

Hello Trees Resource Sheet



What to look for outdoors in Summer

Tree identification: hornbeam

Let's go on a hornbeam tree hunt.



Remember, there are 6 clues to tree identification: far too many for all at once. We group the clues into 3s: **buds**, **branching** and **bark** (note the 'b' sound); and **leaf**, **flower** and **fruit** (note the 'f' sound).

Bud: A Hornbeam bud hugs the stem: small and pointed, it curves in, tight against the stem.

Branching: Hornbeam branching is an upside-down heart-shape. Base branches curve gently out and up, top branches curve in to the top of the tree.



Swing your arm through the air making a hornbeam upside-down heart shape.

Bark: Hornbeam bark is horn-smooth with highlights. Stretch lines snake up the smooth grey bark of the trunk and branches.

Flower: The Hornbeam female flower is hardly noticeable: a few small pale leaf-like dangle. The Hornbeam male flowers are masses of ordinary dangling catkins.

Leaf: The Hornbeam leaf has sawn-through edges. It is matt, narrow-ovoid, has a long pointed curved tip, crinkle-chip grooves – and markedly serrated edges,

Fruit: Hornbeam fruit is a heam of seeds, each in a trefoil bract.



Now we have all the clues, we have all we need to go on a hornbeam hunt.

What words will *you* use to describe your hornbeam's **bud**, **branching** and **bark**, and **flower**, **leaf** and **fruit**?

Here are two photos showing the **branching** of a hornbeam tree near where I live:



Hornbeam tree in Spring, covered in masses of catkins



Hornbeam tree in Summer covered in leaves and fruit



Upside-down heart-shape?

Hmm! What are *your* words to describe the shape of your hornbeam branching?

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer

Tree identification: hornbeam




Have any **buds** developed on your hornbeam? They will be at leaf axils.



Bark on a coppiced hornbeam

Clearly seen hornbeam buds in Winter



Is your hornbeam **bark** 'Horn-smooth'? With 'Highlights'? By 'highlights' I mean the streaks of stretch marks snaking up the bark.  See them?



Hornbeam female and male **flowers** looked like this.



Now in Summer, flowers are long gone.

They have turned into **fruits**.

Here is a heap of hornbeam fruits in Summer.



In Autumn, they will dry out and drop, spinning from the tree. Here is what each of them will look like then. For more, see [Hornbeam spinners](#).



What words would *you* use to describe the **leaves** on your hornbeam? Would you agree that each leaf



Hornbeam leaves next to a 5-year-old's hand

- is dark green,
- is matt,
- is much smaller than the hand,
- is egg-shaped ('ovoid'),
- has a long curved pointed tip,
- markedly serrated edge,
- has a short petiole?
- Is alternate on either side of the shoot.

Anything else?



For much more about trees and how to identify them, and more to see and do outdoors and indoors see Hello Trees website www.hellotrees.co.uk.