Evergreen Oak

Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Quercus ilex*

**AKA:** Holm Oak, Mediterranean Oak, Derwen fythyrdd (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 18th 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

- **Upperside of leaf:** glossy and dark green
- **Underside of leaf:** white and cottony
- **Acorn:**
- **Dark brown bark:** shallowly cracked into small square plates
- **Young leaves:** serrated with slightly spiny edges

* Holm Oak Acorns 2 by tree-species, Creative Common BY
  http://www.flickr.com/photos/22327649@N03/2244960380/sizes/l/

* Holm Oak by pizzodisevo, Creative Common BY-SA
  http://www.flickr.com/photos/globetrotter1937/13775292875/sizes/o/
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

Holly with characteristic spiny leaves

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/

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

For comparison

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

No berries produced

References and further reading:

Photos from: John Choffee, Kevin Doidge, Max Wade, pizzodisevo, tree-species

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