

False-acacia

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Robinia pseudoacacia*

AKA: Black Locust, Silver Chain, White Laburnum

Native to: North America

Habitat: Sunny positions. Frequently in urban areas on roads, railway lines and wasteland

A deciduous tree with fragrant flowers and attractive foliage. Even with-out its characteristic leaves and flowers, the fissured bark and the sharp spines on the leaf stalks make this deciduous tree easy to recognise. The variety Fresia has yellow-green leaves.

Brought to Europe in the 17th century as an ornamental and a source of timber. Known from the wild in the GB since 1888. Found commonly in English towns and cities where it was probably planted; spreads by suckering, less so by seed. Negative impacts include shading out native sun-loving species and damage to pavements and other structures through growth of suckers. Branches readily break off due to their tendency to rot and can be a health and safety risk.

It is included on the amber list for potential invasive species for Ireland and Northern Ireland, as such it may have an impact on the conservation goals of a site, however due to the lack of data their impact on conservation goals remains uncertain.



Key ID Features

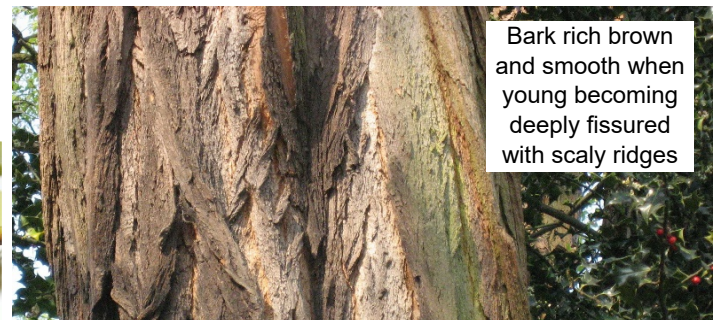
Leaflets arranged in pairs with a terminal leaflet



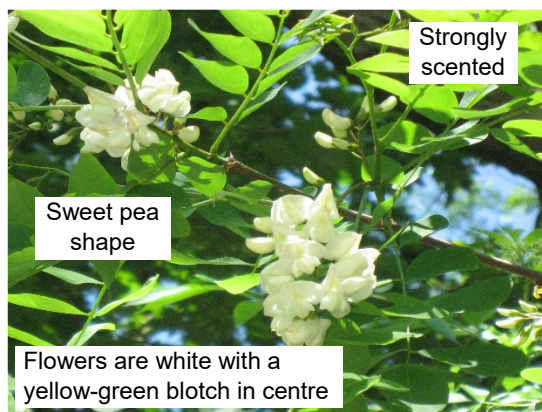
Bright green to yellow-green

Elliptical leaves

Leaf stalk often with pronounced spines at the base



Bark rich brown and smooth when young becoming deeply fissured with scaly ridges

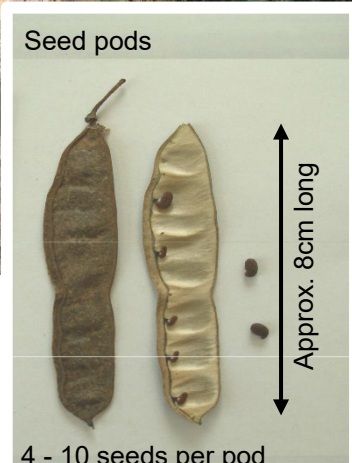


Strongly scented

Sweet pea shape

Flowers are white with a yellow-green blotch in centre

Seed pods



Approx. 8cm long

4 - 10 seeds per pod

Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Identification throughout the year

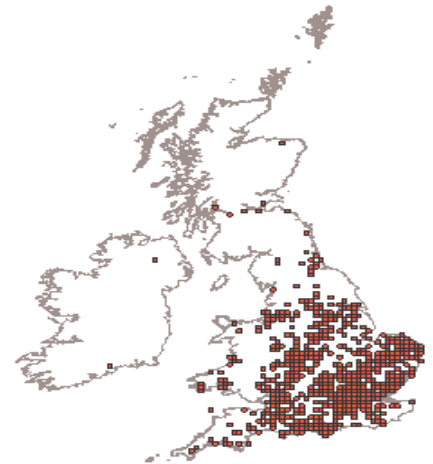
Most easily identified when in leaf, but can be distinguished in the winter after leaves have fallen by the characteristic trunk / bark, remains of seed pods on tree or ground and spines at the end of leaf stalk.

Winter characteristics



Distribution

Rare in Northern Ireland. Very common in urban areas in southern England on sandy soil, less on heavier soil.



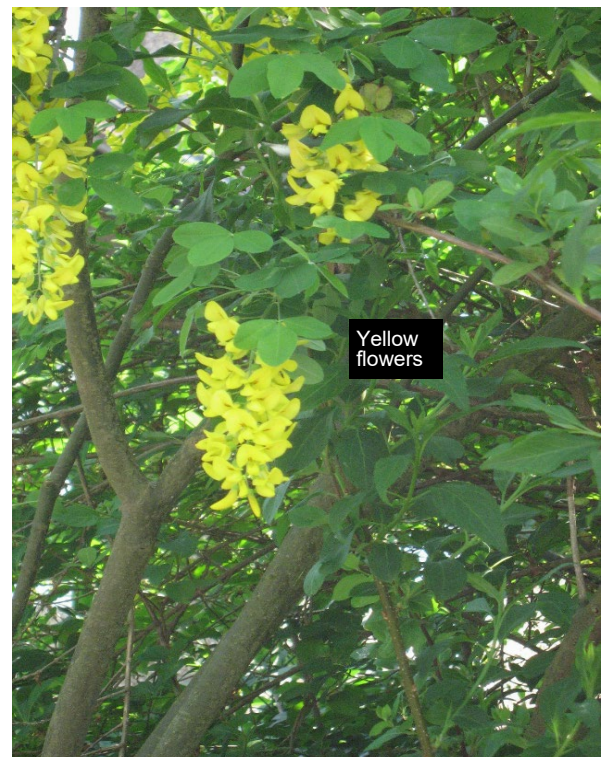
Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution

Similar Species

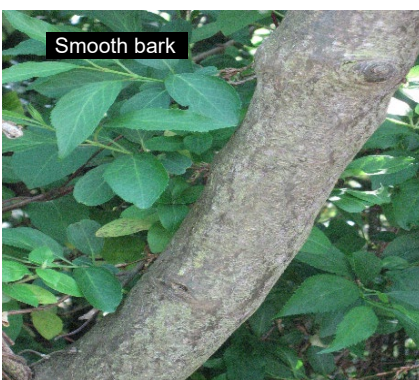
Laburnum
Non-native
(*Laburnum anagyroides*)



Smaller tree (up to 7m)



Yellow flowers



Smooth bark



Leaflets have a pointed tip and a downy underside

Leaves are composed of three leaflets

References and further reading:

Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) "The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora" A & C Black, London
Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora". Oxford University Press
Stace, C (1999) "Field Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press
Photos from: Olaf Booy, Dave Hanson, Max Wade

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Adapted for Northern Ireland
Environment Agency 2020