

How to recognise Trees?

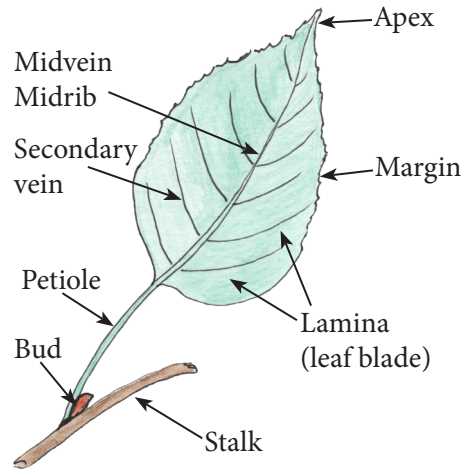
Looking at the shape & size of a tree, the bark on its trunk, the fruits it produces are all usefull, but by far, the easiest way, to identify a tree, is to look at its leaves.

This mini guide will help you identify some of the most common European forest trees. It is far from complete since there are hundreds of tree species and sub-species, in Europe.

Foreword - Trees can be divided into two main groups:

Broadleaved **trees** which usually have flattened leaves and are mostly **Deciduous trees** (losing their leaves annually).

Conifers with needle-like leaves which are mostly evergreen trees.



Simple: a single leaf attached to a stalk.

Compound: several leaflets growing on a single petiole called a rachis.

Palmate: the veins, lobes, and/or leaflets all radiate from a single point.

Pinnate: the veins, lobes, and/or leaflets are all attach to a central axis.

Sweet Chestnut

Deciduous tree

Height: up to 20–35 m (66–115 ft)

Trunk: Ø up to 2 m (7 ft)

Shape: broad crown

Can live for up to 700 years.



Leaves: simple pinnate, oblong and toothed with a pointed tip, and feature around 20 pairs of prominent parallel veins.

Horse Chestnut

Deciduous tree

Height: up to 40 m (130 ft)

Trunk: Ø up to 1 m (3 ft)

Shape: domed crown of stout branches

Can live for up to 300 years.

Leaves: compound, palmate leaf that has 5 to 7 pointed, toothed leaflets spreading from a central stalk. Horse chestnut are not edible.



Elm

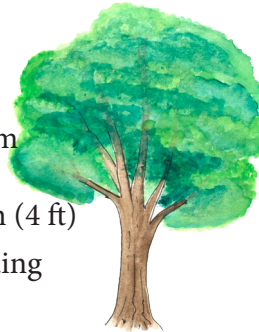
Deciduous tree

Height: up to 30-40 m (100-130 ft)

Trunk: Ø up to 1.2 m (4 ft)

Shape: broad, spreading crown

Can live for up to 400 years.



Leaves: Pinnate leaf with a characteristic asymmetric leaf base and pointy apex. Leaves are rough to the touch.

Poplar

Deciduous tree

Height: up to 50 m (160 ft)

Trunk: Ø up to 2 m (7 ft)

Shape: thin and tall

Can live for up to 100 years.

Leaves: simple, pinnate, diamond shape with irregular blunt teeth on their margins.



MINI POCKET GUIDE

COMMON TREES OF EUROPEAN FORESTS



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European Beech



Deciduous tree
Height: up to 35-45 m (115-150 ft)
Trunk: Ø up to 2m (7 ft)
Shape: huge domed crown

Can live for up to 300 years.

Leaves: Simple, pinnate, thick, alternate, oval with a wavy edge. Leaves can be hairy.

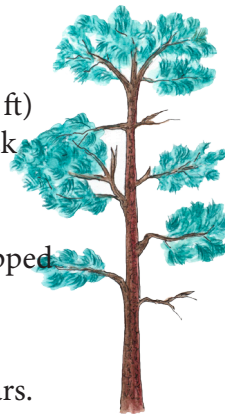
Beech nuts are not edible.



Pine

Conifer - Evergreen
Height: up to 80 m (260 ft)
Trunk: covered by a thick and scaly bark
Shape: pyramidal when young, becoming flat topped with age

Can live for up to 1,000 years.



Leaves: Long needles which can last up to 40 years, depending on species.

Fir

Conifer - Evergreen
Height: up to 30 m (100 ft)
Trunk: covered by a thick and scaly bark
Shape: pyramidal

Can live for up to 500 years.

Leaves: needle-like leaves that are flat, soft and flexible, and distributed around the twig.



Hazel

Deciduous tree
Height: up to 12 metres (40 ft)
Trunk: very thin and bendy

Shape: numerous shoots or trunks branching out, giving it a dense, spreading appearance.

Can live for up to 90 years.



Leaves: Simple, pinnate round to oval, doubly toothed, hairy and pointy.

Hazelnuts are edible.



Oak

Deciduous tree
Height: up to 40 m (130 ft)
Trunk: Ø up to 12 m (40 ft)
Shape: broad spreading branches produce substantial domed crowns, oaks can be wider than they are tall.

Can live for up to 1,000 years.



Leaves: 3 to 8 pairs of pinnate lobed leaves growing on each side of a central stem. Acorns are edible.

Hornbeam

Deciduous tree
Height: up to 30 metres (100 ft)
Trunk: Ø up to 1m (3ft)
Shape: huge domed crown. Often confused with beech.

Can live for up to 150 years.



Leaves: Simple, pinnate, oval and alternate with a serrated margin, toothed and with pointed tips.

Ash

Deciduous tree
Height: up to 35 m (115 ft)
Trunk: Ø up to 12 m (40 ft)
Shape: Tall and graceful, they often grow together, forming a domed canopy.
 Can live for up to 400 years.



Leaves: pinnately compound, typically comprising 3-6 opposite pairs of light green, oval leaflets.

Birch

Deciduous tree
Height: up to 20-30 m (66-100 ft)
Trunk: Ø up to 0.4 m (1.3 ft)
Shape: light canopy with elegant, drooping branches.

Can live for up to 150 years.



Leaves: simple, pinnate alternate, small leaves with a triangular shape and a toothed edge.