

## Oak Trees

Oak trees grow from seeds called acorns, which form on mature trees, taking several months to develop. Once they are ready, the acorns drop onto the ground and are scattered by animals such as squirrels, which hide the food for future use rather than eating it straight away. Because the squirrels sometimes forget where the acorns are buried, or die before they dig them up, some acorns survive and grow into oak trees.

If the acorn germinates, a tiny root will break through the acorn at the bottom, and a tiny shoot will break through at the top. The root will go down into the soil to find water and nutrients, and the shoot will grow upwards and produce leaves to catch sunlight to produce energy for the tree. With most oaks, the leaves will fall off each autumn, and grow again the following spring.

Eventually, after around twenty years, when the trunk is about thirty centimetres across, the tree will start to produce acorns of its own, and the cycle will begin again. Oaks continue producing acorns into old age, some trees living for several hundred years.