

Autumn Gall ID Guide

TheParksTrust
MILTON KEYNES

Galls are growths on plants, that are made of plant tissue but caused by another living thing - usually insects, bacteria, fungi or viruses. Insects are the most common cause, and in the UK, solitary wasps are the most likely to cause galls. In many cases a wasp will lay her egg in a leaf, flower or twig which causes the plant to mutate around it. This helps provide food and/or protects the larva growing inside from cold weather or predators.

Look around

Check the tree's twigs, as well as the tops and undersides of leaves.

Hunt on the floor around the tree as some galls will be hiding in fallen leaves.

Oak trees are a great place to start as they host numerous types of gall (around 50!)



Robin's Pincushion

Look for me on: **Dog Rose**
Late summer-autumn



Witches' Broom

Look for me on: **Silver Birch**
Year-round



Acorn Knopper

Look for me on: **Oak acorns**
Summer/autumn especially

Did you know?

Although galls are technically parasites, most don't harm the host plant at all!

Galls appear on more than half of all plant families.



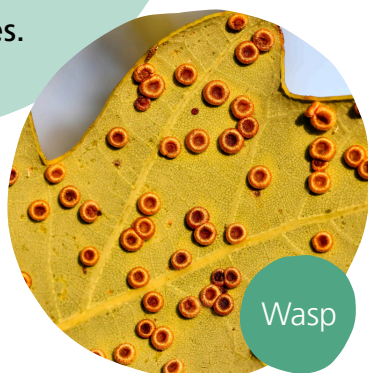
Common Spangle

Look for me on: **Oak leaves**
Autumn



Cherry

Look for me on: **Oak leaves**
July-October



Silk Button

Look for me on: **Oak leaves**
Late summer-autumn



Oak Marble

Look for me on: **Oak twigs**
Autumn

Different uses

Many different galls, including those mostly from oak, have been used in paint pigments for decades! Once they have finished protecting the larval wasp, they can be dried and turned into a colourful powder.

Top tip:

Many gall-causing larvae (babies)

overwinter safe inside their galls so please be careful and leave galls where you find them.

Additional photos: AJ Cann | Craig Mabbett | Graham Calow (NatureSpot) | Southwick Country Park | Libor Kubát | Andrew Halstead | Jonathan (chirpy)