



Oak

Sessile Oak: Latin: *Quercus petraea*, **Irish:** *Dair Ghealach*
Common Oak: Latin: *Quercus robur*, **Irish:** *Dair Ghallda*



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Common Oak

The Common Oak and the Sessile Oak are two of Ireland's native oak species. Both of these species grow slowly. They are deciduous trees.

The oak tree is sometimes called the 'king of the forest'. This is because it can grow up to 40 metres tall and can live for more than 300 years.

Description: The leaves of both species are dark green with a wavy edge. Flowers grow from May to June. The leaves of the Common Oak grow very close to the branch and the acorns are attached by a small stem. The leaves of the Sessile Oak have a longer stem and the acorns grow directly on the branch.

One seed is protected inside the tough shell of the acorn. Acorn seeds are carried away by birds and other animals to different areas, and grow into new oak trees.



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Leaves of a Sessile Oak

Celtic link: The oak tree, like the hazel, was a symbol of knowledge to the Celts. They also believed that doors made of oak wood could keep out evil spirits.
Large oaks in Ireland: The largest Common Oak in Ireland is at the Farnham Estate, Farnham, Co. Cavan. It is 28 metres tall with a width of over 8 metres. The largest Sessile Oak in Ireland is growing at the Baronscourt Estate, Baronscourt, Co Tyrone. It is over 24 metres high with a width of over 8 metres.

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 oak tree was 'D' (duir).