

# The Twelve tree Trail

See if you can find these twelve native trees in West Cork! You can visit a woodland like Glengarriff Nature Reserve to try and spot them, but almost every laneway in West Cork has trees. Start looking around where you live or where you are staying and you might be surprised how many different types of tree you can find.

1



## Sessile Oak DAIR CHAELACH

Sessile Oak is a large tree up to 40m tall which has acorns in autumn. It is a very important tree for wildlife – more types of insect live on oak than any other tree in Ireland and the acorns provide food for Jays and small mammals like Wood Mice.

***Did you know?** The boy's name Doire means oak and if you see Derry in a place name it also means oak e.g. Derrynafula (Dhoire na Fola) means oakwood of the blood.*



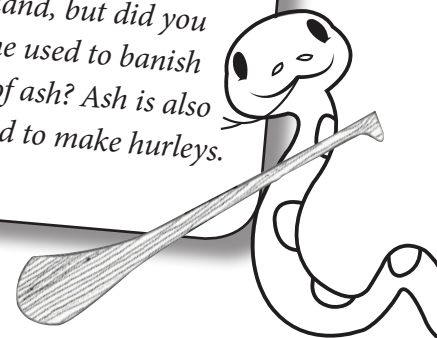
2



## Ash FUINSEOG

Ash grows to be a tall tree of over 30m. It has grey bark, distinctive black buds and leaves that are divided into leaflets. Its winged fruit, known as 'keys', whirl to the ground like mini-helicopters.

***Did you know?** St Patrick banished snakes from Ireland, but did you know the stick he used to banish them was made of ash? Ash is also the main wood used to make hurleys.*





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## Hawthorn sceach gheal

Hawthorn is a medium-sized tree, named after its thorns and its fruit, which are called haws. It has masses of white flowers in spring and is sometimes known as mayflower or whitethorn.

**Did you know?** Hawthorn berries are important food for birds and many caterpillars like to eat the leaves. In Irish folklore lone hawthorn trees are associated with the fairies and it was considered bad luck to cut them down.



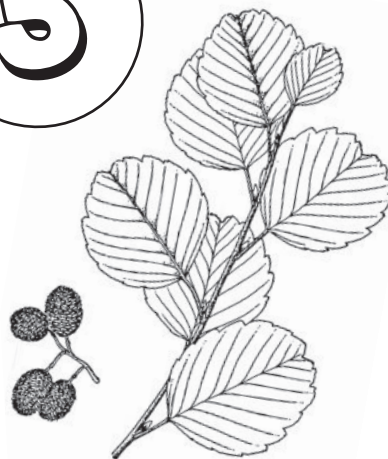
## Holly cuileann

Holly is an evergreen tree that keeps its leaves throughout the year. It is very well known for its prickly leaves and shiny, round, red berries, which are a symbol of Christmas.

**Did you know?** Garinish Island in Glengarriff Harbour is also known as Ilnacullin or 'Oileán an Chulinn', which means 'island of the holly'.



5



## Alder fearnóg

Alder is a tall tree that likes to get its feet wet: it grows in marshy places and along riverbanks. Its seeds, found in little cones like a conifer tree, are devoured in autumn by flocks of bright yellow Siskins.

**Did you know?** Alder wood is water-resistant so it was traditionally used to make bridges and piers and was also used to make clogs (wooden shoes) in Ireland.



## Hazel coll

Hazel is a medium-sized tree that usually has many stems rather than a single trunk. Its leaves are quite rough and hairy and it has hazelnuts in the autumn.

**Did you know?** In old Irish tradition, Hazel is known as the tree of knowledge. Look at a hazel tree and you might feel a bit wiser!



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## Rowan caorthann

Rowan is a medium-sized tree that has clusters of bright red berries. It can survive in upland areas and has similar leaves to Ash so is also known as Mountain Ash.

