

# Sycamore



Sycamore trees (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) make handsome shade trees for large landscapes. The most striking feature is the bark that has a camouflage pattern comprised of grey-brown outer bark that peels off in patches to reveal the light grey or white wood beneath. Older trees often have solid, light grey trunks.

The seed of a Sycamore tree is extremely fertile, hence why Sycamore has spread quickly across the UK and colonised many woodlands to the detriment of native species.

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## Sycamore is a very common native tree in Europe.

The wood of sycamore is very hard and strong, and can be worked well to a very smooth finish. It is good for furniture making and fine joinery, and it is also used by wood-turners and wood-carvers for bowls, platters, and spoons.

It does not taint food, or stain, and can be scrubbed but remains smooth, so it is valued for kitchen-ware.



## Workability

- Works well with machine tools
- Glues and Finishes well
- A pre-conditioner, gel stain, or toner may be necessary to get an even colour.
- It has good bending qualities

## Common Uses

- Kitchenware
- Panelling and Moulding
- Toys
- Butchers Block, Fruit Crates
- Turned Objects

## Mythology And Symbolism

**Sycamore does not appear to have had many mystical connections in Britain. In Montgomeryshire there is a belief that Sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stops them from spoiling the milk.**

Sycamore trees have a long history in folklore dating back to Egyptian times where the Holy Sycamore is said to connect the worlds between the dead and the living.

In Wales, Sycamore trees were used in the traditional craft of making 'love spoons', decoratively carved wooden spoons given as a romantic gesture.

## The Tree

Sycamore grows to a height of 30m or more and a diameter of 1.5m, seeds are plump, and carry wings that are narrow at the base, broader farther out. The two winged seeds are set at a sharp angle towards each other. When they fall, they usually do so as a pair, and drift down to earth spinning round like the blades of a helicopter. They sprout next spring, sending out a pair of long strap-shaped seed-leaves.

Sycamore trees grow in almost any soil, but they prefer deep, rich soil that is moist but well-drained.

Sycamore growth rings are indistinct. Although the timber is usually straight-grained, some trees can have marked grain patterns, such as fiddle-back or bird's eye figure, which are highly prized.

 TREE PARTS PDF

## Drying

While sycamore dries rapidly with little distortion or splitting, it is extremely prone to discolouration, due not only to fungal attack but also to a chemical or enzymatic process which leaves marks under the stickers used to separate boards – so-called sticker-stain

## Strength

It is resistant to splitting due to the interlocked grain. Sycamore has high strength properties similar to oak.

## Working Qualities

Good Sycamore – The wood glues well and stains to an excellent finish. It has moderate shrinkage and little movement when in use, its ease of working and machining according to the growth characteristics and dried condition; The wood is classified as moderate in weight, hardness, stiffness and shock resistance. It turns well on lathe. It has good bending qualities.

**Durability** : Not durable

**Treatability** : Easy

**Moisture Movement** : Medium

**Density (mean, Kg/m3)** : 630

**Price** : Expensive

**Uses** : Joinery – Interior

**Colours** : White / Cream