



Elm (Wych) - *ulmus glabra*



The best time to spot the Elm is in summer when it can be identified by the distinctive leaves.

There are four species of Elm in Britain with the Wych Elm being the only native species. The Elm is rare today due to the ravages of Dutch Elm Disease. The Wych Elm is less favoured by the beetle that spreads the disease and thus tends to be more robust but still usually succumbs to disease after achieving sexual maturity (30 years).



There is a mature Wych Elm beside the path to the west of the Jubilee plantation (above 2/6/12 - also blossom right 4/5/13 and flower/seed detail below left 4/5/13). There is another group at the end of Vincent Avenue near the LB Croydon log pile, one in Greenhill Way and one on the south side of the junction of Bluebell Grove and The Wend. None of these show signs of disease as yet.

The leaves are toothed, oval but asymmetrical and, distinctively, some of the leaves on young shoots have three or more lobes at the tip. They grow alternately, straight from the twig without any clear stalk and are strongly ribbed on the underside. Both surfaces of the leaf and the stems are rough to the touch. It is this texture and the large size that helps to distinguish the leaf of the Elm from that of the Hazel and Beech - see below right.



The trunk is straight with the bark roughly pitted. The green flowers are produced in bunches of blossom before the leaves open. They develop in late spring into a small oblong fruit, called a samara (above left 4/5/13), with a seed in the centre surrounded by a thin membrane that acts as a wing to distribute the seed. However, the Wych Elm does not produce flowers or fruit until it reaches the age of 30 years and even then often only fruits significantly every two or three years. Fruits have been spotted below the tree in Bluebell Grove.

Take a summer walk past the Jubilee Plantation and spot the Elm. Can you find the others?

