

# Common oak (Pedunculate)

*Quercus robur*



## What to look for

Has acorns and distinctively-shaped leaves

Male flowers in drooping yellow catkins

Female flowers in inconspicuous stalked spikes have reddish colour

Oaks can grow 40 metres high and live for more than a thousand years

The leaves have almost no stalk, but the acorns do.



## Where found

Mostly found in mixed woodland, but huge, isolated specimens are also seen in fields, hedgerows and parks. The dominant oak in the lowlands

## Not to be confused with...

Sessile oak *Quercus petraea*



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## Did you know?

More than 2000 species of fungi grow in association with oak

Oak timber infected by the beefsteak fungus, *Fistulina hepatica*, is called 'brown oak' and used by furniture makers

A considerable number of galls are found on oak leaves, buds, flowers, roots, etc. Examples are Oak artichoke gall, Oak Marble gall, Oak apple gall, Knopper gall, and Spangle gall

Oak galls and iron salts were used to make a purple-black ink which was the standard writing ink in Europe from 1200 until the nineteenth century and known as 'iron gall ink'

In spring, fresh young oak leaves can be used to make a delicious medium dry white wine

The beautiful bright yellow chicken of the woods fungus, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, is mainly found on oak trees

Oak was a highly prized timber and was used in ship building in the days of wooden ships. Its timber is also used in buildings, for furniture and a whole range of other uses. Other uses include the bark which was used for tanning leather; the acorns which were used for fattening pigs as they are a rich food source; and like the smaller branches and twigs were used for firewood or charcoal making. Because of our long history with the oak tree, oaks are often used in ceremonial or commemorative plantings. For example every school in Lincolnshire was given an oak tree to plant in its grounds to celebrate the Queen mother's 80th birthday

The oak was sacred to many people, including the ancient Greeks, the Norse and the Celts. It was often associated with the gods of thunder as oak was often split by lightning. This is probably because oaks are often the tallest tree any area. More recently oak was the sacred wood burnt by the druids for their mid-summer sacrifice. In fact the word 'druid' means 'oak man' In modern history, tradition has it that Charles II hid in an oak tree at Boscobel when pursued by the Roundheads. Since then, children wear oak leaves on May 29th to commemorate Royal Oak Day (now known as Oak Apple Day).

Find more fascinating oak facts at <http://www.british-trees.com/>

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