

1



# Hello!

I am the mighty **English oak**

I am the most common woodland tree in the UK. I am mighty because I can grow to over 30 metres tall and I can live for over 1000 years.

You can recognise me because I usually look big and gnarly and old beside other trees. Have a look at the shape of my leaves.

I produce green ACORNS in the summer which turn brown then fall to the ground in autumn. Squirrels love to eat them and hide them in the ground. In the autumn when my leaves fall they provide a safe place for beetles and hedgehogs.

I am especially important because hundreds of species of insects live in me. Caterpillars feeds from me so that butterflies can flourish and birds nest in me.

My wood is used to make barrels for wine, furniture, houses and even ships. The NATIONAL TRUST has a twig of oak leaves with acorns as their emblem.

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**extinction  
rebellion**



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2



# Hello!

I am a **European larch**

but foresters might use my other name: *Larix Decidua*, a name that gives a clue to why I am unusual: I am a deciduous conifer. Unlike most other conifers, I drop my leaves in the autumn.

I mainly live in the high mountains of Central Europe where I can survive through the cold winters. I am tall and strong and tough and can grow up to 30 metres tall and live for 250 years.

Spring is the best time to see me, when I grow tufts of needle-like leaves that are light green and soft. My flowers are clusters of pink scales that are called "Larch Roses". They ripen into brown cones in autumn that open up to release my winged seeds into the wind.

I am especially important because the caterpillars of many moths feed on my leaves. Red squirrels and some rare birds depend on me for food. My wood is strong and weatherproof and is used to make fencing and gates and garden furniture.

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3



Hello!

I am a **London plane**

Most of us live in London but we have been spreading out to other places in the south of England for just over 100 years.

I am popular because I am tough enough to look beautiful even in the middle of a big city where there is lots of traffic and pollution. I can live for hundreds of years.

You can recognise me by my large leaves that are lobed like stars. They are bright green and huge. I produce spiky balls of tiny fruits that hang in ‘strings’. My beautiful bark is a silvery brown green colour that looks a bit like camouflage.

I am important because I make our cities look good and provide food and shelter for insects and birds.

(BTW, my scientific name is *Platanus x Hispanica*)

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4



Hello!

I am a **Silver birch**

People in England Love me! My white bark is slashed with black and is so striking that you can easily spot me. Some people call me the “warty birch” when I get older, which is unkind.

My ancestors have been around since the last Ice Age, one of the first trees to grow when the climate warmed.

I am not as tall as other trees, and I don't live as long, but I am slim and beautiful. The twigs on my branches hang down and sway in the wind. In summer I grow catkins, like lambs tails, which produce thousands of tiny nutlets with two wings that fly off in the autumn winds. Then my leaves turn golden yellow and orange before falling as winter approaches.

I provide a home for more than 300 species of insects. In particular my leaves attract aphids which provide food for ladybirds and other insects. If I'm very big, woodpeckers might nest in my trunk.

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5



# Hello!

I am a **Myrobalan plum**

My nickname is CHERRY PLUM and my scientific name is *Prunus cerasifera*.

Keep an eye out for me in the spring as my pretty pink flowers are one of the first to appear. They fade to white as my small dark leaves appear. I look stunning on frosty spring mornings.

I am not very tall - around 8 metres usually. And my plums, if they appear, can be used to make jam.

But there is one problem - I just cannot be elegant like most other trees. Every day is a bad hair day for me. My branches grow in a mess. But I am tough so don't ignore me. You can give me a severe haircut and I will grow again.

My leaves turn bright red in the autumn - stunning!

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6



# Hello!

I am a **Sycamore** though some people call me a **Great Maple**.

I'm not a native species, but I like it here. I don't mind wind, so can live by the coast. And I cope with pollution, so am happy in city streets. I grow happily in woodlands too, sometimes pushing out native species - not a good idea if you want to feel loved!

My timber is hard and strong, with a fine grain, and is excellent for carving. It is good for ladles and wooden spoons because my wood doesn't taint or stain the food. In Wales, sycamore trees were used to make 'love spoons', carved wooden spoons given as a present to say 'I love you'.

Aphids like my leaves, so I help to feed their predators such as ladybirds, hoverflies and birds. Caterpillars of a number of moths including the sycamore moth munch on my leaves. My flowers produce pollen and nectar for bees and other insects, and my seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals.

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7



# Hello!

I am a **Horse Chestnut**

I am a whopper! Look at how tall and wide and grand I am. Unless I am very young you will not be able to clasp your hands around me. I can grow to over 40 metres tall and live for at least 300 years. Someone imported me from Turkey over 500 years ago, so I am not a natural woodland tree. Instead you find me in parks, gardens, streets and on village greens.

