

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer

Tree identification: English Oak

'Everyone can recognise an English Oak,' I can hear you say.



Acorns amongst oak leaves

'OK then,' I say.



'If you know what to look for, go and find yourself an oak leaf – and, if possible, an acorn – and let's have a look at them.'

Now we can practice our leaf descriptions:



What colour is your oak leaf? Green, dark green, some leaves darker than others?



What colour is your oak leaf underneath compared to on top? Darker green, lighter green? A different colour?



Are the leaf edges lobed, serrated or smooth?



'**Lobes**' are roundish flattish bulges (think 'ear lobe', the roundish flattish bit at the bottom of your ear).



'**Serrations**' are tiny zig-zags like the teeth of a serrated knife.



Is the petiole (the leaf stalk) long, very long, short or very short?



Is your oak leaf smaller than the palm of your hand, bigger than your palm but smaller than your hand, or bigger than your hand?



Is your oak leaf longer than it is wide, or wider than it is long?



Does it have a pointed tip?



Are the leaves clustered closely together or spread out along the twig?

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My leaf is dark green; lighter green underneath; the leaf edges are lobed; it has 12 lobes, one of them very small; the petiole is so short it is hardly there at all; the leaf fitted into the palm of my hand, but only just – and I have a large hand; my leaves were packed closely in swirls of layers at the end of the twig, more spread out further along the twig.

[Let us know](#) how your leaves compare to mine.

Did you find an acorn? Some years, oak trees produce a lot of acorns, sometimes a few acorns or even no acorns at all.



When oak trees produce lots of acorns, we call it '**a good mast year**'.



Would you say that this year is a good mast year?

If you were unable to find an acorn, have a look at my photograph.



An oak leaf and a stalk of acorns



Feel – or see – how rough the cup is and how smooth the seed.

Some of the acorns started to develop but then they didn't develop any further.

From the position of the part-developed acorns, we can see where the flowers must have been.

The acorns are not quite opposite each other.



See how long the acorn stalk is.

It is as if the acorns are on a leg or a *foot*.



The stalk is called a '**peduncle**'. The word '*pedal*,' as on a bicycle or a piano, comes from a form of the Latin word for a *foot*, and so does the word *peduncle*.



An **English Oak** is also called a '**Pedunculate Oak**': its fruit is borne on a peduncle.

Now I can be sure my oak leaf and acorn are of an English Oak, a Pedunculate Oak.



Peduncle and pedunculate are funny words to say out loud. Have a go!

The botanical name is *Quercus robur*, from Latin words meaning 'oak' and 'robust'. Strong!



Remember the leaves of my oak? English Oak *leaves* have *no* stalk/petiole/peduncle.

The name Pedunculate Oak comes from the way the *fruit* is borne, *not* the leaves.

Another time we shall find out about our other native British oak tree, the Sessile Oak.



For clear photographs of all the characteristics of the English Oak in all seasons, see Hello Trees book 'Olly Oak' at www.hellotrees.co.uk.