

# Sorbus aria

## Whitebeam



*Sorbus aria* (common whitebeam) is a medium-sized, deciduous tree approximately ten to fifteen metres tall and six metres wide, with a beautiful, round crown shape. In the wild, both multi-stem large shrubs and standard trees occur. The common whitebeam is found throughout most of Europe and North Africa in open forests, forest edges and on rocky slopes. It is found growing with *Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus petraea* and *Tilia cordata*. The common whitebeam was first described in 1763 by Heinrich Johann Nepomuk von Crantz, a botanist and doctor from Vienna.

The leaves of the common whitebeam are elongated, with jagged edges and have striking veins on each leaf. Most noticeable is that they are covered with white, fuzzy hairs, making this tree stand out from a distance with its silvery foliage. The leaves emerge vertically from the buds so it looks like it is in bloom. Clusters of white flowers appear in May however and have a characteristic musty smell. The red, round apple-shaped berries are covered with lenticels. They ripen in September and October and provide food for birds and small mammals. The foliage changes to yellow in autumn. The bark of *Sorbus aria* is grey and smooth in younger plants and develops vertical black grooves in older trees. The young shoots are olive green to yellow-brown or red-brown and have hairy buds.

*Sorbus aria* is suitable for medium-sized and large gardens and parks. It can also be planted as an avenue tree. The common whitebeam stands out in all seasons. It can be planted on any soil provided it has good drainage as *Sorbus aria* is extremely sensitive to soil compaction. However, it prefers neutral, moist and fertile loamy soils. Established trees are drought tolerant and can withstand very dry periods because of their deep roots.

### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, climate trees | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

### USE

**Location:** street, avenue, park, central reservation, in containers, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones, countryside, ecological zone, coastal area | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed | **Planting concepts:** Climate planting, Eco planting, Landscape planting, urban planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** rounded, egg-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 10 - 15 m | **Width:** 4 - 6 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5A - 8B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** tolerant to wind, slightly tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies, birds, small mammals, nectar value 3, pollen value 3 | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness, tolerates air pollution, tolerates heat

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** umbels, corymbose, striking, flower-scented | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** May - June | **Leaf colour:** silvery white emerging leaves, dark green, silver, grey felty, underside felty white | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovate, ovoid, big, wide, underside hairy, dentate | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** striking, berry | **Fruit colour:** orange-red | **Bark colour:** grey | **Bark:** furrowed, smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** yellow-brown, olive green | **Twigs:** hairy | **Root system:** deep, tap root