

# Evergreen Oak

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Quercus ilex*

**AKA:** Holm Oak, Mediterranean Oak, Derwen fythwyrdd (Welsh)

**Native to:** Southern Europe

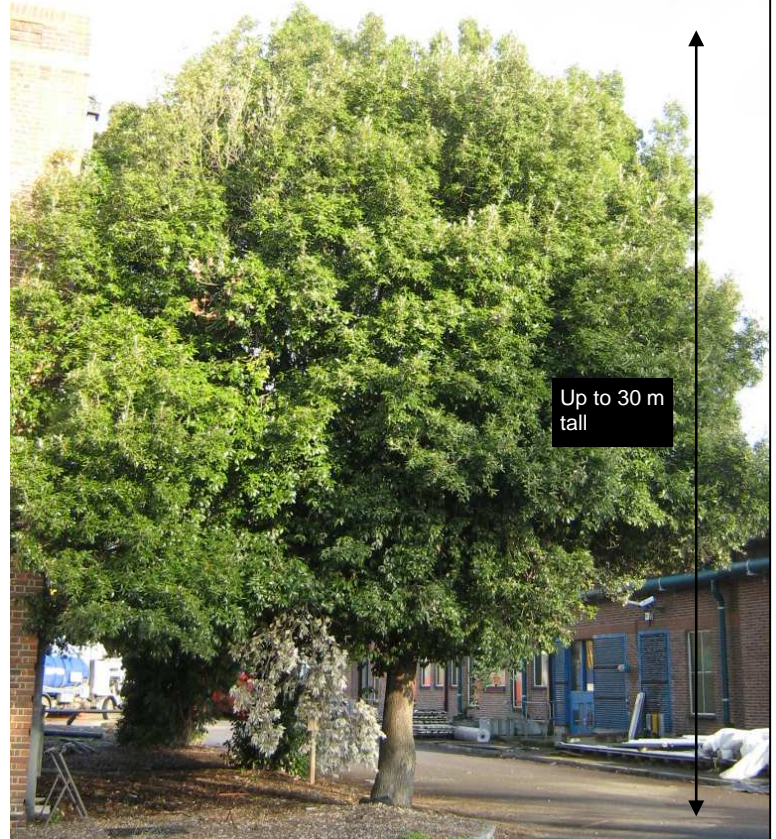
**Habitat:** Mild, coastal areas and urban roadsides

A distinctive type of oak, the mature leaves of which are retained over the winter and are not lobed like other oaks.

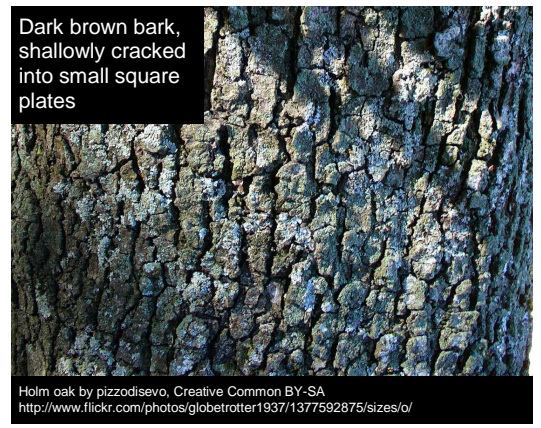
The leaves are dark and shiny on the upper surface, slightly downy on the lower surface, and when young can be toothed and slightly spiny like a holly leaf. The acorn is light green in colour with up to two-thirds enclosed in the scaly cup.

First brought to the UK over 400 years ago, it was widely planted during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was first recorded in the wild in 1862. It has become an aggressive coloniser in parts of southern England, replacing native vegetation.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features



# Identification throughout the year

An evergreen species, so can be identified by its leaves throughout the year. Flowers in late June and fruits ripen in October.

# Similar Species

**Holly**  
Native  
(*Ilex aquifolium*)

Leaves more glossy and usually strongly spined, with a more 3 dimensional shape (point upwards and downwards)

Leaves can be variable, with few or no spines

Distinctive smooth bark of holly

Bright red holly berries

Holly berries by John Choffee, Creative Commons BY-SA  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/choffee/284834838/sizes/l/>

Leaves of young plants with serrated edges which look like weak spines

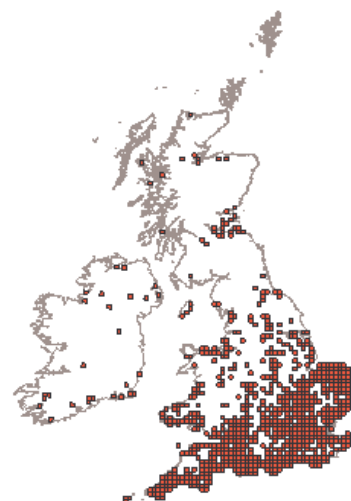
**Evergreen Oak**  
Non-native  
(*Quercus ilex*)  
For comparison

No berries produced

# Distribution

Evergreen Oak is widespread over lowland Britain, especially in south-east England and coastal sites.

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



Holly with characteristic spiny leaves

Evergreen oak is distinctive and would not be confused with native oaks due to its leaf-shape and evergreen habit.

### References and further reading:

Johnson, O and More, D (2004) "*Collins Tree Guide*". HarperCollins

Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "*New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*". Oxford University Press

Stace, C (1999) "*Field Flora of the British Isles*". Cambridge University Press