

# Rowan

*Sorbus aucuparia*

## What to look for

A fairly fast growing species reaching 15 metres tall

Has smooth grey-green bark

Distinctive ash-like leaves, although smaller more numerous leaflets

Young twigs are slightly hairy, and the buds very hairy when bursting

Small, creamy flowers in dense clusters 10-15 cm across

Clusters of red berries in early autumn



## Where found

Widespread - grows happily on quite poor soil, and more common in the wild in west and north of the UK where it grows higher (1,000 metres) than any other tree, hence its other name, 'mountain ash'

## When to look

Leaves from April, flowers in May

Leaves drop late October

Ripe fruit from September to October



### Did you know?

Rowans were once planted to protect farm cottages from roaming witches and can still be seen around many farm yards

Rowan berries, bitter and inedible fresh, can be used to make delicious jams and jellies

A rowan tree planted upon a grave was thought to keep the deceased from haunting

In Irish legend, the first woman was created from rowan (the first male having been created from alder)

In ancient times druids would light fires of rowan wood to help induce insights into forthcoming battles

Rowan berries are an important food source for many birds, especially fieldfares, redwings, blackbirds, finches, mistle thrushes and waxwings, which in turn disperse the seeds in their droppings

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