



B L U E Y

Tree Identification Guide for The Blue Lagoon

On 1st June 2024 young people from The Youth Network joined artist's Kerry Lemon and Ciara Callaghan and photographer Chris Henley for a walk to The Blue Lagoon. We identified some of the trees which grow there; focusing on how to recognise them from their leaves, flowers, fruit and habitats.

We took some cuttings back from our walk to the Spotlight Community Centre in Water Eaton where we created pocket identification books by printing the leaves and flowers. We did research and discussed our own thoughts on how the trees could be identified.

In this identification guide, we are happy to share our findings and offer others some guidance in identifying these trees, which represent just some of the incredible biodiversity at The Blue Lagoon.

All photographs by Chris Henley



OAK

Latin name Quercus

Flower Catkin

Fruit Acorn



Oak leaves appear from Spring until Autumn when they change colour and fall from the tree. They are around 10cm long with deep smooth lobes.

Acorns are shiny nuts held in a wooden cup which can be seen around August and will fall from the tree in Autumn

Oaks can live to over 1000 years old! 2,300 species are supported by oak and 326 species depend on oak trees.

People used to believe that carrying an acorn in your pocket would protect you from being struck by lightning!



WILLOW (Weeping)

Latin name	Salix Alba Tristis
Flower	Catkin
Fruit	Cone shaped capsules



The leaf of a Weeping Willow is long, thin and pointed. This tree can be found alongside canals and rivers. It produces slim long flower clusters called Catkins. It is one of the first trees to produce leaves in Spring, as early as March.

A healthy cutting of Willow will grow into a new tree if pushed into the ground; because it is so fast growing and the it can recover quickly from being cut back Willow is a symbol for resilience, rebirth and renewal in many cultures.



HAWTHORN

Latin name	Crataegus Monogyna
Flower	White five petaled flower
Fruit	Haws



The leaves on a hawthorn tree are small and have between 3 and six deep lobes. The flowers have five petals and are either white or pink, they usually appear on the Hawthorn tree in May.

The fruit is called a Haw. It is a dark red berry with a single seed, they do not drop from the tree until Spring which makes them an important food for birds in the UK during the Winter.

You can often find single Hawthorn trees in the middle of farmers field. This is because it was believed that Hawthorns were protected by the fairies, meaning if you cut one down the fairies may take their revenge on you!



Hornthorn.
flowers - white / come
out in spring
really strong
fruit - red berries



DOGROSE

Latin name	Rose Canina
Flower	White or pink 5 petaled flower
Fruit	Rose hip



Dog rose is a thorny, climbing plant. It uses its thorns to grasp onto other plants to help support its growth. It has toothed leaves which grow on alternate sides of the stem.

Dog Rose's flowers are white or pink and five petaled. It's fruit is called a Rosehip; which are orange or red and oval shaped berries. Each rosehip contains many hairy seeds.

It was rumoured that rosehips were used by the fairies to make themselves invisible. The tiny hairs on the rosehip seeds can be very itchy if you eat them or get them on your skin. Rosehips are a popular ingredient in skincare and contain lots of vitamin C.

ELDER

Latin name	Sambucus Nigra
Flower	Elderflower
Fruit	Elderberry



An Elder's leaves are dark green, which come in 5-7 paired leaflets, and the leaves have serrated edges. The flowers are on large flat umbels, they are white or cream coloured and have a beautiful fragrance. They can be seen from late May. The Elderberries can be found in August and are dark purple or black..

In old folklore it was believed that if the weather was stormy it meant that there was a witch somewhere stirring her cauldron with an elder twig.

In Denmark it was believed that the elder tree contained a spirit called the Elder Mother and that you should never take from the tree without asking her permission first!!

BLACK POPLAR

Latin name	Populus Nigra
Flower	Catkin
Fruit	White, cotton like seeds



Black poplars are a rare tree but can be found at the blue lagoon!

They have bright green heart shaped leaves. They flower in March and April producing Catkins. the male tree produces red catkins and the female produces green catkins which turn into fluffy white seeds..

It is said that the red catkins produced by the male poplar are devils fingers and its bad luck to pick them up!





Artist Kerry Lemon (www.kerrylemon.co.uk) was commissioned by MK City Council in 2024 to create a permanent piece of artwork to celebrate the new Redway extension between The Blue Lagoon and Newton Lees. She engaged local artist Ciara Callaghan to collaborate on a cross-generational project to celebrate and identify the local trees working with Lakeview Lodge Care Home and The Pavilion Youth Club. This handmade book by Ciara is a legacy created for and gifted to Lakeview to celebrate and commemorate our project together.



Interested in learning more about tree identification?

Websites

woodlandtrust.com

NHBS.com

Books

Breverton's Complete Herbal by Terry Breverton

Witch's Garden by Sandra Lawrence

The New Sylva by Gabriel Hemery and Sarah Simblet