

What to look for outdoors April - June

Beech leaves

 Have a magnifying glass in your pocket.

Beech leaves come out a bit later than other leaves. When did yours come out?



Log your finding at <http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/>.

Have a good look at a beech leaf.



A beech leaf in spring

Questions



Do you think its surface looks a bit like crinkle-cut crisps?



What colour is the leaf?

Most beech trees have green leaves but some are copper-coloured at first.



Is your beech leaf glossy or matt?

Find another leaf and see if your beech leaf is longer or not as long; wider or not so wide. You might like to measure it.



Would you describe the leaf as egg-shaped with a pointy tip? Or do you have another way to describe its shape?



Scientists call an egg shape 'ovoid'.



What could you say about the lines of the leaf's veins? Are the veins opposite each other on either side of the centre vein? Are the veins all the same distance from each other?

There is something else you might not have noticed.

Do

Hold the beech leaf up with the sun behind you.

Can you see a fringe of hairs round the edge of the beech leaf?

The hairs are fresh-green and silky-white at first, then they turn dark green on top of the leaf, pale beneath the leaf. Mature beech leaves do not have hair round the edges.

Copper beech leaves turn dark red-brown after a while.



How long does it take for this to happen: a day, a week, a month?

What colour are they underneath?



It is fun to make a note of what you saw and did today

For more about beech trees, what came before and what comes next, see Hello Trees book 'Bella Beech', www.hellotrees.co.uk.