

Wych Elm

Ulmus glabra

Plants · Deciduous tree · in flower Feb–Mar



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A broad, spreading deciduous tree with very large, rough-textured leaves that are strikingly asymmetrical at the base, one side reaching further down the stalk than the other. Wych elm flowers in late winter in tufts of red-purple, followed by papery winged seeds. It is the only elm certainly native to Britain, and Scotland retains more mature trees than most of England.

BEHAVIOUR

Dutch elm disease, spread by bark beetles, destroyed the great majority of Britain's elms from the 1970s onwards. Wych elm has fared somewhat better in the north and west, where cooler summers slow the beetle, so mature trees still stand around Dumfries. Unlike English elm it does not sucker, reproducing from seed instead, which matters for how a population recovers.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Elms (Ulmaceae)
HEIGHT	Up to 30 m
STATUS	Native; reduced by Dutch elm disease, but persisting in Scotland

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