These woodlands are most likely to be descended from the original wildwoods which once covered almost all of the island of Ireland, even to the tops of many mountains. They are the last repositories of the native Irish tree gene pool. As much as 99.8% of Ireland's original woodlands have been destroyed over the centuries.

# What should I plant?

An easy way to consider what to plant is to assess what you want to create and what you have room for, and to group your choices into 3 categories - Large tree, small trees or a hedgerow.

## Large Trees

A selection of large trees could include some or all of the following species: Oak, Ash, Alder, Birch, Yew, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Spindle, Hazel.

Oak, Ash, Alder, Birch and Yew can grow very big over time (see the species' details later in this booklet), while Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Spindle and Hazel are much smaller trees. The small trees can be planted between the larger ones to create a lower storey in your new woodland. The larger trees can form the canopy.

## Small Trees

A selection of small trees could include some or all of the following species: Willow, Rowan, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Spindle, Hazel. These trees are quite tough and hardy and can cope with a range of growing conditions. Hazel and Willow, in particular, are quite fast-growing; they can grow over one metre per year.

## Hedgerow

A Hedgerow might include some or all of the following species: Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Guelder Rose, Spindle, Hazel. Hawthorn and Blackthorn are traditionally used very widely in hedgerows in Ireland. As thorny shrubs, they can form an impenetrable barrier to livestock. The other species are also found commonly in hedgerows around the country and will add interest for both wildlife and people with their varying foliage, berries, seeds and nuts.

# Seedlings

It is best to purchase seedlings, especially if you are planting a large area, this will be a much cheaper option. Seedlings (and larger saplings) can come as either bareroot or cell grown. Bare root trees have no soil attached and must be planted before the trees become active in the spring. Cell-grown trees have a small root-ball with soil attached, surrounding the roots. Most tree seedlings will be approximately 30cm (1 foot) tall, but some of the larger trees may be up to three times this size.



**Bare-root seedling**



**Cell-grown seedling**

## Why seedlings? Why not use larger trees?

There are several reasons why seedlings are used, including:

- They are easier to deliver.
- They are easier to handle for planting.
- They are more likely to survive being transported.
- They are more likely to survive being planted.

- They are less likely to suffer “die-back” after being planted.
- The smaller roots mean less digging, making them easier to plant.
- They are less likely to need additional maintenance such as staking, pruning or watering.

In addition, most Irish native trees actually grow much faster than is widely perceived. Many will grow 30cm (1ft) or more per year, once established. Faster-growing species such as Willow and Birch can easily grow one metre or more per year. A Birch seedling planted today could very easily be 6m (20ft) tall in five years time.

### **Do young trees need extra care?**

The only additional care needed for young trees or saplings is to weed around them until they can out-compete any nearby grass or weeds. This usually means weeding until they are comfortably taller than the tallest of the weeds or grasses.

Also, if there are grazing animals nearby, these need to be kept away. Domestic or farm animals such as cattle and sheep will browse saplings and can damage even larger trees. Small trees may also be damaged by rabbits and hares.

### **What do I do when I receive the seedlings?**

You can purchase trees direct from a nursery and collect them yourself. If you are buying large number, it is often more convenient and just as economical to have them delivered.

If you receive your trees before the end of March, you should leave them in their bags, in a sheltered spot outdoors, until ready for planting.

If you receive your trees later in the spring or in early summer, they will survive for several days without difficulty. Again, store them outdoors in a sheltered spot, out of the sun. If you need to store them for longer than this, the best solution is to dig a small trench and just lay all of the root-balls in it and cover them with soil. This will allow you to water them as well, until you are ready to plant.

# Choosing a planting site

As with growing any plant, your trees will grow best if you can provide them with their ideal conditions. Most trees will prefer a well-drained, sunny site with deep fertile soil, sheltered from the worst of the wind and other elements. However, no matter what your soil condition or level of exposure, your trees will still be capable of surviving and growing, although on poorer sites they will do so more slowly.