I am glorious in spring when my enormous leaves push out like magic from fat buds and unfold 5 or 7 pleated, wide fingers. Then out come my showy flowers in large white candlesticks. And don't you all love me in the autumn when my green spiky pods split open to drop shiny mahogany conkers on to the ground beneath?

I am especially important because I produce a lot of nectar for bees. Many birds, especially blue-tits, thrive on the thousands of insects and caterpillars that live on my leaves and branches. Squirrels and deer eat my conkers.

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# Hello!

I am a **Hornbeam**

My Latin name is *Carpinus betulus* but that doesn't mean that I complain a lot. In fact I'm gnarled and mighty, and as tough as they come. I'm beautiful, useful, and my year-round leaf cover makes me a winter haven for wildlife.

You might mistake me for a beech tree, but my leaves are smaller and more deeply furrowed than beech leaves and have finely toothed edges (whereas beech leaves have wavy edges). I turn golden yellow to orange in autumn and most of my leaves stay on through the winter.

Caterpillars of a number of moth species, including the nut tree tussock love to munch my leaves. Finches and tits and small mammals eat my seeds in autumn.

(If my branches sweep upwards, making me look like an huge Ace of Spades, then I am a version of hornbeam called 'fastigiata'.)

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# Hello!

I am a **Scots pine**

I'm quite special: there are only three conifers native to Britain and I am one of them. If I am allowed to grow into maturity, instead of being turned into a telegraph pole, I could live for up to 700 years.

My natural home is Scotland, where I'm the perfect home for some wildlife, such as the red squirrel, capercaillie, Scottish crossbill and the Scottish wildcat. Unfortunately, these species are rarely found in Surrey ... However, local birds such as the tiny goldcrest find food among my needles and cones.

I am happy in sandy soil. Because I grow tall and straight, millions of me have been planted in commercial forests. Sometimes that is a problem, because I might take over scarce heathland that is home to important reptiles such as the lizard and adder.

My cones take two years to mature, so you will see both old ones and new ones among my branches.

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10



# Hello!

I am a **European Ash**

and I'm in trouble! Although I am one of the most common trees in the UK, the fungal disease *ash dieback* is expected to kill up to 95% of us across the UK. It will change the landscape forever and threaten many species which rely on us. Unfortunately younger trees are most affected.

My 'leaf' is made up of 3-6 pairs of smaller 'leaflets' with another single leaflet at the end. In autumn my leaves fall while still green. I produce bunches of winged seeds that are carried away by birds and small animals.

Here are some creatures who will miss me: bullfinches eat my seeds; woodpeckers, owls, redstarts and nuthatches like to nest in me; dormice love the hazel that lives underneath my dappled shade; caterpillars of many species of moth chomp happily on my leaves.

I think you will miss me too ... prepare to shed a tear.

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11



Hello!

I am a **White willow**

I'm the largest species of willow and can grow up to 25m. But to be honest I find it difficult to stand up straight and you will often see me leaning over. My age shows on my bark too - I develop deep grooves as I get older.

But don't criticize me. The painkiller Aspirin is derived from salicin, a compound found in the bark of all willows. Long ago, people all over Europe chewed my bark to relieve a headache or toothache.

I am beautiful too. I produce lovely (male and female) catkins. After pollination by insects, my female catkins develop small capsules containing minute seeds encased in white down, which are then blown away by the wind.

Oh .. and where would cricket be without willow-wood for bats?

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12



Hello!

I am a **Tulip tree**

Look at me - I am stately. My leaves look like a maple leaf that someone has taken a bite out of!

I am a vigorous deciduous tree and can grow up to 30 metres. I have great autumn colour, but perhaps my biggest attraction is the beautiful tulip-shaped flowers, that appear in summer. They are yellowish-green marked with orange; pollinators such as bees are attracted to their nectar.

I am not a native species but I have been around in Britain for at least two centuries. Local insects such as butterflies now come to me to feed.

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13



# Hello!

I am a **Norway maple**

Some people love me because I am handsome and hardy and grow quickly. I am not as big as some trees - I only grow up to 25 metres tall, so I get planted in gardens and roadsides.

BUT . . . some people hate me because I provide too much shade. My seedlings take root everywhere and I drop LOTS of leaves in the autumn. My roots do not go very deep so I sometimes fall down when the wind is strong. I was brought to England 250 years ago but, because I spread quickly to places I am not wanted, I am now classed as an invasive species.

You can recognise me by my 5 fingered broad leaves that become yellow before they fall in autumn. I produce lots of bright flowers that produce winged seeds ('helicopters') called samaras.

