

Ash

About ash

Another tall tree, reaching over 30m if given the space. The wood of ash is strong and flexible and is used for making oars, spars, hoops, hurdles, tool handles, bows, hockey sticks, snooker cues and spear shafts.

Ash grows fast but allows light onto a woodland floor, allowing plants such as dog violet, wild garlic and dog's mercury to grow. The trees themselves support fungi, invertebrates that live in dead wood, such as lesser stag beetles, some lichens and other plants. Large, more mature trees with cracks and fissures provide nesting sites for birds such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, owls and redstarts, and roosting sites for bats.

Bullfinches eat the seeds and the leaves are an important food source for the caterpillars of many species of moth, including the coronet and privet hawk-moth.

Ash leaves clinging on through winter



Identifying ash

#1 Location – can be found in hedgerows and woodlands, preferring fertile and cooler conditions



Buds

#2 Buds and fruit – the buds of an ash tree are its key defining feature. They are sooty black, with one larger bud at the end of a shoot.

Ash produces seeds known as keys that often remain on the tree over winter. They are similar to the fruit of sycamore but only have one wing.

#3 Bark – when young, the bark is smooth and grey and remains this way until the tree is quite old. Eventually the bark develops fissures, becoming quite deep in the oldest trees.

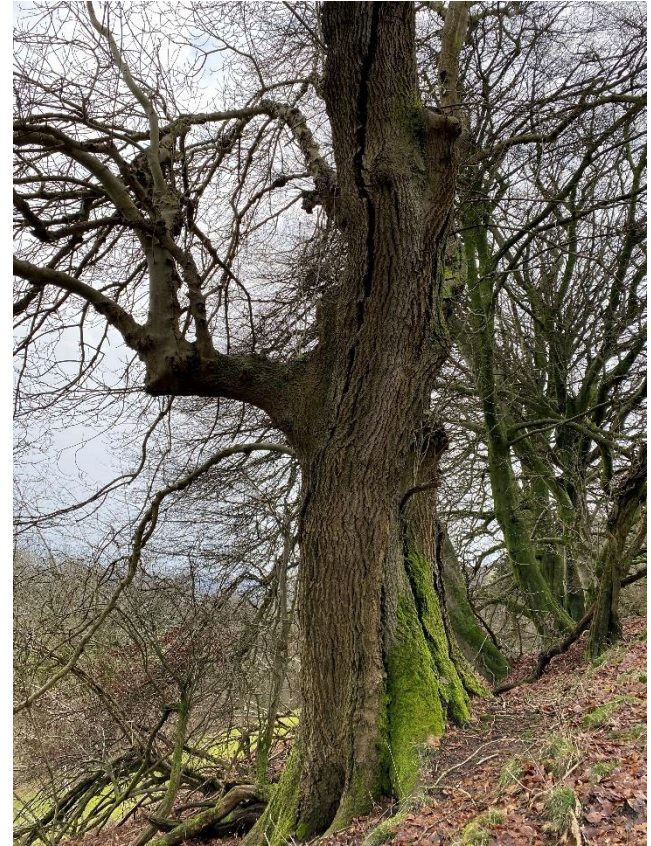


Seeds

Where to spot ash trees in Torfaen

Sadly, ash trees have been badly affected by ash dieback disease and many have been felled in an attempt to stop it spreading. You will still see younger trees growing and possibly some older trees in woodlands and hedgerows.

Mature ash showing fissures



Young ash bark

