

Species ID Guide

Stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*)



- Leaves:** soft, strongly serrated, covered in stinging and non-stinging hairs, opposite.
- Flowers:** Tiny, whitish green clusters of flowers, with four petals, on inflorescences towards the top of the stem.
- Stem:** green, erect, covered in stinging and non stinging hairs

Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*)



- Leaves:** highly branched fronds, all fronds apart from those at the very top are at least 3-pinnate, appear in spring unfurling the tightly curled fronds, going brown and dying back in the autumn. It's the only British fern with fronds on side branches.
- Like other ferns, brackens do not have seeds or fruits

Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.)



- Leaves:** 3-5 (or more rarely 7) oval, pointed and toothed leaflets around a central stem, hairy or prickly, alternate.
- Branches:** Scrambling, tangled, long and arching, prickly thorns.
- Flowers:** 2-3cm, white or pale pink, 5 petals, may be crinkly.
- Fruit:** blackberries or similar, aggregate of tiny fleshy 'drupelets' each containing a seed, green at first, then red and shiny black when ripe.

Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)



- Leaves:** 5 to 9 oval, pointed and toothed leaflets along a central stem, slightly hairy underside.
- Bark:** deeply furrowed and 'corky', straight shoots (suckers) emerge from base.
- Flowers:** 5 petals, creamy white, large flat clusters.
- Fruit:** round, black, shiny berries in pendulous clusters.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.)



- Leaves:** 3-5 lobes, few teeth near apex, tough.
- Bark:** Heavily fissured.
- Twigs:** hairless, sharp spines.
- Flowers:** 5 petals, white or pink in flat clusters.
- Fruit:** rounded-oval, crimson. Common hawthorn has deeper lobed leaves than midland hawthorn and only one seed in fruit.

Ivy (*Hedera helix*)



- Leaves:** 3-5 triangular lobes on creeping and climbing stems, oval on flowering stems, shiny dark green upper with paler veins, untoothed, hairless, alternate.
- Stems:** climbing, sucker-like roots which stick to substrate, downy when young.
- Flowers:** greenish-yellow, small, 5 petals, in clusters at stem tips, open late summer to autumn.

Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)



Leaves: 11-17 leaflets along central stem, strongly toothed, white-grey downy underneath when young, terminal leaflet never larger than side ones.

Bark: silver-grey, smooth.

Twigs: purple-tinged, hairy when young.

Flowers: white, dense clusters.

Fruit: small, round, scarlet, large clusters.

Blackthorn, or sloe bush (*Prunus spinosa*)



Leaves: oval, pointed, toothed, dull when mature, alternate.

Bark: dark blackish brown, often suckers from base.

Twigs: downy when young, many side shoots which become thorns.

Flowers: 5 white petals, open before the leaves to cover the shrub.

Fruit: sloes, round or slightly oval, 1.5cm, blue-black with whitish dusting.

Sallow

There are several recognisable willow species in the UK, any of which spotted on sight will be enough to satisfy this question in the survey. Grey willow, goat willow and other broader-leaved species of willow are sometimes referred to as 'sallows'.

Grey willow (*Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*)



Leaves: oval rather than long and thin (as other willows tend to be), 2-3 x as long as wide, downy underneath, alternate. Young leaves are hairy becoming hairless above and only sparsely hairy underneath with age.

Flowers: short catkins, male grey, stout, oval, become yellow when ripe with pollen. Female catkins are longer, green and on separate trees.

Bark: dark brown, ridged.

Fruits: female catkins develop into woolly/plumed seeds.

Goat willow, or pussy willow (*Salix caprea*)



Leaves: oval rather than long and thin hairless above, bluntly toothed, with a felty coating of fine grey hairs underneath, pointed tip which bends to one side.

Flowers: catkins in early spring. Male catkins are grey, stout, oval, yellow when ripe with pollen. Female catkins are longer, green, on separate trees. Catkins appear before the leaves.

Fruits: female catkins develop into woolly silky haired seeds.

Bark: grey-brown, develops diamond-shaped fissures with age.