

Pedunculate Oak

Quercus robur

Plants · Deciduous tree · acorns Sep–Oct



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A massive, spreading deciduous tree of lowland soils, and the oak of parkland, hedgerow and field corner around Dumfries. Its acorns hang on long stalks — peduncles — while the leaves have very short stalks and two small ear-like lobes clasping the twig. Old individuals become enormously broad and hollow, and can live for many hundreds of years.

BEHAVIOUR

Oaks flush their leaves in a single burst in spring, and the caterpillars that eat them — chiefly winter moth — time their hatch to match it. That caterpillar peak is what blue tits, great tits and pied flycatchers feed their broods on, so the whole woodland breeding season pivots on it. Jays bury acorns and forget many of them, which is how oaks travel uphill.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Beeches and oaks (Fagaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 40 m; can live 500 years or more
STATUS	Native; the oak of lowland soils and parkland

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