

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in June

Lime-tree bracts



We are looking for a lime tree, a common lime, sometimes called a European lime.



A common lime tree

Look for a tree that is taller than it is wide. I don't think you'll need your magnifying glass for this one!

We want one that has lots of pale-green flecks among the darker green leaves.

Then, check the shape of its leaves.

petiole



Common-lime leaf



Pale-green flecks among the darker green leaves

Common-lime leaves are a lop-sided heart shape with a point at the end furthest from the petiole.



Scientists call a leaf stem a **petiole**.

Scientists call a heart-shaped leaf '**cordate**'.

Scientists call a lop-sided heart-shaped leaf '**obliquely cordate**'.

Now you know that you are looking at a common (or European) lime tree.



When you are close up, you can see that the pale-green 'flecks' look like pale, narrow leaves.

They are called 'bracts' and, you are quite right, they are modified – or specialised – leaves.



Pale-green bracts and dark-green leaves

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To each bract, is attached a thin stalk that branches out, and at the end of each branch is a tiny bobble.



What do you think the tiny bobbles are?



Clue: the tree hasn't flowered yet.

Yes, the tiny bobbles are flower buds.



But what benefit to the tree are the bracts, do you think?

Everything a tree produces takes resources: food, time, energy. Very seldom does a tree make something that is not necessary to its wellbeing.



So of what benefit to the tree are the bracts?

Some people suggest the bracts might slide raindrops away from the fragile buds and flowers.



Do you think the buds look fragile?

Do you think the flowers that come out of them will be fragile?

Some people think that the pale bracts might be more visible to bees than the tiny flowers.



Keep an eye on your lime tree and see if you think the flowers that emerge would be difficult for a bee to find.

Some people think that the bracts will be a wing to carry the seeds away.



What size seeds do think these bracts could support in the air?



Keep an eye on the flowers and see what size and weight of seed they develop.



It is fun to make a note of what you saw and did today and what you think the coming flowers and fruits might look like.



For more about lime trees, what came before and what comes next, see Hello Trees book Lionel Lime, <http://hellotrees.co.uk/>



Bracts and the buds dangling from them