A good way to judge where trees will grow well is to look at what already grows in the area. If there are already trees on or near your planting site, these will give a fair indication of what to expect from your new trees.

Ideally, the site should also be easily accessible. This will facilitate maintenance as well as use of the new woodland as a recreational and educational resource. If it is difficult to get to or is in an awkward spot, it will often tend to become neglected.

To avoid damage both now and in the future, you should be aware of any services or infrastructure in the area where you are planting the trees. For instance, ensure that there are none of the following which could be affected by your trees' roots or branches: footpaths, gas pipes, water mains, ESB lines (above or below ground), telephone lines, sewer pipes or septic tanks, foundations.

In addition, consideration may have to be given to security. In situations where vandalism or other anti-social behaviour might be an issue, you should ensure that the trees planted are not likely to be damaged or uprooted and also that they do not provide undesirable cover.

In some situations, this may mean that the "parkland" approach described below is the preferred option. However, it is also possible to design the layout of the woodland in such a way that clear lines of sight are available from different angles and that there is no hiding place which cannot be seen.



# Parkland, woodland or hedgerow?

Further thought should be given to the desired end result. Do you aim to have a hedgerow, a woodland, or a parkland with trees?

## Hedgerow

If you have chosen the hedgerow option for your school, then you probably already have a location in mind. The trees in the hedgerow set are small tree types and are species typically chosen for hedging in Ireland. Not only will they tend not to grow very tall, they will also respond well to trimming, usually growing multiple stems and producing a thick screening hedge.

To plant a hedgerow, the species should be mixed freely and planted 30-45cm apart.

As it is not intended that the hedgerow trees grow to their full size, they do not need much space between them. Being in close proximity will lend itself to the branches of each tree touching the next and closing the hedge.

JIM LAWLOR



A planted hedgerow base

## Woodland

To create a native woodland, use a planting layout that follows a natural pattern. Try to replicate the conditions that you would find in a natural woodland. The trees should be planted approximately 2m (6ft) apart, but this is not a strict rule; to create something more natural, plant some trees closer together and others further apart.

As the years go by and the trees grow in height and width, their spreading branches will meet and form a woodland canopy. At this stage, light-loving species beneath the canopy, such as grasses and weeds, will be suppressed and the ground cover will thin out.

Some woodland species such as Bluebells and Primroses have evolved to survive under the canopy by growing and flowering in early spring before the leaves appear on the trees and block out the sunlight.

Seeds of woodland flowers can be collected locally\* where they are abundant or purchased from professional suppliers. Do not be tempted to use seeds or plants purchased in a garden centre or similar, as these are almost always of British/European provenance. Seeds of Irish provenance only should be used.

\*Be careful to have the permission of the landowner and not to collect seed of protected species or within a protected habitat, e.g. an NHA, SAC or Nature Reserve.



Seedlings of naturally regenerating ash carpet a woodland floor.

The trees should be planted in groups of the same species. This will avoid the worst of interspecific competition and prevent the larger species from outcompeting smaller ones in a struggle for light, nutrients and water.

In order to nurture the emerging woodland environment, the cutting of grass and clearing of leaves should stop once the trees have outgrown the surrounding grass or weeds. Shade from the trees will suppress the growth around them naturally, and the leaf litter will also help. In only a few years, the build-up of leaf litter will lead to the formation of woodland soil.

JIM LAWLOR



**Grass growth is gradually suppressed by trees in a woodland.**

JIM LAWLOR



**The same site, a few years later, and the grass has stopped growing, leaf litter is building up and primroses and lesser celandines have colonised.**

## **Parkland with trees**

A third option is to create a parkland with trees. This is the most common type of tree planting in public spaces today. The trees are planted at widely spaced intervals, allowing plenty of sunlight to reach the ground between the trees. The grass can then be grown as a lawn and mowed regularly.

