

Quercus robur

[Synonyms : *Quercus pedunculata*, *Quercus petraea*, *Quercus robur cristata*, *Quercus robur* subsp. *eurobur*, *Quercus robur* subsp. *pedunculata*, *Quercus robur* subsp. *puberula*]

OAK is a deciduous tree. Native to North Africa, western Asia and to Europe (including Britain) it has greenish-yellow catkins.

It is also known as Aac, Acherne, Achorn, Ackernel, Akeron, Akher, Akhern, Akran, Akyr, Archarde, Atckern, Atchorn, *Ballut Ingliza* (Maltese), *Bouvre* (French), British oak, Brown oak, *Carvalho commum* (Portuguese), *Chêne* (French), *Chêne à grappes* (French), *Chêne pédonculé* (French), *Chêne rouvre* (French), Common oak, Cups and ladles, Cups and saucers, *Derwen Goesog* (Welsh), *Dub letní* (Czech), *Dub letný* (Slovak), *Eiche* (German), Eike tree, *Ek* (Swedish), English oak, *Eschio farnia* (German), European oak, Frying pans, Hatch horn, Jove's nuts, Knappers, *Křemelák* (Czech), *Letňák* (Czech), Mace, Macey-tree, Mast, *Majoo* (Urdu), Oak atchern, Ovest, *Pédonculé* (French), Pedunculate oak, *Pelud mesesi* (Turkish), Pipes, *Quêne* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Querce comune* (Italian), *Quercia pedunculata* (Italian), *Querciola* (Italian), *Roble* (Portuguese, Spanish), *Roble albar* (Spanish), *Robre* (Spanish), *Roburo* (Esperanto), *Roteiche* (German), *Rotheiche* (German), *Rovere* (Italian), Rump, *Skogsek* (Swedish), *Sommarek* (Swedish), *Sommereiche* (German), *Steileiche* (German), *Stejar* (Rumanian), *Stjälkek* (Swedish), *Tammi* (Finnish), Tanner's bark, *Tchêne* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), Tom Paine, Trail, Woke, Wuk, Yachrans, Yak, Yapper, Yeaker, Yek, Yik, and *Zomereik* (Dutch); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of bravery (leaves), courage, faith, fire, flames, honour, hospitality (tree), humanity, independence, liberty (live), longevity, reward, royalty, stability, and welcome.

Oak galls or oak apples are round growths that can be found nearly anywhere on this tree and are caused by larvae of certain insects.

Warning – buds, leaves (particularly in Spring) and acorns are poisonous for some animals.

Robur is Latin (hard wood – especially oak wood, strength) and is the Latin name for the species *Quercus robur* (oak).

The oak tree is believed to be able to reach an age of 1,200 years.

In a 'bad' year (in Britain certainly) the acorns can often appear mis-shapen from the attentions of the gall-wasp. This insect is responsible for Knopper gall which can encrust part of the acorn cup and fruit.

This tree appears in the arms of Colonel William Carlos or Careless (died 1659). It was he who was supposed to have hid his king, Charles II of Great Britain and Ireland, in the upper branches of an oak tree after the Battle of Worcester in September 1651 and then fled with him to France.

The heavy timber can be used for building and furniture. The bark is used for tanning leather, and by the food industry for smoking food eg. fish. Oak is used by the pharmaceutical industry in some proprietary medicines, and the wood is used for making barrels for storing alcohol eg. whisky.

Medicinally, herbalists used the bark to treat lung disorders, fevers, haemorrhages, dysentery, bleeding gums and piles. A decoction of the leaves was a recommended treatment for ringworm. The acorn (powdered or grated) was prescribed for the treatment of diarrhoea.

Galls were used particularly as a remedy for dysentery, venereal diseases, diarrhoea and cholera. Today the bark can still be employed in the treatment of diarrhoea and piles, and as a gargle for throat disorders – and is used in homoeopathic treatments.
The oak leaf is the birthday ‘flower’ for 24th January.