

### Stop 3      OAK and ASH (*Quercus robur* and *Fraxinus excelsior*)

All right, I'm here! It's me again, the grey stark!

I'd like to introduce you to the **peduncled oak tree** first.

It can live for several hundred years, preferring forests in plain areas similar to this one, living next to ashes, hornbeams or elms.

It is a species of hard essence, particularly valued in the construction, furniture and crafts industries. The flowers are green and can be seen around April. Its fruits are called acorns, they are attached to a long peduncle and ripen in September-October and when they fall on the ground they are the ones that determine the natural regeneration of the species, from which the oak saplings grow. They can also be produced in nurseries by foresters and then planted to help nature when it encounters difficulties in continuity.



**Photo 2:** Acorns and oak leaves

Some birds or animals (e.g. jay and squirrel) hide these acorns for the cold season and often, forgetting about them, contribute to the spread of oaks because small seedlings grow where nature wants. There are other species of oak trees, among which we mention: the Turkey oak, the sessile oak (durmast), the Hungarian oak, the greyish oak or the red oak, each with its specific area of spread.

Now, let me tell you some interesting things about the **ash**.

If it is grown in intimate mixtures with the oak tree, it comes to overwhelm it. The flowers are small, dark-aubergine coloured and appear in April from lateral buds, before the spring foliage.

The fruits are greyish-yellow samaras, 2-4 cm long. Approximately 16,000 fruits can enter 1 kg! Think how many ash trees can appear in the forest from these!



**Photo 3:** Flowers, samaras and ash leaves

The wood is hard, very appreciated in construction and by craftsmen, many objects in man's dwelling, and not only, being made of this valuable wood!

I, the grey heron, also made my nest at the top of the tallest ash trees in the forest. But let's fly to the heart of the forest to see the nests where I live, along with my brothers, the colony of grey herons.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- ... the forests are the home of water? They protect natural springs and the water - this essential element of life, is stored in natural reservoirs protected by trees. And, also, some extremely dangerous nature phenomena, such as the floods, will be stopped by the forest that has the role of ecological protection.

### **ACTIVITY:**

- Gather several oak acorns and weigh them to find out exactly their weight. And, as you're a good mathematician, try to find out how many go into 1 kg!

### **ROUTE DIRECTION**

Continue down the trail, then turn left at the marked intersection until you reach Stop number 4 near the hunting observatory.