As the trees grow, the side branches are trimmed off until they have been removed to a height of circa 2m. This means that the average person can comfortably walk beneath the trees and can also see the whole way through the area.



**A parkland with trees at the planting stage**



**The ideal end result**

## Other considerations

Other matters which might be given some consideration relate to how your woodland fits in with its surroundings. The entrance and exit could be linked to existing paths or other features. Open spaces could be left in the middle, or a path constructed to run through the woodland, or a seating area provided.



**A low-maintenance path with chipped bark surfacing meanders through a newly planted school woodland.**

We would highly recommend that you carry out the design work up front. This will save time and effort later on. There is nothing worse than having to dig up trees which you have recently planted. Once you are happy with your design, try to lay it out on the ground. Put each tree where it will eventually be planted, and use ropes or a hose to mark paths and other features. This will enable you to spot any potential problems before your design becomes a reality.

On your tree planting day, before you do anything, it is useful to again put each tree in the place it is to be planted and to lay out all equipment and supplies where it will be needed. This should help things run more smoothly and prevent any risk of damage to the trees or volunteers.

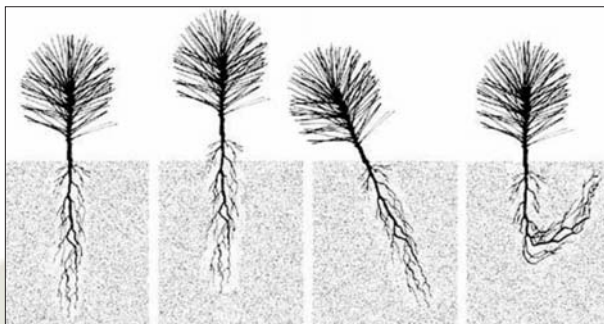
# How to plant your trees

The best way to plant your trees is to use a method called pit-planting. This involves digging a hole for the tree and backfilling it with the soil you removed. This may sound obvious, but there are many other methods used in different circumstances, such as for large-scale, rapid planting.

The hole should be dug slightly deeper than the depth of the roots on the tree, and about 50% wider. Some loose soil can be backfilled until the tree is at the right level. The tree should be planted at the same depth it was previously grown at. This means that, for cell-grown trees, the top of the soil on the root ball should be level with the surrounding ground. For bare-root trees, there will be a mark where the roots meet the trunk – it defines the previous soil level.

Once the tree is at the right level, the soil from the hole can be backfilled. For cell-grown trees, just fill up the hole around the roots, continually ensuring that the tree stays at the correct level and remains straight. For bare-root trees, ensure that the roots are spread out and not damaged as you re-fill the planting hole.

Once the soil has been backfilled, press it down with your heel to ensure that the tree is secure and that there are no air pockets. While doing this, take care not to scrape the bark from the tree with your heel.

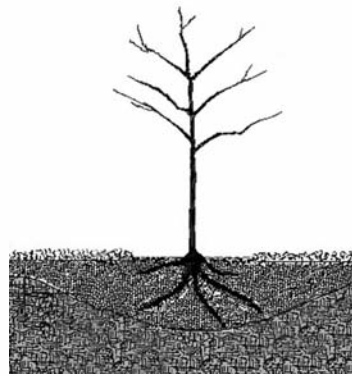


**Tree planting guide (from left to right): correct; not deep enough; not straight; roots damaged.**

Care should be taken not to plant the trees in straight lines, unless you are planting a hedgerow. Even with the best of intentions, many people sub-consciously plant trees in a straight line; this looks unnatural and would allow the elements to blow straight through your woodland.

### **How to care for your new trees**

Once a tree has been planted, it should be generously watered immediately.



**A correctly planted tree**

The planted trees must be kept free of weeds, because when trees are still small they can be overwhelmed by grass or weeds. These compete with the trees for water, nutrients and light. Once winter comes, they may collapse on top of the trees and weigh them down.

