

Elms and Nature

Elms are an important part of the environment, and are used by **caterpillars, beetles, spiders** and other wildlife, with elm branches used for homes and their leaves eaten as food.

Sometimes elms are preferred by wildlife, but not essential. **Birds** like Rooks and Ravens are known to prefer elms for nesting in because of their height, but can settle for other trees if they are not available. For other species, elms are important for their survival. For example they are the only source of food for more than ten species of **butterflies and moths**, including the rare White-letter Hairstreak butterfly.

Elm has uses throughout nature. They are home to different species of fungi (like **lichen and mushrooms**) to other trees, because elm tree bark is less acidic. It is a type of fungi that causes Dutch elm disease which kills elms, but other types can be good for wildlife, providing a source of food and it's also used for bird nests. When the fungi die, they also give nutrients to the soil to help other plants grow.

Activity: *Using this sketch of an elm tree, draw pictures of some wildlife and other parts of nature that might use the tree, and draw an arrow to which part of the tree they would be using.*

