

Hedgerow Trees & Shrubs

A series of ID guides to help you discover more of Leicestershire's wonderful wildlife

Hedges are not natural – they are man-made barriers which exploit the dense growth and often prickly nature of some of our native trees and shrubs. If left unmanaged, a hedge would soon turn into a row of trees! Yet hedges, particularly if large and thick, are very important wildlife habitats, providing food, cover and travel opportunities for many animal species. This guide focusses on the shrubs commonly found in Leicestershire hedges, which would become small trees if left to grow. See the Common Trees ID Guide for details of the larger trees often found growing in association with hedges.

When viewing online, simply click on the species name to find out more.



Hawthorn – *Crataegus monogyna*

ID: To 10m. Leaves small and deeply lobed. Prickly. White flowers and red berries with a single stone.

Where: Most commonly used hedge species.

Similar: [Midland Hawthorn](#) (less lobed, 2+ stones)



Blackthorn – *Prunus spinosa*

ID: to 4m. Small oval leaves. Spiny branches. White blossom appears before the leaves. Fruits are 'sloes'.

Where: Suckers readily, often widening the hedge.

Similar: [Plum](#) and [Cherry Plum](#) (not usually spiny)



Hazel – *Corylus avellana*

ID: to 6m. Multiple stems. Rounded leaves, shaply pointed. Male yellow catkins. Nuts in Autumn.

Where: Frequent in hedges, also in woods.

Similar: None.



Field Maple – *Acer campestre*

ID: Only native maple. Small, indented 'maple' leaves. Paired, winged seeds in line.

Where: Common in hedges and woods.

Similar: Sycamore (larger & less indented leaves)

Become a citizen scientist! If you can spot any of these species, why not submit your sighting at www.naturespot.org.uk and contribute to our scientific knowledge of local wildlife. Record data submitted by the public is vital to conservation. Simply register online then follow the guidance on the Submit Records page.

Other Leicestershire hedge species to check out:

[Dog Rose](#), [Buckthorn](#), [Beech](#), [Yew](#)



[Holly - *Ilex aquifolium*](#)

ID: Glossy, prickly leaves. Red berries on female plants, White blossom on male plants.

Where: Hedges, woodland.

Similar: None.



[Guelder Rose – *Viburnum opulus*](#)

ID: To 4m. 3-lobed leaves. Cream flowers in a circle of infertile larger flowers. Orange to red berries.

Where: Hedges, woods.

Similar: [Field Maple](#) (lacks 3 clear lobes).



[Dogwood - *Cornus sanguinea*](#)

ID: To 4m. Red stems. Leaves with 3-4 prominent veins. White flowers and black berries.

Where: Frequent in hedges.

Similar: Ornamental dogwoods are occasionally found.



[Wild Privet – *Ligustrum vulgare*](#)

ID: To 3m. Thin, elongate shiny leaves. White blossom and black glossy berries.

Where: Mainly in longer established hedges.

Similar: Garden Privet (fatter leaves)



[Elder – *Sambucus nigra*](#)

ID: To 10m. Paired leaflets. Corky bark. White, flat-topped flowers. Black berries.

Where: Hedges, scrub, woods.

Similar: None.



[Elm – *Ulmus sp.*](#)

ID: Rough leaves, usually with asymmetrical bases.

Where: Though larger trees are affected by Dutch Elm Disease, Elm thrives as a hedge plant and is common.

Similar: Elm species are hard to tell apart and also hybridise.

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Wildlife ID Guides at:
www.naturespot.org.uk/IDguides



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