

## 10 Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Sycamore is a broadleaf tree that can grow to 35m and live for 400 years. The bark is dark pink-grey, and smooth when young, but becomes cracked and develops small plates with age. Twigs are pink-brown and hairless.

### Did you know?

Sycamore is native to central, eastern and southern Europe. It is thought to have been introduced to the UK either by the Romans or in the Tudor era around the 1500s. More widespread planting occurred in the 1700s and the earliest reports of the species naturalising in the UK date from the mid-1800s.

### Value to wildlife.

Sycamore is attractive to aphids and therefore a variety of their predators, such as ladybirds, hoverflies and birds. The leaves are eaten by caterpillars of a number of moths. The flowers provide a good source of pollen and nectar for bees and other insects, and the seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals.

### Mythology and symbolism.

In Wales, sycamore trees were used in the traditional craft of making 'love spoons', decoratively carved wooden spoons given as a romantic gesture. In some parts of the UK, the winged seeds are known as 'helicopters' and used in flying competitions and model-making by children.

### Uses of Sycamore.

Sycamore timber is hard and strong, pale cream and with a fine grain, and is excellent for carving. It is used to make furniture and kitchenware, such as ladles and wooden spoons as the wood does not taint or stain the food.

Mature trees are extremely tolerant of wind, so are often planted in coastal and exposed areas as a wind break. They are also tolerant of pollution and are therefore ideal street trees.



Thank you to Ashby Castle for allowing access to the grounds for the photo, why not visit and see the array of other lovely trees in the grounds!