Moth caterpillars find my leaves very tasty and my flowers produce nectar for birds and bees. I am not much use to the ground as nothing can grow underneath me!

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# Hello!

I am a **Douglas fir**

My Latin name is a real tongue-twister: *Pseudotsuga douglasii*.

I'm pretty tall, don't you think? We Douglas firs are evergreen conifers that can grow to 55m and live for more than 1,000 years. My ancestor was brought to the UK in 1827 by a man called David Douglas!

Because we grow straight and tall we were planted by the thousands - many of us now feature as part of your furniture, decking and flooring.

As we get older, we accumulate deadwood cavities in our trunks which birds and bats shelter in. Being tall, we also make perfect nesting sites for larger birds of prey, such as buzzard, sparrowhawk and hobbie. Spruce carpet and dwarf pug moths feed on our needles, while finches and small mammals love our seeds.

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15



Hello!

I am a **Common lime**

Apart from some conifers, I am one of the tallest trees around - I can reach 40 metres in height. My big, heart-shaped leaves are a bit lopsided - look at where the stem joins my leaf. If you want to be sure that I am a common lime, turn my leaf over and look for the small tufts of white hair at the joins between veins.

During the summer my leaves are shiny with honey-dew from aphids, which absolutely love my leaves. Bees drink the honeydew, and insects and many species of bird eat the aphids. Caterpillars of many moth species think my leaves make a good meal, including the lime hawk, peppered, vapourer, triangle and scarce hook-tip moths.

But the honey-dew also drips down onto anything below and then goes black with Sooty-mould. So best not to park your car here!

I live a long time and, over time, bits of me die off. Wood-boring beetles drill holes in those bits, and birds can make nests in holes in my trunk.

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Hello!

I am a **Rowan**

Everybody loves me: I am small, elegant and make lots of berries to eat. I only grow 15 metres tall but I am tough; you can find me on cold, windy Scottish mountains. I can live for up to 200 years.

My leaves are a bit like spread out feathers in pairs on either side of my twigs. Unlike the ash tree, my leaves are tooth-edged. In spring I have big bunches of creamy white flowers with yellow centres. The flowers turn scarlet in autumn, when my branches are heavy and droop with the weight.

My flowers produce lots of nectar for birds and bees. Moth caterpillars feed on my leaves. Birds, especially blackbirds and thrushes, love to eat my berries and humans use them to make Rowan berry jelly.

There are some mythical stories about me, saying that I possess magical powers to heal or protect against evil. Well ... I am only a tree and wonder if these are just old wives tales!

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17



# Hello!

I am a **Beech**

I am known as the queen of British trees. Beech woods are magical places with great branches spreading upwards like a cathedral; they provide an important home for many butterflies.

My bark is smooth, thin and grey, often with slight horizontal marks. My leaf buds are shaped like a torpedo and have a distinctive criss-cross pattern. When my leaves first come out they are bright green with silky hairs. My leaves are wavy edged, which is a way of telling me apart from a hornbeam (the hornbeam has toothed edges). I often hold onto my leaves throughout the winter.

The caterpillars of many moths eat my leaves. Mice, voles, squirrels and birds love my seeds. Because I live for so long and become knotted and gnarled with age, hole-nesting birds and wood-boring insects make their home in my trunk.

You might have come across my wood in your home: in furniture, cooking utensils, tool handles and sports equipment.

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18



# Hello!

I am a **Yew**

and one of the longest-lived native species in Europe, up to 1,000 years or more. Oddly, because I can reach such a great age, I have become a symbol of death and doom! But I love life, and provide food and shelter for woodland animals.

My leaves are straight, small needles with a pointed tip, coloured dark green above and green-grey below. They grow in two rows on either side of each twig.

Even though I am a conifer, which means that I produce cones, I don't actually put my seeds into a cone. Instead, I put each seed into a red berry known as an **aril**. Dormice, squirrels and birds such as the blackbird, mistle thrush, song thrush and fieldfare eat my fruit. The tiny goldcrest and firecrest - Britain's smallest birds - make their nests in yew.

My timber is incredibly strong and durable. One of the World's oldest surviving wooden items made by a human is a yew spear head estimated to be around 450,000 years old!

**But please don't eat my leaves.** Although some caterpillars enjoy them, they are poisonous to humans.

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Hello!

I am a **Cedar of Lebanon**

People say I am stately, aromatic and gigantic. I do think I am rather majestic, with my layers of branches and grey-green foliage.

Can you see my large, barrel-shaped cones that sit on top of my branches, rather than hanging below? They are big, from 8 to 12cm long and take a lot of energy to produce, so sometimes I only make them every second year,

My dark grey-green needles, arranged in rosettes or clusters, have transparent tips.

