

Photo guide to Trees in winter

START HERE

Are the buds opposite each other?



Yes

SECTION A
Opposite buds

No

Does the twig have **thorns**?



Yes

SECTION B
Alternate buds
with thorns

No

Are there lots of **bud scales**?



No

SECTION C
Alternate buds
few scales

Yes

SECTION D
Alternate buds
many scales

A Opposite buds

Ash



Buds hard and dark black. Bark light grey. Bark is smooth when young, becoming vertically fissured.

Horse Chestnut



Buds large, dark brown and very sticky. Bark grey-brown, becoming flaky with age.

Sycamore



Buds pale green, with purple edges. Bark grey. Smooth on young trees but with age flakes off in rectangles.

Field maple



Buds reddish-brown, with white hairy edges. Bark grey or brown. With age may become flaky and corky.

B Alternate buds with thorns

Hawthorn



Buds small, oval and red, found at the base of spines, but not on them. Bark grey-brown, flakes off with age.

Blackthorn



Buds small, oval and red, found on the spines as well as the stem. Bark black or dark brown and rough.

Cherry plum



Buds green, small, often in clusters. Bark dark brown, with horizontal lines, orange bark underneath.

Holly



Evergreen, keeps spiky green leaves all winter. Bark light grey with horizontal warts, becoming craggy.

C Alternate buds few scales

Lime



Buds red, plump and bluntly rounded. Bark grey-brown, becoming fissured with outgrowths at the base.

Willow



Buds red or yellow, pointing away from the stem. The buds are cottony inside. Bark brown or grey.

Alder



Buds purple, and boxing club shaped. Bark purple-brown, becoming greyer and more fissured.

London plane



Buds red and round. Bark light green or grey, peeling off in patches, cream underneath.

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Identifying trees without their leaves seems like a daunting challenge. But a closer look will reveal a multitude of slowly swelling buds.

Some winter trees have buds in opposite pairs, like ash, horse chestnut, sycamore and maple. A few more trees have spines, like hawthorn and blackthorn.

But for the other trees you will need to look more closely at the bud. Some trees, like lime, alder and willow, have less than three scales that protect the bud. But other trees, such as oak, elm and cherry, have many bud scales.

Winter trees are best in January and February. By early spring the buds start to open, and lose their distinctive shape.

Why not share your photos of buds on Twitter or Instagram, using the hashtag #winterbuds. Or why not try to find five over-wintering insects, such as ladybirds, butterflies and bees.



Planting trees in winter

Winter is a great time to plant trees. Why not join a planting party in your local area this year?

Planted bare rooted whips is easy. All you need to do is make a small slit trench with a spade. Keep the roots in soil or water until the moment you are ready to plant the tree.

For larger saplings and container trees, dig a large hole and add plenty of organic matter.

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



The National Lottery
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Alternate buds many scales

Oak



Buds orange-brown, plump, with waxy hairless scales. Bark grey, becoming vertically fissured with age.

Cherry



Buds red-brown and pointed. Bark red, brown or grey, with orange-brown horizontal lines.

Alternate buds many scales

Elm



Buds black and tiny. Bark grey-brown, with corky ridges when young, then becoming fissured.

Birch



Buds green or brown, and pointed. Bark orange-red when young, becoming white grey.

Alternate buds many scales

Whitebeam



Buds green with brown edges, hairy, and oval-shaped with a blunt point. Bark brown-grey, smooth and glossy.

Hazel



Buds green or red, plump and oval-shaped. Bark brown or green, shiny, peels in thin horizontal strips.

Beech



Buds brown, long and pointed away from the twig. Bark grey, developing criss-crossing ridges and furrows.

Hornbeam



Buds brown, pointing towards the twig. Bark grey, develops orange or silver vertical furrows with age.

Poplar



Buds brown or green, sharply pointed and sticky. Bark brown-grey, developing wavy ridges with age.

Rowan



Buds purple-brown, cone-shaped and hairy. Bark grey and smooth, with horizontal scars.

Apple



Buds red-brown, usually on a stalk. Bark light brown or grey, becoming fissured with age.

Pear



Buds brown or green, small and pointed. Bark light grey, splitting into squares and rectangles.