



Hawthorn - Common (*crataegus monogyna*) & Midland (*crataegus laevigata*)



The best time to spot Hawthorn is in May when it is flower. However it is also easily seen in early spring when the leaves begin to open before those of any other trees in the wood.

Hawthorn is widely distributed throughout the wood especially in the northern section along Court Wood Grove. It mostly occurs as tangled bushes in the understory but there are a few taller specimens such as the one in Middle Gorse that is as tall as the trees that surround it. The trunk has a cracked rugged appearance, looking as though a number of trees have been twisted together (bottom centre 7/5/12). The twigs have slender thorns and the leaves are distinctively shaped, opening early in the spring before most other trees.

There are two species of Hawthorn in Selsdon Wood, both of which can be found along Court Wood Grove. The Common Hawthorn (below left) has a deeply lobed leaf (cut at least half way to the middle) while the leaf of the Midland Hawthorn is similar in overall shape but with very shallow lobes. Hybrids between the two are also found.



Both species have similar white (or occasionally pink - see overleaf 25/5/12) flowers, known as May Blossom, with the Midland flowering first in late April. The blossom of Common Hawthorn is sweet scented but that of Midland Hawthorn has an unpleasant odour of decaying flesh. This may be the origin of the old wives' tale that bringing Hawthorn blossom into the house will cause a death in the family.



The fruits are red berries, known as haws (below 27/8/12). The Common Hawthorn has a single stone while the Midland Hawthorn has two or three stones.



This Midland Hawthorn curving over the path is at the end of the Wend where it joins Steven's Walk (above left 3/5/12) and a Common Hawthorn at the top of Field 2 by the path (top right 16/5/12).

Take a walk in early spring (March/April) and look for the Hawthorns, which are the first bushes coming into leaf. A month later, spot the white blossom.

Can you tell the difference between the Midland and Common Hawthorns?

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to improve our wood



Hawthorn is common throughout the wood.
The map shows the locations of some of the specimens mentioned overleaf.

