

November 2022

**European yew, *Taxus baccata* L.**

From the Taxaceae family (yew family)

The yew is an evergreen, upright, perennial plant that can grow up to 20m in height as a shrubby tree.

The flat, needle-shaped leaves grow up to 3 cm long and are soft and flexible. Yews are dioecious, i.e. there are male and female plants. Rather inconspicuous flowers appear in March and April. Seeds with a red, fleshy covering develop from the female flowers. The yew species are mainly distributed in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere.

The yew is a poisonous plant. The ingredients are alkaloids, biflavonoids and phenolic compounds. All parts of the plant except the red seed coat are highly poisonous.

In the garden, the yew is a decorative hedge plant. It is also an ornamental tree, can grow in shady places and offers birds nesting space and food. The yew tolerates pruning well and is a popular topiary.

Yew trees can live for over 1000 years, which is why they are considered a symbol of immortality.

