



September 2012

The leaves and fruit of Tilia cordata

Studies into peat preserved pollen grains have proven that *Tilia cordata* is one of our countries oldest, native trees. Its range spreads across south and midland Britain, large parts of Europe and western Asia. During the 17th and 18th centuries, it was widely planted in avenues and landscapes giving us many magnificent specimens which we still enjoy today.

Tilia cordata is a large tree and has a broad, oval crown. Its leaves are heart-shaped with a serrated edge, dark green on top and bluish-green on the underside. They are hairless apart from the identifying tuft of brown hairs on the leaf vein axil.

In summer, small, cream-white flowers are borne in clusters. They have a strong, sweet scent and are highly attractive to bees and insects.

The hermaphrodite flowers develop into hanging groups of small, round fruits. The flesh coating, downy on the exterior and becoming smooth as it ripens, protects the seed concealed within. Above the cluster is a single 'wing' which aids the seeds distribution by wind.

As with most Limes, it is a great tree for pleaching, pollarding or coppicing.

Plant Profile

Name: *Tilia cordata* & *Tilia cordata* Greenspire

Common Name: Small leaved Lime

Family: Tiliaceae

Height: *Tilia cordata* approx. 20m+
Tilia c. Greenspire approx. 15m+

Demands: .Ideal on a moist, loam, neutral - alkaline soil though is tolerant of many conditions. Very good in urban environments

Foliage: Dark green heart shaped leaves, yellow in autumn.

Flowers: Clusters of small, creamy flowers.

Fruit: Small, round, nut like fruits

Bark: Grey and smooth becoming fissured with age. Young growth is reddish brown

Tilia cordata Greenspire

A cultivar of *Tilia cordata* 'Euclid', *Tilia cordata* Greenspire was bred in Boston and introduced in the 1960's. A consistently uniform habit in comparison to *Tilia cordata* makes it a popular choice nowadays for urban settings and street planting.



Tilia cordata Greenspire 50-60-70cm girth standards

Deepdale

Tilia cordata is the national tree for the Czech and Slovak republics.



20-25cm girth pleached trees



Autumn colour



50-60cm girth standards



Field grown specimens



18-20-25cm girth standards



Underside of a *Tilia cordata* leaf

EVERY PART IS USEFUL!

Lime was widely grown in woods and coppiced to ensure a constant supply. Traditionally it has had the following uses:

Flowers are still used medicinally to make a tea. They are considered to have anti-inflammatory properties.

Young leaves can be eaten as a salad leaf or used for cattle food.

Fruit has also been eaten historically and tastes similar to cocoa when ground into a paste. If the fruits are overripe though, they can have a narcotic effect so don't take this as our advice for a chocolate substitute!

The fibrous layer under the bark is called 'bast' and has been used to make rope and shoes.

The wood has a tight grain and does not splinter easily making it ideal for cups, bowls, wood carving and Morris dancing sticks!



Tilia cordata bark