

# Hello Trees Resource Sheet

## What to look for outdoors in Winter

### Tree ID: oak buds



Many tree buds are small and brown.

How are we ever going to remember which is which?

Let's think how to remember *all* the ways to identify **oak** buds. **Oak** buds are:

- **egg** shaped
- **small**
- **brown**
- **spaced out** along the twig
- on **each side** of the twig
- **clustered at the tip** of the twig



Have a go at thinking of ways to remember all of that for oak buds!

Let's start with: **OAK** and **EGG**, two **small** words each with 3 letters.

That will help us remember **egg** and **small**.

What about '**brown**'?

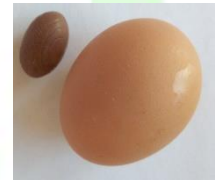
Eggs – Easter eggs – chocolate. That will remind us! chocolate **brown eggs**.

Buy a packet of the smallest chocolate eggs in the shop.



I unwrapped one and took a photo of it alongside a hen's egg.

That makes it look **small**!



Now we can remember: oak buds are **egg-shaped**, **small** and **brown**.

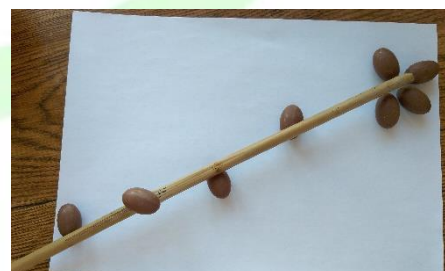
How can we remind ourselves that **oak** buds are **spaced out** on **each side** along the twig and **clustered** round the tip?



Find a garden cane and **space** out the chocky **eggs** along it, one on **each side**:

under, left, above, right - and then a **cluster at the tip**.

By the time you have battled to balance an egg on top of the cane, and balance the cane on top of another egg, as well as position eggs to the left and right, there is no way you will ever forget that oak buds are on **each side** of the twig – and that **spacing out** the eggs helps to balance them.



**Spacing out** the **eggs** on **each side** along the twig and then in a **cluster at the tip**, I imagined a hen laying one egg each day: on the left, then waiting a day and laying an egg above, then waiting a day and laying an egg on the right, ... then below, ... then left – and then, **at the end**, the hen getting broody and laying a whole **clutch** of eggs to sit on and hatch!



Again: **oak** buds are **spaced out** on **each side** along the twig and **clustered at the end**.

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What about reality?



Look under an oak tree for twigs that have been shaken off by the wind.

Pull off the leaves gently to see the buds underneath.



Compare these buds with buds on the tree.

The buds that have been lying on the ground may be affected by damp.



We have six things to look for:

On our oak twigs, are the buds 1) **egg-shaped**, 2) **small**, 3) **brown**,

4) **spaced out**, 5) on **each side** along the twig, with 6) a **cluster** of buds at the tip?

I took a photo of everything together. The twig next to the hen's egg has been lying on the ground. The other 2 twigs I cut from the oak tree.



Do you agree that:



the oak buds that have been lying on the ground are swollen and lighter brown than the buds on the twigs cut from the oak tree?



oak buds are egg-shaped but pointed at one end?

Botanists call this 'ovoid-conic':  
ovoid=like an egg, conic=like a cone.



Now we can remember that **oak buds** are pointy-**egg-shaped**, **small**, **brown**, **spaced out** on **each side** along the twig, and **clustered** at the end of the twig.



In Spring, shoots will burst out of the buds.

The shoots being spaced out on each side and in a cluster at the tip of each twig will control the shape of the tree: more about that another time.



For more about trees, fun things to look for and do indoors and outdoors, and about Hello Trees books – especially Olly Oak - see the [Hello Trees website](http://www.hellotrees.co.uk).