

# What's that plant?

## *Alder*



A tree which loves wet places. It grows along the top of the lock wall and along the river banks. Has little round cone-like fruits. Can 'fix' nitrogen from the air in the strange nodules on its roots.

## *Black poplar*



The tallest tree near the pub is a hybrid black poplar. The native black poplar is very rare. Poplars grow well (and fast) in wet places like this. They are closely related to willows.

## *Osier (willow)*



A small tree or shrub which loves wet places. Planted and harvested for its long straight flexible twigs which are used to make baskets. Lots of different caterpillars eat osier leaves.

## *White willow*



Loves wet places. Has silvery grey leaves, white beneath. (Shorter than crack willow leaves). Twigs of white willow are used to weave baskets. There used to be many willow trees here, grown as a crop and regularly harvested.

## *Crack willow*



Loves wet places. Find the big split/fallen crack willows in the nature area at the Lock. These used to be pollarded (cut off at head height and allowed to grow again). The name comes from the sharp noise the twigs make when (very easily) snapped off.

## *Elder*



A common bush or small tree. Bark creamy grey, criss-crossed with corky ridges. Flat white plates of flowers make delicious elderflower 'champagne'. The twigs are full of pith so they can be hollowed out to make tubes.

## *Field maple*



Wonderful yellow leaves in autumn. Slender, brown straight twigs which grow a corky bark as they get a bit older. Large winged seeds twiddle well as they fall if you throw them in the air as 'helicopters'. Often grows (as here) in hedges.

## *Hawthorn*



Very common in hedges. Red berries are a favourite autumn/winter food of birds. Hard timber makes good tool handles, mill-wheel teeth and the ribs of small boats. Masses of ancient beliefs: for example - thought unlucky to bring the flowers into a house.

## *Ash*



Pale grey bark with a fine pattern of ridges and cracks. One of the last trees to get leaves in May. Bunches of seeds stay on bare twigs. The big ash in the pub garden has been coppiced in the past (cut down at the base and allowed to grow up again).

## *Hop*



Not a tree but a climbing plant which sends up new shoots every spring. Can grow up to 50 cm in a week! The dried flowers are used in beer-making to add taste and help preserve it. Find it not far from the 24 hour mooring sign.

## *Spindle*



This slender twiggy shrub has (very poisonous) bright pink berries with orange seeds inside. Grows in the hedge between the footpath and the car park. Spindle wood was traditionally used to make spindles for spinning wool.