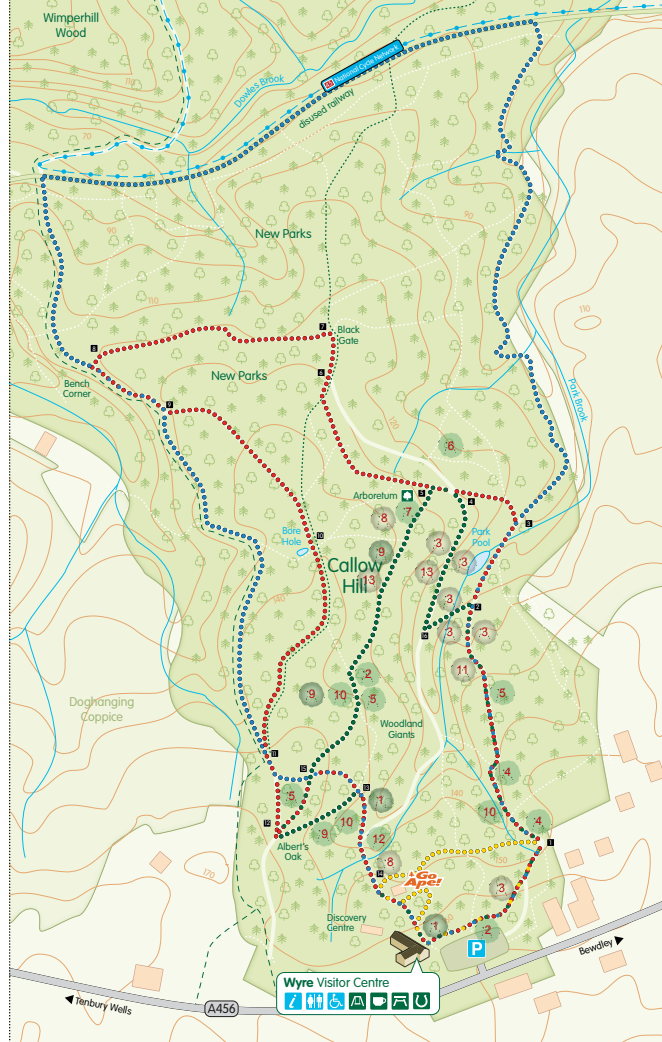


Wyre Forest Callow Hill area

Key

- Parking
 - Information
 - Toilets
 - All access
 - Cafe
 - Play area
 - Picnic area
 - Horse riding
 - Buzzard Trail
 - Woodpecker Trail
 - Wren Trail
 - Family Mountain Bike Trail
 - National Cycle Route
 - Public footpaths
 - Public bridleways
 - Emergency numbered posts
- 0 100 200m



Key to trees

- 1 European Larch
- 2 Holly
- 3 Douglas Fir
- 4 Oak
- 5 Silver Birch
- 6 Wild Service
- 7 True Service (Whitty Pear)
- 8 Ash
- 9 Scots Pine
- 10 Corsican Pine
- 11 Alder Buckthorn
- 12 Hazel
- 13 Hawthorn

NB: Some numbers relate to individual trees and some to plantations of a single species.

As you learn the trees see if you can spot them at other locations around the route. (Eg silver birch is very common just about everywhere!)

You will also come across different tree species on this route - look at their leaves, buds and bark and see if you can identify what they are by using a book or the internet.



Oak

(Pedunculate and Sessile)

Use this map to find an example of this tree when you next visit Wyre.

Alternatively, to print a bigger version click [here](#).



Pedunculate Oak - Quercus robur

Folklore

What's in a name?

The oak tree has a long history of folklore throughout Europe. 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 in 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 Boscombe 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).



Also called Common Oak or English Oak, the Oak is the largest of our native broad-leaved trees, regarded as "the king of the forest", Oaks are sturdy and tall with domed crowns. The broad rounded canopy has wide spreading thick lower branches. There are two native Oaks in Wyre, the other being the Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). Both have the different characteristics of leaves and acorns.



Size

Oaks can grow over 40m high and over 3m in diameter.



