

## BEECH (*Fagus sylvatica*)

This species was introduced into Ireland about 1650. Now it is a commonly planted forest broadleaf tree. It likes shade when young, but once established, beech resists exposure very well and is an invaluable shelter-tree in upland areas. In spring the leaves are a fresh green colour. Beech woods in autumn are orange, crimson and red-brown.

### TIMBER

The timber is strong with a smooth grain and valued for furniture and toy making.

### WILDLIFE

Beech 'mast' is a valuable food source for many small mammals such as squirrels and woodmice, and birds such as tits and chaffinch.



## LIME (*Tilia*)

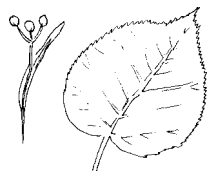
The lime is a hardy tree. They have been planted to give shade throughout man's history. The heart shaped leaves are bright green in spring. The sweet-smelling flowers are greenish-yellow and develop into the rounded hanging fruit resembling drumsticks.

### TIMBER

Lime wood is ideal for carving as it is soft and even-grained. The wood does not warp and is used for sounding boards and keys of pianos and organs. It also makes good drawing boards

### WILDLIFE

The nectar from the flowers of the lime is a valuable source of food for bees. The leaves are palatable to browsing animals such as deer and cattle. They are also popular with the caterpillars of many moths.



## OAK (*Quercus petraea*)

Oak is our most cherished native tree. For centuries the economy and history of Ireland were closely related to the primeval oak forests that were the main feature of the lowland vegetation from pre-historic times until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Gaelic word for oak is 'Doire' and 'Derry' means oak wood or grove. About 1,600 townland names in Ireland contain 'Derry' in one form or another.

### TIMBER

The deep brown heartwood of oak is durable and attractive. It is mainly used for decorative work in furniture making.

### WILDLIFE

Mature oaks have a rich fauna. They are outstandingly rich in the variety of insects (284 species) which feed on them. These insects in turn form a main source of food for breeding birds and nestlings. Large trees often support epiphytes and many mosses and lichens on their bark. Oak acorns provide food for jays, wood pigeons and woodmice.



## HORSE CHESTNUT (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

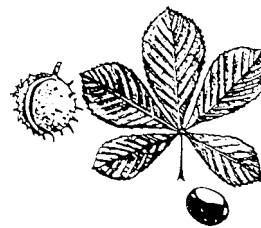
Horse chestnuts are often grown as ornamental trees. Their showy white 'candles' of flowers are borne on spikes. The nuts of 'conkers' which follow are shiny brown with spiky green cases. The tree grows rapidly, but requires plenty of space.

### TIMBER

The wood is pale cream or brown and it is very light and weak. As it is absorbent it is used for making trays in which to store fruit. It is also used for toys and paling.

### WILDLIFE

The insect-pollinated flowers provide nectar for bees and flies.



# Learmount Forest Trees



*We hope you enjoyed your time at Learmount Forest. Why not come back and follow the trail again - who knows what you might find next time!*

*Thank you for visiting.*



### JAPANESE LARCH (*Larix kaempferi*)

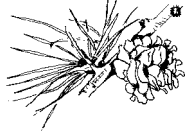
Larch is of the high mountain. It is one of the few conifers that shed their leaves in winter. Japanese larch is easy to establish, and thrives on well drained soil. With its light coloured foliage in summer and russet coloured twigs in autumn, the Japanese larch plays an invaluable role in enhancing many forests.

#### TIMBER

The Japanese larch has a reddish heartwood surrounded by the light coloured sapwood. As the branches remain on the tree longer it contains more knots. It is mostly used for fencing, gateposts and chipboard.

#### WILDLIFE

Predatory and roosting birds appreciate the good visibility from the canopy. Squirrels and seed-eating birds such as the siskin and redpoll can eat the seeds from the cones. Insects like the Larch Leaf Miner attracts tits. The dry ground conditions are ideal for badger setts.



### YEW (*Taxus baccata*)

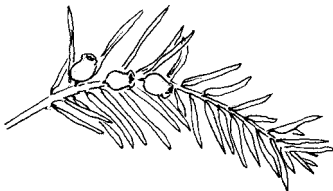
The bright red berries and the dark green needle leaves are both very poisonous to people and to many animals. The yew is resistant to almost every pest and disease of importance, and to stress caused by exposure.

#### TIMBER

The yew has extremely strong and durable wood. In the middle ages yew trees were prized for making longbows. Yew wood, when obtainable, is orange-brown in colour with an attractive grain, and takes a high polish.

#### WILDLIFE

The yew can resist pollution, but little will grow in its shade. The flesh of the scarlet berries is enjoyed by birds, but the seed is poisonous.



### ASH (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

The fast growing ash, with its ability to coppice, was a favourite tree with private landowners. In days gone by, its timber was valued next to oak and was in great demand for agricultural vehicles and implements. Today ash is still a feature of our countryside. Some farmers continue the old tradition of leaving ash standards in the hedges.

#### TIMBER

This white wood is the toughest and most elastic of any native timber. The toughest material is found at the butt whereas timber for stiffness and compression is found higher up. Ash is widely used for sports goods because of its elasticity and bending properties.

#### WILDLIFE

The ash casts very little shade on the ground and its leaf litter decomposes rapidly. Therefore the field layer under ash is often rich in herbs. Ash seeds or 'keys' are eaten by small mammals and birds. They form an important food for bullfinches in winter.



### SCOTS PINE (*Pinus sylvestris*)

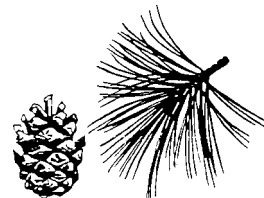
Scots pine can grow on heathland and rocky ground where few other trees can thrive, but it is at its best on sandy and gravel soils in the lowlands and in sheltered mountain areas in the drier parts of the country. It is strongly resistant to damage by frost, drought or wind and may be regarded as the hardiest of our native trees.

#### TIMBER

A good, general purpose soft wood, known under the trade name of red or yellow deal. It is valued for joinery, flooring, carpentry and general construction.

#### WILDLIFE

Red squirrels eat the seed which they extract from the woody cones.



### BIRCH (*Betula pubescens* and *Betula pendula*)

Both Downy and Silver birch are native trees. They are pioneers, quick to colonise open land. In spring the bud scales scatter like chaff, and the male catkins drop to the ground. Later on the tiny seeds float down by the million.

#### TIMBER

These native birch are valuable, not for their own timber, but because they protect frost-tender species and improve the soil.

#### WILDLIFE

In autumn the seeds are a main source of food for redpolls, siskins and tits. Birch also are outstandingly rich in the number of insects which feed on them.



### SYCAMORE (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

The sycamore did not reach Ireland until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a member of the maple family. It can produce heavy crops of winged seeds which are quick to colonise open spaces. It is often regarded as a weed. However it can withstand high winds and will flourish near the coast where few other broad-leaved trees can grow.

#### TIMBER

This strong and straight-grained timber has a uniform texture. In the past its clean white appearance made it popular for kitchen and dairy utensils. It is still used for brush backs, toys and the backs of violins. It is also important in furniture making.

#### WILDLIFE

Sycamore is host to only 15 species of insects. However the quantity of these insects, such as greenfly, provide good feeding for birds. It also provides shelter from extremes of temperature.

