

STWN/EACN Lime day 8/8/26

Tilia

- 30 species of limes native to Asia, North America and Europe
- In the subfamily of Tilioideae, par of the Malvaceae family which includes cacao, cotton, durian and okra (among 4221 other species)
- Tolerant of a wide range of soil types, urban pollution, heavy pruning, cyclical pollarding and pleaching.
- Relatively pest and disease free
- Honeydew from feeding aphids can deter some people from planting especially in urban environments
- Limes form ectomycorrhizas (symbiotic relationships between certain plants and fungi) and associated fungi in or near a site may support colonisation
- Regeneration is more readily achieved by layering and young plants can be propagated from cuttings.

Tilia cordata

Once a dominant forest species it declined after 3000 BC largely due to human activity. It is a good soil improver mainly due to its deep rooting allowing the tree to access nutrients. The honeydew deposited by aphids increases biological activity around the tree although can deter planting. Excellent for furniture and instrument making, many pulpits are carved from lime.

Other species commonly found in UK include Tilia Europea (a naturally occurring hybrid between T cordata and T platyphyllos) and the native T platyphyllos which is less prone to aphid infestation so is planted more commonly in urban situations.

Pests and diseases

Trees can suffer root killing and bleeding cankers caused by *Phytophthoras*. *Verticilium* wilt is infrequent, but can be fatal.

Identification

Due to high variability within species but also on individual trees, **it is important to check leaves, flowers and fruits on well-lit flowering shoots.**

	T cordata	T europea	T platyphyllos
Twigs	Hairless	+/- Hairless	Very Hairless
Leaves	3-6cm long, tufts of orange hair on underside	6-9cm long, generally hairless underside except for a few whitish forked hairs	6-12cm long, hairy underside
Buds	3-6mm long, 2 visible scales	4-10mm long, 3 visible scales	4-10mm long, 3 visible scales

Flowers	5-15 per cluster, cluster usually erect	5-10 per cluster, pendent	3-5 per cluster, pendent
Fruits	Faint/absent ribs/ ridges, densely hairy	Slight, woody and hard	Prominent ribs ridges, thick-skinned

Adapted from *Trees of Britain and Ireland* by Jon Stokes (2025)