

# False-acacia

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Robinia pseudoacacia*  
**AKA:** Black Locust, Silver Chain, White Laburnum, Fflug-acesia (Welsh)  
**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 without 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 UK since 1888. Found commonly in 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.

False-acacia is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to Scotland only. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

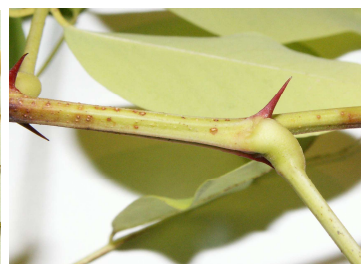
Leaflets arranged in pairs with a terminal leaflet



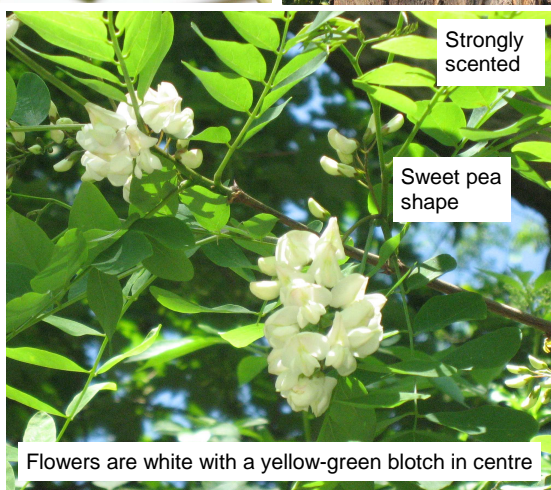
Bright green to yellow-green

Elliptical leaves

Leaf stalk often with pronounced spines at the base



Bark rich brown and smooth when young becoming grey-brown/blackish deeply fissured with scaly ridges

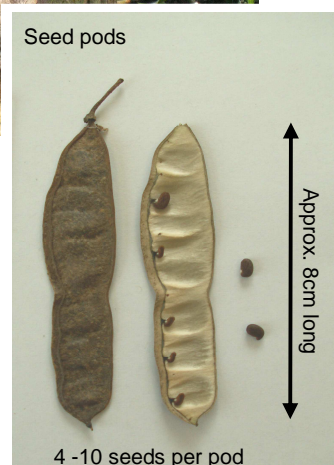


Strongly scented

Sweet pea shape

Flowers are white with a yellow-green blotch in centre

Seed pods



Approx. 8cm long

4 -10 seeds per pod



## 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.

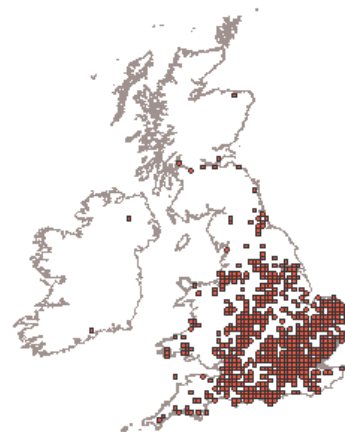
### Winter characteristics



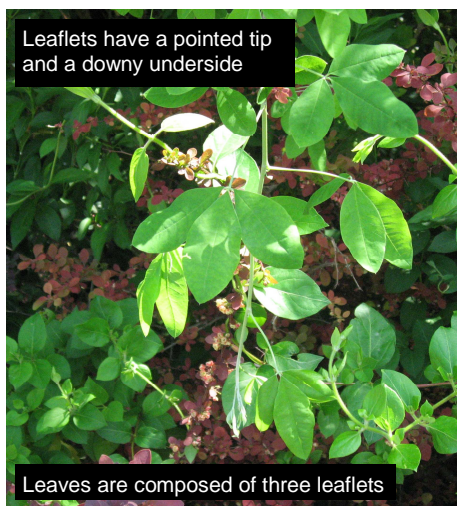
## Distribution

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

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution



## Similar Species



### 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