Weeding around the trees runs the risk of damaging the trees themselves, either by pulling up roots or by cutting stems accidentally. The best way to keep the trees free of weeds is by mulching with hay, grass, wood chips or anything organic that will suppress growth around the trees. Once the trees have comfortably outgrown any potential weeds, mulching can be discontinued.



**A well-mulched tree. Note how the mulch at the very centre does not touch the tree trunk, where it might cause rot.**

# What next?

## Maintenance

Apart from the mulching, your trees should be relatively maintenance-free. In their first year or two, it may be beneficial to water them during times of drought, but other than that, they should look after themselves.

## Back to nature

If you have planted a woodland or hedgerow, you will soon find that the ground around the trees is becoming shaded. This will suppress the growth of weeds and grass and will create the right conditions for other plants to move in. If there are woodland plants growing nearby, or if the ground has not been intensively cultivated in the past, the chances are that wild flowers will begin to appear on their own. Many of the tree species will also produce flowers and fruit at quite a young age and may start to colonise any gaps in the woodland.

## Planting wildflowers

If there is not much hope of natural growth of wildflowers, native woodland plant seed can be purchased. The Native Woodland Trust can provide additional details of seed collected from ancient woodlands in Ireland, with nearly forty different species available in a single mix.

JIM LAWLOR



Wild garlic may cover the woodland floor just a few years after the trees are planted.



# TREE SPECIES GUIDE



# Alder

Fearnóg • *Alnus glutinosa*

Alder is a familiar tree of river banks and swampy areas. It can grow to 35m, though in Ireland it seldom grows higher than 12m. It is fairly common and is often used as a shelterbelt for commercial forestry. It has the unique ability to grow in very poor soils as it can fix nitrogen from the air and effectively fertilise the soil itself. Woodlands of almost pure alder, called alder carrs, can form around the edges of lakes or along riverbanks.

Alder is a prolific producer of seed, and in favourable conditions it can become quite invasive. Once established, it can grow very quickly, with growth of over 1m in a single summer being quite common. The seeds are borne in cone-like structures and are much sought after by birds in winter.

The timber of alder possesses the special quality of being resistant to decay in water. Archaeological finds have revealed that it was used to make shields in prehistory.



COLLIN MACLOCHLANN

## Identification

The leaves of alder are almost round, similar in many respects to those of hazel. Twigs have sticky buds when young, hence the latin name *glutinosa*. In spring, the tree produces catkins (similar again to those of hazel and birch) which eventually grow into small woody cones 1-1.5cm long, which contain the tree's seeds.



# Ash

Fuinseog • *Fraxinus excelsior*

Ash is one of the most common trees in Ireland. As well as being found in almost every woodland, it is a familiar sight in hedgerows and is frequently the lone tree in the middle of a cultivated field. It can grow to over 35m, and usually has a long, straight trunk.

Its wood is famously used to make hurleys (camáin) as it is less inclined than other woods to splinter from the high impact of the sliotar. Historically, many ash trees took on local and religious significance, and many individual trees took on their own personalities as they became places of worship and pilgrimage.

COLLIN MACLOCHLAINN



## Identification

An easy-to-identify tree that is familiar to most people. The ash keys often persist on the trees through the winter.

Even during winter, the bare twigs, with their distinctive black buds, immediately signal an ash tree. In early spring, small blackish or dark purple flowers appear which are soon followed by the composite leaves – leaves in pairs along a single stalk with a single leaf at the end.



# Birch

Beith • *Betula pubescens*

The downy birch is the more common of two species of birch found in Ireland – the other is silver birch (*Betula pendula*), which has whiter bark and more pointed, less hairy leaves; it is confined to the centre and south.

COILIN MACLOCHLANN



The downy birch grows in most woodlands as well as on bogs, mountains and beside lakes and rivers. It is a pioneer tree, often the first to invade cleared ground. As a pioneer, it is fast-growing and light-demanding: it does not grow well in the shade of other trees. It is short-lived, seldom surviving much beyond 100 years. It can grow to 30m (100ft) in height. Nowadays, the main commercial use for birch timber is for plywood.

