

What Does It Look Like?



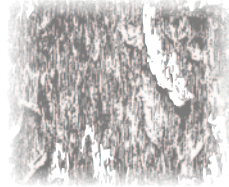
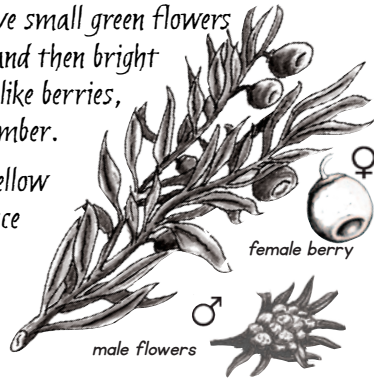
Look for the flat green leaves with sharp-looking points that emerge on either side of the sideshoots.

The leaves are dark green on the top and slightly yellow underneath. The ends of the branches are always green.

The trees are either male or female.

The female trees have small green flowers in March and April and then bright red fruits that look like berries, which ripen in September.

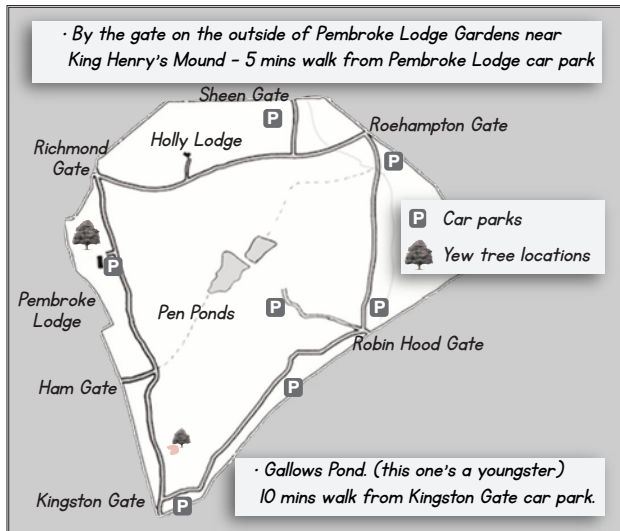
The male tree has yellow flowers which produce clouds of pollen in March and April but doesn't have the bright red fruit.



The trees themselves can grow up to 25 metres tall. The tree is often broad with a pointy top.

The bark is slightly flaky and can be grey, purple or red.

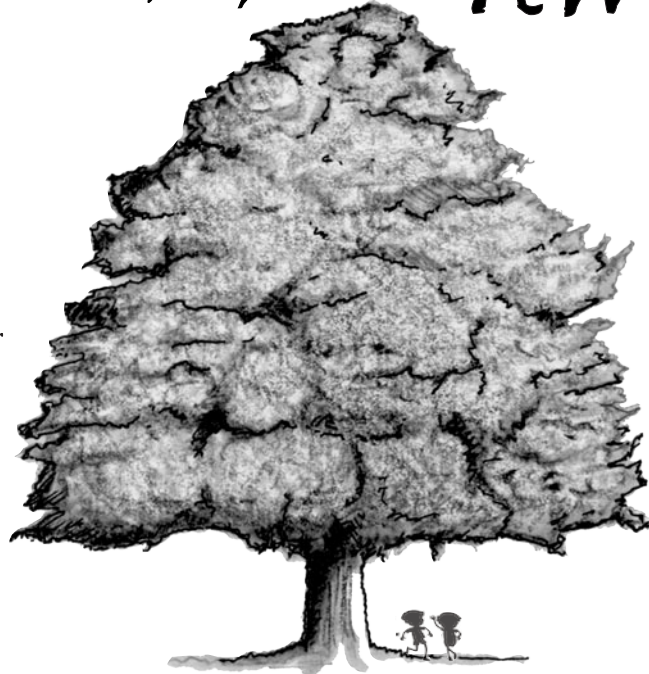
Where to Find Yew in the Park



Tree of the Month April

Dark, Mysterious Yew

upto 25 m



The evergreen yew is one of the longest-lived native species in Europe. Yews are often found in and around churchyards but were probably there before the churches were built.

Beware! You must remember that the leaves, seeds and bark of the yew are poisonous and can even be fatal!

You might get very ill if you touch any part of the tree... **So Don't!**



FRIENDS of RICHMOND PARK

The Tree of the Month is produced by the Friends of Richmond Park

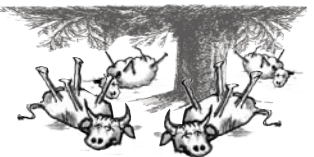
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Edited for younger readers and designed by Ken Edwards

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Folklore & Customs

People have always been wary of yews because they are poisonous to us as well as to cattle, horses, dogs and cats.



Norse and Celtic peoples however, believed yews protected us against witchcraft and death. Christians believed that yew poison could protect the souls of the dead. That could be why yews are often found in churchyards.



Regeneration?
Huh! I've been regenerated 12 times!

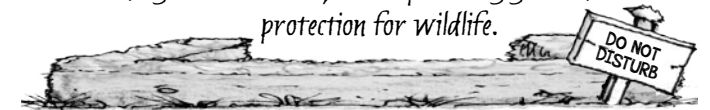
So, as well as being linked with death and doom, they are also thought of as symbols of regeneration and immortality.

In the past, people thought planting a yew tree or hedge along the boundary of their property would protect them from evil spirits. Cutting one down would have the opposite effect and result in bad luck for their whole family.

Good for Wildlife

Yew is not poisonous to birds and many woodland animals. The fruit is eaten by deer, badgers, squirrels and dormice.

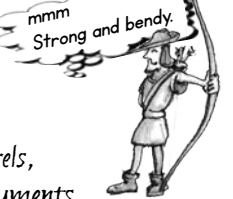
Yew hedges are incredibly dense providing good shelter and protection for wildlife.



What Can Yew Be Used For?

* Try saying that quickly 3 times!

Yew wood is very strong and tough and keeps its shape well after it's been bent.



It's also used for tool handles, wine barrels, expensive furniture and musical instruments.

Many gardeners like to use yews for hedging as they are long-lived and can be easily be shaped into unusual shapes.

Recently, scientists have discovered a chemical found in yew, known as taxol, that can be used in the treatment of cancer.