Age

Often 1000 years old!

www.foresteducation.org/search/learning.results/



Pedunculate Oak - identification

The Pedunculate Oak is a broadleaf deciduous tree and widespread, particularly on clay soils.



★ Flowers and seed

The acorn is the ripened fruit or seed of the tree. It looks like an egg in a cup.

On the Pedunculate Oak the acorn is on a stalk called a "peduncle".

Male and female flowers are found on the same tree. Male flowers are long green catkins. Female flowers look like buds with bracts at the tips of the shoots.

★ Leaves

The leaves have large deep lobes and smooth edges. There are two tiny lobes where the leaf joins the stalk. They are dark green, turning orangy-brown in autumn. The leaf stalk is short.

★ Bark

The greyish bark has very knobby ridges and deep fissures.





Sessile Oak - *Quercus petraea*

Folklore

What's in a name?

British people have always loved the Oak. Its great size, low branches and hollows in the trunk mean it was used as a natural tree house, hiding place and social centre. Robin Hood was said to have lived in the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest. Kings and Queens have hosted many a social event around a big old Oak. Oak trees were often landmarks and are still found in many place names such as Sevenoaks in Kent, England. The Gaelic word for Oak is "dairch" and is seen in place names in Scotland such as "Craigendairch" or "Clasindairch". The Welsh word "der" can be seen in place names like Derwen and Deri. In Irish "doire" means oakwood.



The Oak is the largest of our native broad-leaved trees, regarded as "the King of the forest". Sessile Oaks have straighter branches than the Pedunculate Oak, radiating from a more upright trunk. Sessile and Pedunculate Oaks often hybridise and their ranges overlap. In Wyre you may find leaves with rounded lobes at the base with a long stalk, for example.



Size

Oaks can grow over 40m high and over 3m in diameter.



Age

Oaks often reach an age of 300 years old!

www.foresteducation.org/search/learning.results/



Sessile Oak - identification

The Sessile Oak is widespread, particularly in North and West Britain, including the Wyre Forest



★ Flowers and seed

The acorn is the ripened fruit or seed of the tree. It looks like an egg in a cup. Unlike the Pedunculate oak, the acorn of a Sessile oak has almost no stalk.

★ Leaves

The wavy dark green lobed leaves are very distinctive with their long (1-2cm) yellow stalks. The leaf bases do not have rounded lobes at the base, but are wedge shaped



★ Bark

The Greyish bark has very fine vertical cracks and ridges forming shapes called "plates".



Oak - associated fungi and lichens

Damp and humid conditions in an Oak wood are the perfect conditions for lichens to grow. Some fungi can seriously damage wood and kill trees. The fruiting bodies of many fungi often appear as 'brackets' on the bark, producing spores.



★ *Chlorociboria aeuruginacens*
A saprophytic fungus common in The Wyre on dead oak branches.

★ Beefsteak fungus - *Fistulina hepatica*
This parasitic fungus attacks Oak and can give a deep brown colour to the timber, enhancing its market value.



★ *Bulgaria inquinans*
A saprophytic fungus common in The Wyre on dead oak branches.



Oak - associated fungi and lichens (cont.)



★ Bryophytes - are the group of non-flowering plants which include mosses and liverworts, and 65 species grow on the trunks and branches of oaks.

★ Lichens

A remarkable diversity of lichens, totalling over 300 species, have been recorded growing on oaks.



★ Oak apples and other galls

Oak apples and other galls grow around the eggs of insects laid in the buds. Over 40 species, including midges, mites and wasps, are responsible for stimulating the oak to produce these unusual growth forms on its leaves or twigs, within which the larva of the insect lives and feeds.



Oak - associated wildlife

In the UK, Oak provides a habitat for more organisms, and especially insects, than any other tree. Because of its large size and longevity, it plays a unique role in forest ecosystems and many species have adapted to live with it.

Every oak tree is a reserve in its own right. 350 different species of insect are supported by Oak. A single oak tree may have over 30 different lichen species on its bark.. Huge numbers of creatures seek food and shelter in crevices of the bark, in the canopy of fresh leaves, hollow trunks of old trees, leaf litter and branches of dead wood and rotting wood on the forest floor.

