

Lime - *tilia*



The Lime is most easily identified in summer by its distinctive-shaped leaf.

There are six Limes in Linden Glade (below left 11/11/11 and right 20/5/12). They are grouped around the bird pool and are believed to have been planted about 30 years ago. There is also a Large Leaved Lime in the eastern corner of Great Hill.



Lime has a straight tall trunk clad in grey bark marked with horizontal slashes. The trees are late to come into leaf (May) and also tend to be amongst the first to lose their leaves in autumn. The leaf is toothed and heart shaped with one lobe larger than the other and young leaves are the eponymous lime-green colour (bottom right 21/5/12).

There are three kinds of Lime in general cultivation in Britain, Large-leaved, Small-leaved and Common Lime which is a hybrid between the two others. A comparison of the leaves of the Lime in Great Hill (shown on the left) and those in Linden Glade is shown right (29/5/12). The Limes in Linden Glade are thus either Common or Small-leaved. A feature of the Common Lime is white hairs on the underside of young leaves around the base of the ribs - this can be seen on the Linden Glade trees (far right 20/5/12) which are thus probably Common Limes.



The yellowish-white flowers are borne after the leaves in clusters attached to an elongated bract. The bracts develop beneath the leaves but move round so that they are above them before the flowers open (left 11/7/12). The flowers are succeeded by small yellow fruits containing one or two seeds.



Small-leaved Lime trees were part of the ancient Wild Wood and were coppiced up to the Middle Ages to provide timber for building, furniture, carving, firewood and rope-making. Monks kept their hives beneath the trees for the rich pale honey and the flowers were used to produce herbal medicines and tea. In more modern times the wood has been used for guitars and wind instruments. When explorers brought back hemp for ropemaking the tree fell into decline, being replaced by the more productive hazel which abounds in Selsdon Wood today. One of our Limes has been pollarded in a gale and the resulting long stems must be typical of what was used for rope making.

Take a summer walk to Linden Glade or through the fields and look at the Lime trees.

Friends of Selsdon Wood

Working to improve our wood

