

Oak

About oak

There are two types of oak that grow native to the UK – the English and Sessile. Both support more life than any other species of tree growing in this country. Oaks are large trees that grow between 20 and 40m high and live for hundreds of years.

Oaks and oak woodland support hundreds of different species of insects and many birds and mammals. The leaves break down on the woodland floor and provide habitat for species such as stag beetle and different fungi. Birds such as the pied flycatcher and marsh tit use holes and crevices to nest and bats use them to roost as well as providing food in the form of insects in the canopy. Animals, including squirrels, jays and badgers eat the acorns.

Oak timber is prized for its strength and used in buildings, flooring, wine barrels and as firewood. The acorns can be used to make flour and the tannin found in them has been used in the leather industry for centuries.

Mature oak



Identifying oak

#1 Location – usually in woodlands, hedgerows and fields. Sessile oak is more of an upland tree whilst English oak favours lowlands.



Bark

#2 Seeds and buds – oaks produce acorns. Sessile oak acorn cupules have no stems. The acorn cupules of English oak grow on a stem. Buds grow in clusters at the tip of twigs and alternately along the twig and have scales. If there are more than 20 scales it's probably a sessile oak, less than 20 indicates English oak.

Buds



#3 Bark – the bark of a young oak is smooth but becomes vertically fissured as the tree ages.

Where to find oak trees in Torfaen

You will find sessile oak in Herberts Wood and Lasgarn?

English oaks at the Boating Lake in Cwmbran

Sessile oak

English oak

Acorn

