

Tree of the Year 2024*

Common whitebeam

Sorbus aria (member of the family Rosaceae)

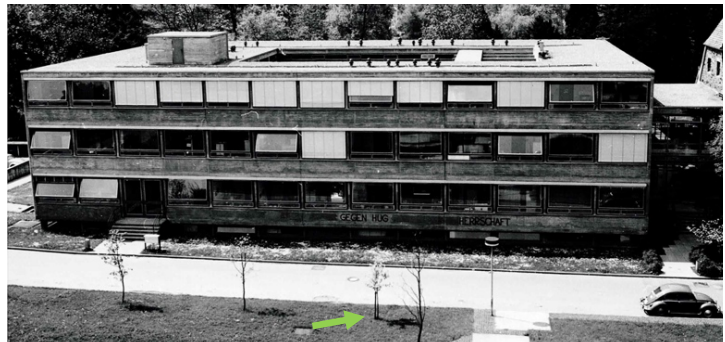
The white-felted - and therefore mealy - appearance of the Common whitebeam is due to its hairy leaves on the underside. Its shimmering crown makes it easily recognizable even from a distance. The upper side of the leaves are dark green.



Foto 1) Leaf of Common whitebeam

The hairs on the undersides of the leaves protect against transpiration and heat. It allows the thermophilic Common whitebeam to colonize sunny, warm locations. The tree is likely to be able to cope with a changing – increasingly dry and warm - (urban) climate in the future.

The Common whitebeam is found in the Mediterranean region to W-Europe, Central Europe and Asia Minor. It can grow to a height of 12 - 15 m and live for 150 - 200 years. The specimen in front of you is estimated to be 60-70 years old.



The institute building with newly planted young trees in 1970, including the Common whitebeam growing in front of you



Foto 2) Inflorescence of Common whitebeam

From the middle of May, the Common whitebeam begins to bloom with white, slightly cream-colored flowers in hemispherical inflorescences - botanically: false umbels. The flowers are rich in nectar and pollinated by insects.

The flowers develop into small apple-like fruits - botanically: simple-accessory fruits – which gradually turn orange to scarlet red from mid-September. They are edible raw after frost. In earlier times the fruits were processed into flour. Nowadays they are occasionally used for jam and jelly.



Foto 3) Fruits of Common whitebeam

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