

Friary Park Main Area – Sandra Lea’s notes



The Main Area of the Park

- 40 **Buckeye** *Aesculus flava*
Native to eastern North America. Similar to the Horsechestnut but a finer tree with yellow flowers and fine autumn colour. The name refers to the resemblance of the nutlike seed, which has a pale patch on a shiny red-brown surface, to the eye of a deer.
- 41 **Giant Redwood** *Sequoiadendron giganteum*
Native to the [Sierra Nevada](#) Mountains of California. It is named after [Sequoyah](#) (1767–1843), the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet. In its native habitat it is the world's [largest tree](#) and largest living thing by [volume](#). Giant sequoias grow to an average height of 200 ft and 24 ft in diameter. Giant Sequoias are among [the oldest living things](#) on Earth and the oldest known giant sequoia is 3,500 years old. It was brought to the UK in 1853.
- 42 **Purple-leaved Plum** *Prunus cerasifera nigra*
Native to Asia and Europe. A garden variety of the cherry plum. The flowers are small, fragrant and either white or pale pink and one of the first trees to flower in the spring, with the blossoms appearing before the leaves.
- 43 **London Plane**
The origin of this tree is not quite known. It is thought to be a hybrid of the oriental plane and the American plane, and was brought here from Spain in the 17th century. It is a very large tree when mature and needs lots of room. It is often confused with the sycamore, however the edges of London plane leaves are not serrated. It has little bio-diversity value – it supports no wild-life and its seeds have little nutritional value. In the autumn its leaves take a long time to decay – up to three years – and if uncollected spoil grass and flower beds and on pavements slippery leaves are a danger to pedestrians. It is, however, an exceptionally beautiful tree with its ‘waterfalls of leaves’.
- 44 **Hawthorn / May Tree** *Crataegus monogyna*
Native to the UK where it has had many uses over the centuries. It was extensively planted as a hedge, especially for [agricultural](#) use - its spines and close branching habit made it stock, and human, proof. Its wood burns with a good heat and little smoke. It had many uses in traditional [herbalism](#), and today research is being carried out on its many healing properties, both leaves, flowers and fruit, particularly for treating cardiac diseases.
- 45 **Whitebeam** *Sorbus aria*
Native to Europe. A compact tree with almost-white underside of the leaves. The cream-white flowers appear in May followed by scarlet berries.
- 46 **Caucasian Wingnut** *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*
Native to Caucasus and Iran. The wood is used for veneers, which are very popular because of their dark texture. The leaves can grow up to 2 ft in length with 7 - 27 leaflets. In Spring pendulous, pale-green catkins up to 20in long are produced which develop into the ‘fruits’ arranged on the remains of the catkins, resembling strings of beads.
- 47 **Lombardy Poplar** *Populus nigra italic*
Native to Asia. A group of four. Male trees were brought from Turin, Italy to St Osyth, Essex in 1758. Female trees are hardly known in Europe. It is a useful tree as is not affected by pollution and the high dense shape provides good screening. However, it absorbs a lot of water and if planted near to buildings this can cause considerable soil movement in periods of drought.
- 48 **Silver Birch** *Betula pendula*
See 3.
- 49 **White Poplar** *Populus alba*
Native to central and southern Europe It is the whitest tree in the park and is most distinctive in a breeze when the underside of the fluttering leaves, which are dark greeny-grey and white on the underside, look as though they are flashing on and off. The stems of the leaves are also distinctly flattened, rather than round. The bark is pale grey with lines of black diamond-shaped pores, called lenticels.
- 50 **Giant Redwood** *Sequoiadendron giganteum*
See 41.

