

CELEBRATE NATIONAL TREE WEEK  
8<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2026



OPW

There are 52 acres of parkland surrounding Kilkenny Castle and they are full of trees! They are a mix of native and non-native trees some of which were planted by the Butler family over the years. All of the trees provide food and shelter for the varied wildlife in the park. Trees are so important to all living things and for keeping the planet healthy. They absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, they purify the air we breathe and keep our water sources clean. Remember the trees look very different during the different seasons, so come back again and again to have a look at them and enjoy their beauty!!

**Find these trees in Kilkenny Castle Park**

**The Copper Beech** (in front of Castle)

This tree is about 50 years old but they can live for up to 300 years! A mature tree can grow up to 40m in height. Beech trees are not native to Ireland but were introduced here in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In winter you can identify the tree by looking for its sharply pointed buds on the branch. It is often used as hedging and if it's clipped it keeps its leaves, providing winter shelter for birds. The leaves are eaten by caterpillars and the seeds eaten by squirrels and mice.



**Holm or Evergreen Oak** (near outdoor café)

This tree is over 100 years old and mature trees can grow up to 20m in height. This type of oak is native to the Mediterranean and was introduced to Ireland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike native oak (sessile and pedunculate), it keeps its leaves in winter making it an evergreen which provides year round shelter for birds. In ancient Greece it was believed its leaves could predict the future and the Romans used its wood for making cartwheels because of its strength.



**Scots Pine** (opposite entrance Children's playground)

The Scots Pine is a native coniferous tree and it can live for up to 300 years. Tree stumps have been found in the bog dating back 7,000 years. The seeds of this tree are loved by the native red squirrel. Scots Pine was often used as a Yuletide log and symbolised hope for the coming seasons. Our tree is 70 or 80 years old and is home to a family of blue tits.





**Ginkgo biloba leaves**

**Ginkgo Bilboa Tree** (past Scots Pine, almost opposite the bench)

This amazing tree is known as a living fossil. These trees lived on the earth over 250 million years ago, so they existed at the same time as dinosaurs and even outlived them! Ginkgo trees can live to be 1000 years old. It has fan shaped leaves and only produces fruit when it is at least 20 to 30 years old, however the fruit is known to be very smelly! Look for the leaves on the ground.



**Holly** (along the path to the pond)

Holly is native to Ireland and is an evergreen. The year round foliage provides excellent protection for birds and the fallen leaf litter can be used by hedgehogs for winter hibernation. Both the male and female trees have flowers in summer but only the female produces red berries in winter. The leaves are spiky lower down on the tree to protect them from being eaten by animals but are often smoother at the top of the tree.

**Willow** (beside the pond)

Willow is native to Ireland and there are a number of varieties found here. They all grow on damp soil and produce catkins on their branches. Catkins on willow are soft, furry clusters of flowers. The trees support a variety of insects and provide food for birds like the willow warbler. One type of willow called osiers produces flexible long shoots with long leaves. These are used for weaving baskets and as biomass, a renewable energy source. In the past willow was used as a medicine to help cure toothache!



For more information check out.....

[www.nationaltreeweek.ie](http://www.nationaltreeweek.ie)

[www.treecouncil.ie](http://www.treecouncil.ie)