Because of the large numbers of insects and other invertebrates which feed upon Oaks, many of the leaves can be tattered and have numerous holes in them by late July.

Oaks then produce a new flush of leaves, especially on young trees, and this phenomenon is called lammas growth, because it occurs around the time of Lammas, the Celtic festival of first fruits, on 1st August.

In autumn, the leaves turn various shades of yellow and brown, as chlorophyll is withdrawn from them and carotenoid pigments become visible instead. In some areas, the leaves are shed at the end of October, but in milder areas a few leaves will stay on the trees until December.



Oak - associated wildlife (insects)

★ Great Oak Beauty Moth - *Hypomecis roboraria*
A large but well camouflaged moth whose caterpillars resemble a twig when at rest, and feed on oak leaves.



★ Purple Hairstreak
The purple hairstreak (*Neozephyrus quercus*) is the only butterfly whose larvae feed exclusively on oak leaves.

★ Wood Ant
The ants climb to the top of the tree to find the aphids which they then "milk" by stroking them until they ooze sweet, sticky honeydew.



Oak - associated wildlife (birds and mammals)

There is a lot of competition for the acorns of the Oak tree. Here are the main suspects to look out for.



★ Grey Squirrel
They peel the acorns first then bury them to store for winter food.



★ Fallow Deer



★ Jay

Wildlife Spotter

To download a wildlife spotter chart click [here](#)



Oak - timber properties

Oak timber is strong and durable. The heartwood resists penetration by liquids, making it ideal for posts in contact with the ground.

The timber is best once the tree has reached about 150-200 years old. It has conspicuous growth rings which give a characteristic silver grain when quarter-cut or split.

The Sessile Oak is taller and straighter than the Pedunculate Oak.



Oak - uses past and present



The most prominent use of Oak is as a timber tree. Traditionally, Oak was a highly prized timber and was particularly used in ship building in the days of wooden ships. Its timber is also still used in buildings, for furniture and a whole range of other joinery uses.



The strength, durability and the straight, close grain of the Sessile Oak, make it ideal for barrels and casks. When used in this way, the wood imparts a particular flavour to wines and spirits.



Oak bark peeling was a traditional industry in Wyre, as the tannin in oak bark was used in the leather tanneries in Bewdley.



Pigs were allowed to forage for acorns in the forest in order to fatten them up as they are a rich food source.



Like many other trees the smaller branches and twigs were used for firewood or charcoal making. Charcoal production using coppiced Oak was a major industry in Wyre until the Industrial Revolution. Charcoal fuelled the local iron furnaces and the salt evaporation works in Droitwich.



Because of our long history with this species, Oaks are often used in ceremonial or commemorative plantings. They are used as landmarks and at the edge of the Ribbesford Wood you can still see the stump of the Gospel Oak where John Wesley preached in the 18th century. You will also often see them pollarded as boundary trees in Wyre and other woodlands.



Even sawdust was, and still is, used for smoking food. Oak from Wyre is currently used in building, fencing and fuel (woodchip and logs). Young Oak from Wyre is used for making distinctive rustic garden furniture.



Oak - activity

OAK APPLE INK

Oak produces tannin. Oak bark used to be harvested by gangs of men and women in the Wyre Forest when the sap rose in the spring. Then it was transported to the riverside in Bewdley to be used in the leather tanning industry.

You can use tannin to make a useable ink. Oak apples or marble galls (both caused by eggs laid by gall wasps) can be gathered from oak twigs most easily in early spring before the leaves appear. Crush a handful and put them to soak either in an iron pan or another metal pan with a couple of rusty nails added. Boil them up for about half an hour then leave the mixture for a few days before straining and keeping the liquid.

Your ink will get darker in time but you can make it blacker by adding sooty "lampblack" collected on the back of a spoon above a candle flame. BE VERY CAREFUL - THE SPOON WILL GET HOT! The ink is acidic and will etch into the paper when you write with it. This means that it will not fade.



Thanks to "The Garden Cottage Diaries" by Fiona J. Houston, 2009 Saraband (Scotland) Ltd for this recipe.