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Ulmus glabra

[Synonyms : *Ulmus campestris*, *Ulmus carpinifolia*, *Ulmus elliptica*, *Ulmus montana*, *Ulmus podolica*, *Ulmus scabra*, *Ulmus sukaczewii*, *Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro*]

WYCH ELM is a deciduous tree. Native to northern Europe it has greenish flowers and leaves that turn yellow in Autumn.

It is also known as *Alm* (Sweden), *Bergulme* (German), Bough elm, *Brest horský* (Slovak), Chewbark, Drunken elm, Elm-wych, English elm, Halse, Holme, Hornbeam, Hornbirch, *Jilm drsný* (Czech), *Jilm horský* (Czech), *Llwyfen Lydanddail* (Welsh), Mountain elm, Quicken, Scotch elm, Smooth-leaved elm, Switch elm, *Vuorijalava* (Finnish), *Weissrüster* (German), Witan elm, Wych halse, Wych-tree, Wych-hazel, and Wychwood.

Warning – in rare cases the pollen oil can cause dermatitis.

Glabra is Latin (hairless, bald) meaning 'hairless or smooth'.

The 'wych' found in so many of the common names means 'flexible or pliant'.

Superstitions involving wych elm seem to be few but it is delightful to note that as recently as the 1950s in England a farmer's wife was reported as having expressed the view vehemently that it was hardly surprising some butter was not forming as there was no wych elm in the churn. The tree's wood was once used for the churn's central spindle. Some people used also to sew a twig into their clothing, and it is said that in the past conjurors preferred to have their wands made from this wood.

In Britain this species was a source of branches for bows and when forked they were used as divining rods as well. In Wales the bark was often stripped off younger branches in long ribbons for securing thatching. The tough, durable timber has been used for making boats, farm buildings, threshing floors, coffins, furniture and especially cart and wagon shafts. The fibre from the inner bark has been used for ropes and mats.

Medicinally, wych elm is used today in some homoeopathic treatments.