Its main wildlife benefit is in its prolific production of tiny seeds in catkins, which attract birds. Because of its rapid growth, it produces much deadwood, which harbours fungi and insects, further benefiting wildlife.

## Identification

A very distinctive tree, the downy birch grows tall and upright and is graceful but not weeping. Its leaves are wedge-shaped and slightly hairy, hence its name. It produces familiar catkins in spring, which stay on the tree, turning brown and almost dissolving by the autumn. The two-winged fruits are tiny.





# Blackthorn

Draighean • *Prunus spinosa*

Blackthorn (or sloe) is a widespread native tree, often used in combination with hawthorn as a hedging plant. Its white blooms brighten thousands of miles of hedgerows every spring. The blackthorn flowers earlier than the hawthorn, before its leaves even bud, a feature that helps distinguish it at a distance.

Blackthorn is more of a shrub than a tree, growing to about 5m in height. Its hard, shiny black stems were the source of the famous blackthorn cudgels known as ‘shillelaghs.’

While the hawthorn is a member of the rose family, the blackthorn is related to cherries and plums, as can be seen from the fruit or sloes, which are small versions of plums. As with other members of the cherry family, it can spread by suckering; that is, new trees grow directly from the roots of the parent tree. The fruit is much sought-after by all sorts of wild creatures, from bullfinches to foxes. The blackthorn hosts over 100 insect species.

## Identification

Blackthorn is a dense, thorny shrub which often forms copses. It is one of the first trees to flower in spring, and the most noticeable with its white blooms. The leaves do not appear until the flowering is over; they are oval, up to 5cm long and toothed. The sloes appear in autumn and last through the winter. They are dark purple and have a “bloom” – a whitish dusting on the skin which rubs off easily. The fruits are edible but quite bitter.



# Guelder Rose

Caor Chon • *Viburnum opulus*

Guelder rose is more of a good-sized shrub than a tree, but it makes an excellent addition to any hedgerow and as an under-storey in woodland.

Many people will be more familiar with *Viburnum* as a garden shrub and may not realise that it is a native plant and widespread in Ireland. Growing up to 4m in height, it is an occasional species that grows almost anywhere, in hedges, woodlands and by riverbanks and lakesides. It is particularly common in the Burren.

A distinctive and attractive plant, guelder rose produces clusters of creamy white flowers in May-June. These then form bright red berries, which ripen before almost any other wild fruit, often as early as August. This provides a valuable early source of food for wildlife before things wind down during the autumn.

THE DOW GARDENS ARCHIVE



## Identification

Guelder rose is a small, nondescript shrub. The leaves are lobed with 3-5 lobes – broadly similar to a maple or sycamore. The flowers are white and slightly fragrant and grow in a cluster, with the flowers on the outer edge of the cluster much larger than those inside. In autumn, when the leaves turn an unusual shade of purple and the berries ripen to a bright red, the guelder rose is easily picked out in the landscape.



COLLIN MACLOHLAINN



# Hawthorn

Sceach Gheal • *Crataegus monogyna*

With its copious white blossoms, hawthorn, or whitethorn, is perhaps the most identifiable of all Irish trees. It is the main ingredient in the thousands of miles of white hedgerows that adorn the countryside in spring.

Hawthorn grows almost everywhere and can be found from the tops of mountains to the edge of the sea. It is one of the country's smaller trees, reaching at most 15m, but it can live for several centuries.

The countrywide bloom of white flowers leads to an equally profuse display of red berries in autumn. These attract the attentions of millions of birds. As well as providing a bountiful supply of calories and vitamins for birds and other wildlife, the hawthorn also supports over 100 species of insect.

Its dense, bushy growth and sharp thorns make it a popular choice for stock-proof hedging. The same attributes make it an ideal nesting place for birds and a refuge for many other species.

