

I-Spy on Hocombe Mead January 2017

In winter it is more difficult to identify deciduous trees as they have no leaves so we have to resort to looking at their buds and bark.



Beech

Fagus Sylvatica

Beech buds are long, thin and pointed and have an elegant spindle shape. They are a dark coppery colour and about 1 - 2 cm long. Often there are some of last year's dead leaves left on the twigs which may help you identify the tree.



Hazel

Corylus avellana

Hazel buds are rounded, short and blunt with scales that are often green-red. When Hazel trees are young their bark is a light grey-brown, often with sheen to it. This picture also shows something else that, at this time of year, helps with the identification of the tree.



Goat Willow

Salix caprea

Goat Willow's buds are rounded and are chestnut brown. At this time of year they have yellowish buds on them that are about to produce their flowers (as seen in the picture). These buds produce the flowers that give the tree its other name of Pussy Willow.



Oak

Quercus robur

The English Oak has ovoid-shaped buds which are orange brown in colour. They are up to about 5mm in length. At the tips of the twigs the buds are often clustered together. Remaining dead leaves can also be present on young trees which will help with identification.

	<p>Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i></p> <p>Ash trees are perhaps the easiest to identify from their buds. Their twigs are smooth, grey brown in colour and have black, sooty-looking velvety buds. The buds are arranged opposite each other</p>
	<p>Downy Birch <i>Betula pubescens</i></p> <p>The buds of Downy Birch are insignificant so it is easier to identify it by its silvery white bark. In older trees the lower part of the trunk becomes black with a diamond pattern but the upper part remains silvery. The silvery colour is caused by a chemical called betulin.</p>
	<p>Wood Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i></p> <p>The wood pigeon lives in broadleaved woods. The woodpigeon is a vegetarian; it eats seeds, leaves, fruit (especially of Ivy), buds and root crops. They are often thought of as a pest because they raid crops. Can you find a place where there are Ivy berries in Hocombe Mead?</p>
	<p>Common Feather Moss <i>Kindbergia sp.</i></p> <p>This is one of the commonest mosses in Britain and is found on the trunks and branches of trees, on banks, on the ground in woodland. It offers an excellent home for insects and many other small creatures. This means that it is a good place for birds to forage for food. What sort of insects might birds find in the moss?</p>