As I get older, cracks and crevices develop within my trunk and branches, providing nesting places for species such as tawny owl, and roosts for bats.

Long ago in the Middle East, cedar wood was used to build buildings, such as temples, due to the tree's exceptional size and durability. The wood is also a source of an essential oil similar to turpentine and was used to make cough medicines, ointments and antiseptic. Egypt also imported the oil from Lebanon for embalming the dead.

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20



Hello!

I am a **Walnut**

I am food of the gods, medicine for the people!

I was first introduced by the Romans who, like much of our native wildlife, valued my nuts

My bark is very pale grey and smooth between wide, deep grooves. My branches twist and turn, spreading out to a wide crown.

My leaves unfold orange-brown and stay this colour until June, when they turn yellow-green. If you crush my leaves, they smell like polish. My leaves are used in medicines to treat conditions including acne, ulcers and diarrhoea. The walnut shell is used in the treatment of blood poisoning.

Caterpillars of a number of micro moths feed on my leaves, and mice and squirrels eat my nuts.

Carpenters use my wood, famous for its intricate, wavy grain, to make fine furniture.

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rebellion**



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21



# Hello!

I am a **Sessile oak**

I might be less famous than English oak, but I grow just as big.

Unlike the English oak, my acorns have no stalks. That's what gives me my name: sessile comes from the Latin word meaning 'to sit' - my acorns *sit* on the twigs.

Oak trees support more wildlife than any other native trees. They provide a habitat for more than 257 species of insect, which are the food source for birds and other predators. The bark also provides a habitat for mosses, lichens and liverworts, and deadwood cavities for nesting birds and roosting bats. The acorns are eaten by a number of birds and mammals, including the jay, badger and red squirrel.

The oak was sacred to many gods including Zeus and Jupiter. Each of these gods ruled over thunder and lightning, and oak trees are often hit by lightning as they are the tallest living feature in the landscape.

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22



# Hello!

I am a **Field maple**

A pollution fighter, an autumn stunner, and a syrup maker.

I am the UK's only native maple. You will find me growing in woods, scrub and hedgerows, and on chalk lowland. Gardeners like me because I look neat, can tolerate air pollution and produce rich autumn colours.

I am attractive to aphids and their predators, including many species of ladybird, hoverfly and bird. Lots of species of moth feed on my leaves. My flowers provide nectar and pollen sources for bees and birds, and small mammals eat my fruit.

My wood is the hardest, highest-density timber of all European maples. It is a warm, creamy-brown colour with a silky shine and is popular for making musical instruments, particularly harps.

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23



# Hello!

I am a **Hawthorn**

My pale green leaves are often the first to appear in spring, but people really notice me in May, when I produce an explosion of pretty pale-pink blossom. My flowers are a sign that spring is turning to summer.

I simply teem with wildlife from bugs to birds and I am a popular choice in wildlife gardens.

Around September to November my branches are adorned by deep red berries. They're an important food source for birds and small mammals. Humans shouldn't eat my berries raw - much better to turn them into jellies, wines and ketchups.

Hawthorn is a pagan symbol of fertility. It was the ancestor of the Maypole and its leaves and flowers the source of May Day garlands.

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24



# Hello!

I am a **Holly**

Look at my glossy, dark green leaves. If I am a young tree then they are likely to be spiky but as I get older they will become smoother.

My berries are red but my flowers, which bloom any time between early spring and the very beginning of summer, are **white**. After pollination by insects, my flowers develop into scarlet berries which can remain on the tree throughout winter.

I provide dense cover and good nesting opportunities for birds. Hedgehogs might hibernate among my dead leaves. My flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. Caterpillars of the holly blue butterfly and some moths eat my leaves. In winter, and if they can reach, deer eat the smooth leaves near the top of my crown. My berries are a vital source of food for birds and small mammals, such as wood mice and dormice.

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# Hello!

I am a **Locust tree**

but you might know me by my other name, **False acacia**.

Look at my bark - have you ever seen such thick, broad ridges? These are a mark of my seniority; the bark of young locust trees is quite different - smooth and a rich brown.

I am native to North America, where I am known as the Black Locust tree. Early British colonists used my wood to build houses there. I was brought to Britain in 1636.

My leaves are *compound*, meaning that each leaf contains many smaller leaflets - just as the ash tree does. But my leaflets are rounder than the ash, particularly next to the stem.

My creamy white flowers open in May or June. They are very fragrant and produce large amounts of nectar, so insects love me. If I am very mature, woodpeckers might nest in my trunk.

My wood is extremely hard and durable, making it prized for furniture, flooring and even small boats.

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20



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