

**BEECH** *Fagus sylvatica*

The leaf of a beech.

Beech was favoured as a charcoal wood for the glass industry, as it burned at a high temperature.

Beech chair legs were turned by itinerant wood turners in the beech woods of Buckinghamshire, known as “bodgers”, albeit a highly skilled task.

Fallen beech does not last long on the ground; but the black lines of “spalted” beech, the boundary between a fungally infected area and another, are prized by wood turners.

On the boundary between Sheepwalk and Sandhurst Copse I have an enormous five stemmed beech. It is like a cathedral when the leaves are light green in the Spring, and golden in the autumn.

Beech seedlings first have two lobed leaves and the second leaves have the distinctive form of beech.



The seeds are triangular and typically two in the hard four sided shell covered in soft spines.

Seed production is very variable from year to year; but often there is a “mast” year with exceptional quantity of seed. Beech seed is very fickle and difficult to germinate. All the planting in Sandhurst Copse & Sheepwalk is from transplanted self-sown seedlings.

