

Hawthorn

Habitat Hero

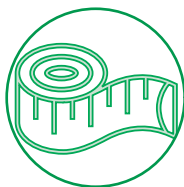


Common Name: Hawthorn/Whitethorn
Irish Name: Sceach gheal
Scientific Name: Crataegus monogyna

Seen in Ireland:

Flower: May – June

Fruit: July– November



Hawthorn leaves have toothed lobes and can grow up to 6-8cm long. The tree itself can reach a height of up to 10-18m.



Hawthorns are found all over Ireland and grow on all types of land. They are common in hedgerows and are also seen in woodlands or growing in fields by themselves.



They like a well-drained soil rich soil with lots of organic matter, which holds plenty of moisture in spring and summer, doesn't dry out or become waterlogged. However, they will grow in just about all soil types. •Photosynthesis is the process in which green plants use sunlight to make their own food.



The Hawthorn tree is deciduous, meaning it loses its leaves in winter and they grow back in spring. Hawthorn trees can live up to 700 years.

Hawthorn Life Cycle

In **Winter**, the Hawthorn bushes and trees try to save energy. They lose their leaves and stop growing altogether when the weather is cold.

In **Spring**, the Hawthorn tree begins to grow again and produce new leaves.

In **early Summer** (May) small clusters of white, and sometimes pink flowers appear. The flowers produce nectar which attracts insects.

The visiting insects accidentally move pollen between different Hawthorn trees' flowers as they feed on the nectar. This is called pollination.

Pollinated flowers can now turn into fruit (red berries), called 'haws'. Each fruit contains one seed.

The seeds are spread to new locations by the animals who eat them (and plant them by pooping!). Seeds will germinate in the soil in **Autumn**.



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Some more Facts:

- They have a lot of branches that are twisted and very thorny.
- Small white scented flowers begin to appear in May and grow in clusters all over the tree. This is why Hawthorn is sometimes called Whitethorn.
- These flowers then turn to fruits called 'Haws' in July which ripen to a rich red colour in autumn
- The tree can support up to 300 species, including bees, moths, small mammals, and birds which feed on its haws and nest in its dense branches.
- Traditionally in Ireland we use Hawthorn as hedging in farmland for our livestock (to keep cows in...).
- This tree also acts a good source of protection and cover for other young trees such as oak.
- In Irish folklore, having a Hawthorn tree on your land is seen as good luck.
- The Fairy trees: Fairies are said to be found where Hawthorn, Oak and Ash trees grow together.
- It has been said to be unlucky to cut down the tree, in particular if it is a lone tree. It is the stand-alone trees, most associated with fairies.