*Did you know? The old Celtic name for Rowan is 'fid na ndruad', which means 'tree of the druids' and it was traditionally planted around houses to protect against evil.*

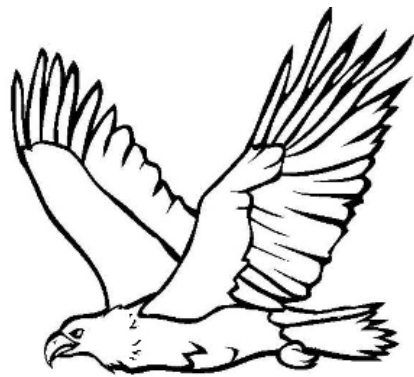


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*Did you know? Eagles and other birds of prey like to nest in big old Scots Pine trees and Red Squirrels love to eat the cones.*

## Scots Pine péine albanach

A tall conifer tree with orange-red bark, long pine needles and roundish pine cones. The only other native conifer trees in Ireland are Yew and Juniper.



MY HEAD  
HURTS

9



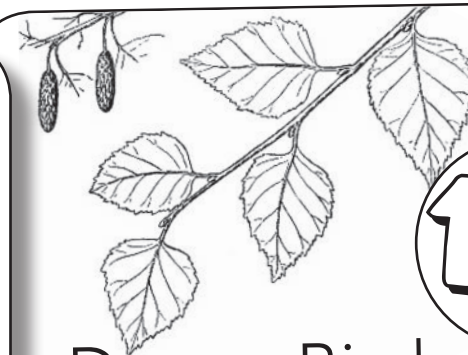
## Willow saileach

There are several types of willow in Ireland and their leaves vary from small and round to long and thin. Rusty Willow is the commonest species.

*Did you know? The painkiller Aspirin is derived from willow bark. Long before Aspirin was manufactured by modern scientists, ancient Egyptians knew that chewing willow bark helped cure headaches.*



10



## Downy Birch Beith chlúmhach

Birch has papery thin silvery bark and small leaves that turn beautiful shades of yellow and orange in autumn.

*Did you know? After the last ice age, 12,000 years ago, birch was one of the first trees to start growing in the barren landscape. Its tiny seeds blow everywhere and because of its ability to colonise bare ground it is known as a pioneer species.*

*The tiniest tree in Ireland is Dwarf Willow which only grows a few centimetres tall and is found on the highest mountain tops. Ellen Hutchins (1785-1815), Ireland's first female botanist, found it at the top of Knock Boy (Cnoc bui), Co Cork's highest mountain. Ellen lived in Ballylickey, not far from the mountain. Over two hundred years later Dwarf Willow is still growing there.*

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## Strawberry Tree or Arbutus caithne

The fruits of this evergreen shrub are round, red and look a bit like strawberries but are not very nice to eat unless you are a bird! It is rare, only growing in south-west Ireland and in one place in Co Sligo. Glengarriff Woods is the best place to see it in West Cork.

**Did you know?** Although it is a tree, it is related to heather (not strawberries!) – if you are lucky enough to find it you might see its flowers are like large heather blossoms.

image: Lizzie Harper



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## Blackthorn Draichead

Blackthorn is a bushy tree or shrub, with fierce spines and blue-black fruit called sloes. It is more commonly found in hedgerows than in woodlands.

**Did you know?** Blackthorn was traditionally used for making walking sticks and shillelaghs, a type of club originally used as a weapon but later used more peacefully as a walking stick.

## 12 activity ideas inspired by the Twelve Tree Trail:

- colour in this leaflet
- make a collection of fallen leaves
- draw six different leaf shapes
- do a leaf rubbing
- measure the circumference of the largest tree you can find
- plant an acorn
- make a list of trees growing near you
- see how many parts of a tree you can name
- find out what the national tree of Ireland is
- hug a tree, close your eyes and listen in silence for one minute
- write a poem about your favourite tree
- tell other people how much you love trees!



For more on plants and botany of Bantry Bay  
see [www.ellenhutchins.com](http://www.ellenhutchins.com)

Produced by the Ellen Hutchins Festival 2020 Written by Clare Heardman, Conservation Ranger, NPWS Funded by Fisheries Local Action Group – South



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Ellen Hutchins

IRELAND'S FIRST FEMALE BOTANIST