



Whitebeam - *sorbus aria*



The best time to spot Whitebeam is in late spring or early summer when the white leaves stand out against the green foliage of other trees.

There are half a dozen mature Whitebeam in Selsdon Woods with some additional young trees distributed throughout the wood, including some recently planted in the Jubilee Plantation. One of the most prominent specimens is to be found in the western border of the Great Hill (Field 3) behind the bench (below left 1/5/12). A second is higher up the same hedgerow beside the path that cuts through it. This is growing almost horizontally from within the wooded area towards the light of the open field.



Leaves are oval (below left) with the under surface having the eponymous white colour giving the opening buds the appearance of tulips or magnolia flowers (above right 3/5/12).



The Whitebeam has white flowers (above centre 28/5/13) followed by red berries but they do not flower every year, as those in Selsdon Wood did not bear either flowers or berries in 2012.

Two Whitebeam can be seen in the Gorses area on the south facing stretch of East Gorse and an unusual young tree can be found at the junction of Broad Walk and Addington Border where it seems to be clinging to a mature Oak. There is also a Swedish Whitebeam at the northern end of Middle Gorse. This has a leaf shaped like that of an oak (above right 21/5/12) and may be a garden escapee as this species is not a British native.

Take a walk through the fields in late spring or early summer and spot the Whitebeam when the leaves are at their whitest and the buds look like magnolia flowers.

