

Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna

Plants · Deciduous shrub · in flower May, haws Sep–Dec



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A dense, thorny deciduous shrub or small tree with deeply lobed leaves, sprays of white — occasionally pink — blossom in May, and dark red haws in autumn. Hawthorn is the backbone of the region's hedgerows, and also grows as gnarled standalone trees on hill ground. Its flowering is so tied to the month that the tree, the blossom and the month share a name.

BEHAVIOUR

A managed hawthorn hedge is one of the richest habitats in the farmed landscape: dense thorny cover for nesting yellowhammers, whitethroats and dunnocks, blossom for insects, and a heavy autumn crop of haws for thrushes and winter migrants. The blossom's slightly unpleasant scent mimics decay and attracts the flies that pollinate it, which is behind the old superstition against bringing it indoors.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Roses (Rosaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 15 m, usually kept low in hedges
STATUS	Native; the dominant hedgerow shrub

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