## Identification

Hawthorn is one of only a few native species to have long, narrow, needle-like thorns which are borne on the twigs all year round. As well as the obvious white flowers and red berries, the hawthorn's leaves are almost unique: small (around 5cm long) and deeply lobed, they have the appearance of a miniature maple leaf.



# Hazel

Coll • *Corylus avellana*

Hazel is a familiar, small tree found growing in woodlands and hedgerows all over Ireland. It is rarely taller than 6m. In folklore, the seven hazels of wisdom on the Boyne provided nuts for the salmon of knowledge, which was eaten by Fionn MacCumhaill.

CÓILÍN MACLOCHLAINN



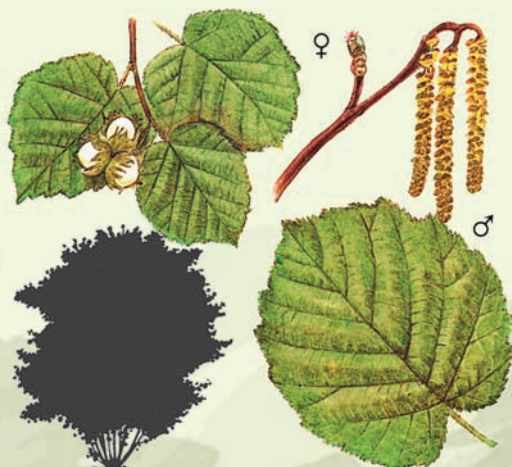
The wood of hazel had a multitude of uses. With its ability to grow back strongly after coppicing,\* its stems were harvested regularly to provide flexible hazel rods and poles. These were used for making tools, handles, wattle fences and hurdles (as in *Átha Cliath*, Ford of the Hurdles).

Hazel is quite noticeable in early spring as its catkins appear before almost any other species is in flower or leaf. In autumn, the hazelnuts appear pale, almost white, and are conspicuous on the tree.

\* Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management in which young tree stems are repeatedly cut down to near ground level. New shoots emerge from the stump and, after a number of years, the coppiced tree, or stool, is ready to be harvested again. The poles produced were used to make tool handles and fencing and were also burned in kilns to make charcoal.

## Identification

Hazel is a small tree or shrub, almost always multi-stemmed and bushy. Catkins appear on the bare branches in early spring (often in early February), followed by large, soft leaves which are slightly hairy and almost round. The edges of the leaves are toothed, and they are slightly lobed towards the end, with a definite end point. The hazelnuts are often in clusters and are wrapped in a tough, papery coating.







# Holly

Cuilleann • *Ilex aquifolium*

Holly is a very familiar tree as it is the main source of foliage for Christmas wreaths and similar decorations. It is sensitive to prolonged extremes of temperature, not favouring either very cold or very warm and dry climates. Accordingly, Ireland's temperate climate is ideal for it.

It is a very resilient tree, able to cope with all sorts of conditions. It grows in mountains and close to the sea and can withstand browsing by animals and coppicing by humans. Despite this, it is not a very long-lived tree, surviving for only one to two hundred years. It has been suffering in recent years from uncontrolled cutting for the Christmas market, and many fine trees and wild sources of holly have been badly damaged.

The holly's berries provide a source of winter food for birds, and holly is one of the few food plants for the holly blue butterfly. This formerly rare butterfly is now spreading throughout Ireland from a population which was, only 15 years ago, restricted to a few isolated locations.

## Identification

Holly is readily identifiable from its glossy-green, prickly leaves which grow on the tree all year round. No other native tree species has comparable foliage. In winter, female trees have clusters of bright red berries (not all holly trees have berries as there are separate male and female trees). The young branches and twigs are green, while the trunks turn a silvery grey with age, though the bark remains smooth.



# Oak

Dair • *Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*

Oak is one of the most well-known trees and is the national tree of Ireland. It can grow up to 40m high and can live for 1,000 years. It is well known for its ability to sustain wildlife – it supports up to 200 species.



