



## Hawthorn



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**Latin:** *Crataegus monogyna*

**Irish:** *Sceach gheal*

The hawthorn is a very common tree in Ireland. This deciduous small tree, which sheds its leaves in the autumn, is also native to most of Europe, North Africa and Western Asia.

It can grow as a small bushy tree, and is often used in agriculture to create hedging. It grows to both a height and width of about 6 metres.

**Common names:** The May, the Mayblossom, the Maythorn, the Mayflower, the Quickthorn, the Whitethorn, the Motherdie, the Quickset, the Quickthorn, and the Haw.

**Description:** Hawthorn has a greyish, brown bark with many cracks on it. Through these cracks, an orange layer beneath can be seen. Glossy green leaves grow on thorny branches. These are joined by five petal white flowers from May to June. When these flowers are pollinated, they become deep red edible fruit (pomes which look like berries) by September.

**Uses of fruit:** The fruit (known as haws), are not usually eaten fresh. They are commonly made into jelly and jam. They are also



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**Folk link:** In the Irish folk tradition, the hawthorn is often connected with fairies. Many people believed that their cows would yield more milk than usual if they put a hawthorn twig in their milking parlour.

**Ogham:** Ogham, the Celtic alphabet system, was based on trees. The Celts believed trees had different characteristics, emotions and magical or healing powers. The letters of this alphabet were linked to the names of trees.

The Ogham letter for the hawthorn tree was 'H' (huathe).