

## Quercus robur

English Oak / Pedunculate Oak

### Deepdale Jubilee Tree June 2012



*Quercus robur leaves and acorn*

To celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, what better tree to choose than the English Oak, a classic national emblem.

Quercus robur is commonly seen throughout British woodlands, parks and gardens and is native to Europe and parts of Northern Africa. It is a large, deciduous tree with a broad crown of strong branches.

Flowering occurs mid spring in the form of catkins and the acorns following this are borne on long stems, called peduncles, ripening in the autumn. The most recognisable feature of English oak has to be its leaves. They have 4-5 deep, smooth edged lobes on either side with two smaller ones where it joins the stalk.

Quercus robur naturally live for many centuries. Some of the oldest trees are ones that have been pollarded or coppiced, a method which seems to extend their life. The trees are also very important to nature as they support the largest number of different life forms than any other British tree. Over 300 lichens and over 400 insect species live on or within the oak tree itself and the insects and acorns then provide a valuable food source for birds and small mammals.



### Plant Profile

**Name:** Quercus robur

**Common Name:** English Oak or Pedunculate Oak

**Family:** Fagaceae

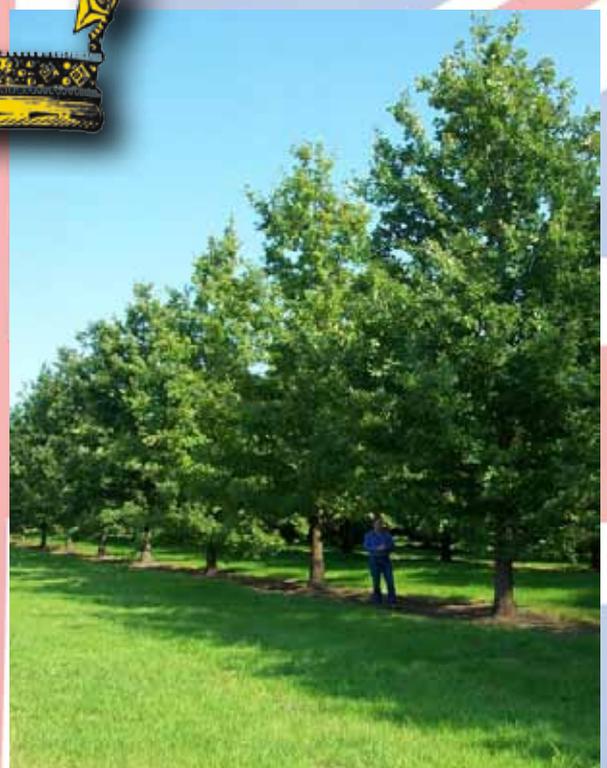
**Height:** 20-30m

**Demands:** Will tolerate a wide range of soils but not extremes of wet or dry

**Foliage:** Deeply lobed green leaves

**Fruit:** Acorns ripen in the Autumn

*Quercus robur is available from Deepdale Trees as a standard or feathered tree.*



*Field grown specimens, 12m in height*

### FAMOUS OAKS

**The Royal Oak** is Possibly the most renowned Oak in England sited at Boscobel House. In 1651, during the English Civil war, King Charles II hid from the Roundheads in an Oak tree to escape capture. He later told Samuel Pepys that a Parliamentary soldier had walked right underneath. This story is now celebrated on 29th May, known as Royal Oak Day and traditionally, oak leaves are worn to commemorate it. The tree that stands today is not the original tree but an offspring grown from an acorn.

**The Bowthorpe Oak**, Lincolnshire is thought to be the oldest Oak in the UK, estimated at over 1,000 years. It also has the greatest girth at 42 feet / 12.8m. Its hollow trunk was once fitted with a door and is thought to once have had nearly 40 people stood inside.

**The Major Oak**. Named after Major Hyman Rooke who wrote about it in 1790, bringing it to the publics attention. Situated in Sherwood Forest with a 35ft girth and a 92ft spread, it is rumoured to have associations with Robin Hood. Now classified as an ancient monument, conservation measures are in place with steel rods propping up the branches and a fence around to prevent damage by tourists.

**The Majesty Oak** in Fredville Park, Kent has the largest girth of a maiden tree (not pollarded) at 12.2m. It has a 9m trunk and an overall height of 18m



Autumn colouring



A large Oak on the move



35-40-45cm girth feathered plant



9-10m Quercus robur field grown multistem



20-25cm girth standard

Quercus robur ready for dispatch



## USES FOR OAK

For as long as there have been iron tools to cut it down, oak has been a valuable timber source. Ship building and construction meant that thousands of oaks were felled across the country. Nowadays it is mostly used for interior features and furniture making.

Uses for other parts of the tree include bark for tanning leather, acorns for feeding swine and smaller branches for firewood and charcoal making

## OAK SYMBOLISM

The Oak tree has always been a symbol of strength and power. The Romans believed that it attracted lightning . Socrates believed it had divine powers. Druids burnt Oak boughs in a sacred ceremony on the summer solstice and ritually cut the mistletoe from them on the winter solstice.

Nowadays, it is the emblem of the National trust, Conservative Party, The Royal Oak Foundation and other organisations. The leaves are an important part of the German army regalia and in the United States Armed Forces, they symbolize rank.