There are two very similar species of oak in Ireland, the common oak (*Q. robur*) and the sessile oak (*Q. petraea*). The sessile oak is found mainly on acid soils, particularly on mountain slopes and glens, while the common oak is more usually found in low-lying parkland. Sessile oak was very common in the original wildwood and is still found in almost all of the remaining ancient woodlands around the country.

Historically, oak was the tree most valued for its timber, and its wood was used in ship construction, iron-smelting, house-building, furniture-making and a whole host of everyday tasks. The acorns were used to feed livestock (and sometimes even ground into flour) and its bark was used for tanning.

## Identification

Oak is one of the most identifiable of trees with its distinctively lobed leaves and familiar acorns. The acorns of the common oak have a long stalk, whilst their leaves have almost no stalk. Conversely, the sessile oak (pictured) has acorns with no stalk but leaves with relatively long stalks. The common oak forms a very broad crown and has deeply ridged bark. The sessile oak tends to be a taller, narrower profile.





# Rowan

Caorthann • *Sorbus aucuparis*

Rowan is a member of the *Sorbus* family, which in Ireland includes the rowan and a number of species of whitebeam. It is also known as the mountain ash as it has similar compound leaves to the ash.

Often found singly or in small, widely dispersed groups in the mountains, the rowan can reach 25m in height under ideal conditions. It is very widely planted as an ornamental in gardens and public places.

Rowan is a very attractive tree: it has clusters of white flowers in spring and red berries in autumn and its leaves turn a spectacular red and orange before they fall.

While the rowan supports its own share of insects and other species, its most noticeable wildlife benefit is its profusion of berries: these provide a welcome, if short-lived, source of food for thrushes in autumn.

## Identification

Rowan is very similar to ash, though smaller in size. It has the same compound leaves with up to seven pairs of opposite leaflets and one terminal leaflet. The leaves are relatively long (5cm) and narrow with toothed edges. Unlike ash, however, rowan has distinctive white flowers which set to form green berries that turn bright red on ripening. Also unlike ash, the bark of rowan is smooth, though it becomes rough and fissured with age.



# Spindle

Feoras • *Euonymus europaeus*

Spindle is a small, inconspicuous, bushy tree, little more than a shrub. It is quite widespread in Ireland, where it is often found in old woodlands and hedgerows, especially in limestone areas. It has slightly shiny leaves and produces small, creamy-white flowers in early summer. It grows to about 6m in height, or rarely to 10m.

COLLIN MACLOCHLANN



The wood of spindle is very hard, and so it was used for making small, hard items that could be shaped without breaking or chipping, such as pegs and spindles; this is how it got its English name.

In autumn, spindle has spectacular berries with a pink outer coat which splits to reveal a bright orange flesh inside, known as the aril. It is inside the aril that the seed is found.

## Identification

Spindle is a small tree or shrub, normally with a bushy appearance. The leaves are slightly glossy or shiny, 10cm long or more, with pointed ends. The flowers are quite small and unspectacular, but the fruit (as described above) is very distinctive. Spindle berries are poisonous and should never be eaten.





# Strawberry Tree

Crann Caithe • *Arbutus unedo*

Strawberry tree is a rare tree found only in Kerry, west Cork and in one isolated location in Sligo. It was almost certainly more widespread in the past, probably with a continuous distribution from Sligo to Cork and east to Waterford. Sometimes known as the Killarney strawberry tree, it is a very distinctive tree species which bears fruit and flowers at the same time. It is related to the heather family, a relationship that is most apparent from the shape and structure of its flowers.

The strawberry tree is one of the only trees found in Ireland that is not found in Britain – the next nearest locations for the species are in western France and around the Mediterranean. This led to doubts in the past about whether or not it was actually native to Ireland. However, its pollen grains have been found in peat dating from over 6,000 years ago. The Irish trees seem to grow bigger than their continental counterparts, sometimes up to 15m.

