

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to look for outdoors in Summer Tree ID: Rowan aka mountain ash



There are 6 clues to tree identification:

in Winter we have **buds**, **branching** and **bark** (note the 'b' sound).

In Spring we have **flowers** and **leaf** shape (note the 'f' sound)

Now, in Summer, we have 2 easy-to-see clues: **leaf** and **fruit** (note the 'f' sound again).



And what could be easier to see than rowan berries!

They hang in glowing clusters of berries, yellow at first, then orange, then red.



Here are some red rowan berries.

Their smooth skins gleam in the sunshine.

It is as if the berries are signalling to be seen.



Who or what will see the berries?



What advantage will it be to the tree?



Yes, birds will see the berries.

The berries are good food for birds.

Mistle thrushes, blackbirds and starlings love to eat rowan berries.

The berries are an advantage to the birds, but what about the tree?

There are 1, 2, 3 or 4 good seeds in a rowan berry.



These birds are 'seed dispersers': they disperse the seeds to new places.

They swallow berries whole. The seeds in the berries come out in the birds' poo.



Wouldn't it be better for the seeds to drop straight from the tree into the soil below?



It might get a bit crowded round there if all the seeds started sprouting around the mother tree. Better that the birds poo them later somewhere else.



Bullfinches are badly behaved when it comes to dispersing rowan seeds.



Can you think why we call them 'seed stealers'?






Correct. Bullfinch beaks can break the seeds inside the berries. Once broken, the seeds can't grow into new trees.



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So far, we have been looking at rowan tree **fruit**.


 Can you remember the other obvious clue to the tree's identity in summer?
 **Don't FORGET!** Don't forget the summer clues have the 'f' sound.

 Yes, the **leaf**. The really, really obvious clue.

 Here is a rowan leaf next to the outline of a 5-year-old's hand.
 A rowan tree is also known as (aka) a '*mountain ash*'.


 Here is an ash leaf next to the same hand. Look at the photo of a rowan leaf in late summer held on my large adult hand.


 In what way would you say the leaves are similar?

 In what way are they different?

I would say the ways rowan and ash leaves are the same are:

1. Both leaves are pinnate: made up of lots of leaflets.
2. Leaflets are opposite each other on either side of the rachis + a leaflet at the end.

 The central stalk is called a '*rachis*'. We say ray-kiss.

I would say the ways rowan and ash leaves are different are:

1. Rowan leaves and leaflets are smaller than ash leaves and leaflets.
2. Rowan leaves have more leaflets per leaf than an ash.
3. Rowan leaflets are more rounded at their tip than ash leaflets.
4. Rowan leaflets have a serrated edge. Ash leaflet edges are smooth.



Look at the photos of a rowan leaf in late summer held on my large adult hand, and of a single leaf.

I think the photos shows the leaflet shape more clearly.



Did you agree with my list of similarities and differences?



Do you have more to add?



Look for a rowan tree in a park near you. I would be surprised if you did not find one.

Would you like to make a tangy rowan berry and apple jelly?

See [Hello Trees Resources](https://www.hellotrees.co.uk/resources) for an easy recipe.

I say 'easy' because I managed to make it!