## Identification

The strawberry tree is very distinctive and easy to identify. The leaves are glossy on top, long and narrow with toothed edges. The fruit are round, strawberry-like berries which take a year to ripen and so can be found on the tree all year round. The flowers are creamy white, very like those of bell heather (*Erica cinerea*), and hang in clusters of several dozen. The bark, branches and twigs are reddish-brown in colour.



# Grey Willow

Saileach • *Salix cinerea*

While most people would recognise a willow (or sally) from its catkins or from its weeping habit, few would know that there are dozens of different species of willow. It is believed that twelve or more species are native to Ireland, though all are very similar and difficult to tell apart.

Grey willow is one of the most widespread willows in Ireland. It grows everywhere except on the driest and most well-drained soils. It is particularly abundant in damp places, especially near lakes and bogs. It is a small tree, but can reach up to 15m in height.

The willow supports a greater range of wildlife than any other species of tree in Ireland. It has been estimated that it supports up to 250 species of insect and well over 100 lichens. This is partly explained by its almost countrywide distribution and the fact that it has been present since the end of the last Ice Age. Down through the years, it has co-existed, and sorted out its differences, with thousands of local species.

COLLIN MACLOCHLANN



## Identification

The grey willow has familiar, furry catkins resembling rabbits' tails. These give it the more commonly used name of "pussy willow."

Catkins are clusters of tiny flowers with no petals (they are also found on hazel, alder and birch). The leaves of grey willow are somewhat rounded, two or three times longer than they are wide, and widest in the middle. The leaves are very slightly rough or hairy underneath.



# Tree Dedication Form

Name

Email or phone number

Your address

Address to send certificate to (if different)

Dedication to appear  
on certificate

(up to 4 lines of forty characters)

**Note:** a tree can be sponsored as a gift on the birth/christening of a baby, for a birthday, Christmas, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, as a wedding gift, or to mark a death, anniversary, etc.

Payment details:

€34 per tree

1. To pay by Cheque or Postal Order, please make payable to Irish Woodland Trust Ltd.

2. To pay by credit card or Laser Card, please complete the details below:

VISA

MASTERCARD

LASER

Please charge my credit/debit card account with the amount: €

Credit/Laser Card Expiry Date:  /

Card Number

Signature

*Please return to:*

The Native Woodland Trust  
Stoneybrook  
Kilteel  
County Kildare  
Ireland

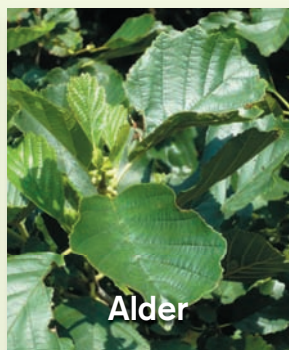
Phone: +353 (0)86 816 9924  
Email: [info@nativewoodlandtrust.ie](mailto:info@nativewoodlandtrust.ie)  
Website: [www.nativewoodlandtrust.ie](http://www.nativewoodlandtrust.ie)  
Incorporated in Ireland, Number 298277  
Registered Charity Number CHY14035



Oak



Ash



Alder



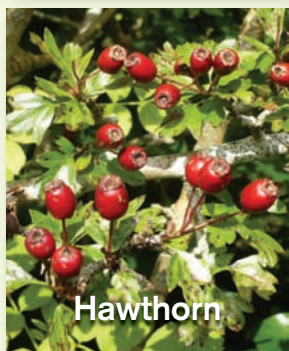
Birch



Blackthorn



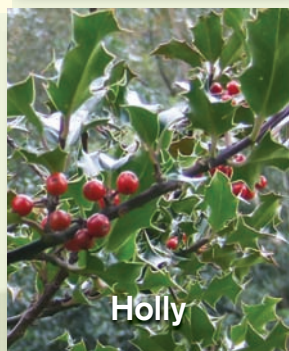
Guelder Rose



Hawthorn



Hazel



Holly



Rowan



Spindle



Willow