- 51 **Birch** *Betula Pendula*
Native to the northern hemisphere. The Birch trees reaches further north than any other tree, even into the Arctic Circle. A small, fast-growing, but tough timber. Large pieces are seldom available but it is used in the manufacture of plywood.
- 52 **Ornamental Cherry** *Prunus sp.*
Originating in Japan where cultivated cherries have been grown and developed for over a thousand years. They were introduced into the UK in the 18th century and are now probably the most popular ornamental tree. The blossom can range from white through pink to deep rose and usually appears before the leaves are mature enough to hide the flowers. They do not bear fruit.
- 53 **Broad-leaf lime** *Tilia platyphyllos*
Native to the UK. The flowers are used medicinally and are probably best known for making the calming and restorative Linden Tea. Bees are attracted to the strongly scented flowers, and lime flower honey is said to have the best flavour of any. See also 1.
- 54 **Golden Robinia** *Robinia pseudoacacia Frisia*
See 62. This is an ornamental variety.
- 55 **Poplar** *Populus x Canadensis*
The Hybrid Black Poplar is a a cross between the European Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*) and forms of the North American Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus detoidest* , that arose in the early 1800s in France. Also known as the Railway Poplar it was used as a screening tree along railways in the London area in the early 20th century. Its flowers create snowstorms of white fluffy-cotton seeds. Habitat: Planted near railways, on the coast, or in parks and other urban settings.
- 56 **Turkey Oak** *Quercus cerris*
Native to south-eastern [Europe](#) and [Asia](#). The acorn cup is unusual being densely covered in soft 'mossy' bristles. The acorns are very bitter, and are only eaten by birds and squirrels when other food sources have run out. The timber has many of the characteristics of other oaks, but is very prone to crack and split and is relegated to such uses as fencing.
- 57 **Horsechestnut** *Aesculus hippocastanum*
Native to mountains in the Balkans. It was not known to have been grown in western Europe until after 1600. It is widely grown as an ornamental tree, particularly for the beautiful blossom. It is notorious for shedding branches, particularly after rain, and the timber is weak with few uses. The game of conkers was originally played with cobnuts or snail shells until in the 18th century when chestnuts came into use.
- 58 **Silver maple** *Acer saccharinum*
Native to North America. It is very fast growing with a smooth grey bark with many sprouts and burrs. The underside of the leaf is pale grey. Similar to the sugar maple it can be taped for its sap but it is not as sweet or prolific.
- 59 **Alder** *Alnus glutinosa*
Useful trees in infertile soil as the roots have nodules in which nitrogen-fixing bacteria grow. In the wild it grows near to water and as the timber withstands constant wetting and drying in the past was used for lock-gates and mill workers clogs. It also makes the best charcoal for gun-powder. The catkins appear early, in February but the leaves have no autumn colour.
- 60 **Crab Apple** *Malus*
There are over 200 different species of crab apple in the northern hemisphere. The timber is particularly fine and has been used for centuries for carving and turning. It is a favourite wood for burning in domestic hearths as it emits an aromatic smell
- 61 **Ash** *Fraxinus excelsior*
Native to Europe. Tall and graceful, it is the third most common tree in Britain, and can live for 400 years. The seeds are popularly known as 'keys' or 'helicopter seeds'. It is one of the toughest hardwoods and absorbs shocks without splintering. It is used for making tools and sports equipment, including hammers, axes, spades, hockey sticks, snooker cues and oars. An attractive wood, it is also used for furniture.
- 62 **Black Locust** *Robinia pseudoacacia*

Native to USA and Northern Mexico. The name 'locust' is said to have been given to *Robinia* by Jesuit missionaries, who fancied that this was the tree that supported St John the Evangelist in the wilderness, but it is native only to North America. It is admired for the racemes of white pea-like fragrant flowers in May and June. The timber is one of the hardest woods in Northern America. It is very resistant to rot, and durable, making it prized for furniture, flooring and paneling. It burns slowly, with little visible flame or smoke.

63 **One-leaved Black Locust** *Robinia pseudoacacia unifolia*

See 62. This variety originated in a French nursery in 1855. Unlike other forms of *Robinia* it only has one, or possible two or three leaves.

64 **Variegated Sycamore** *Acer psuedoplatanus variegatum*

Native to central Europe and western Asia. The sycamore was possibly introduced into Britain by the by the Romans. It is planted in parks for ornamental purposes, and sometimes as a street tree, since its tolerance of air pollution makes it suitable for use in urban plantings. It is very invasive - regarded by some as a forest weed – and the heavy leaf-fall destroys anything growing beneath the tree. It produces a hard-wearing, white timber that can be worked in any direction making it suitable for musical instruments and furniture and, because it is non-staining, for kitchen utensils, wooden spoons, bowls, rolling pins and chopping boards.

65 **Common Oak** *Quercus robur*

The oak is probably the best known and loved of British native trees and is the most common tree species in the UK. Acorns are not produced until the tree is at least 40 years old. Most acorns will never get the chance to germinate, they are rich food source, eaten by many wild creatures including jays, mice, squirrels, badgers and deer. In ancient times acorns were ground into flour for bread making, practice that was revived in the Second World War. It has great bio-diversity value - the soft leaves of English oaks breakdown in autumn to form a rich leaf mould, supporting many insects and fungi. Holes and crevices in the tree bark are perfect nesting spots for several birds and bats. In England the oak has for centuries been a national symbol of strength and survival. It has played an important part in our culture. Once couples were wed under ancient oaks and the festive Yule Log was traditionally cut from oak. It features on the 1987 pound coin. Oaks produce one of the hardest and most durable timbers on the planet, even its Latin name, *Quercus robur*, means strength. However, it takes up to 150 years before an oak is ready to use in construction. It has been a prized timber for thousands of years, was the primary ship building material until the mid-19th century and remains a popular wood for architectural beams. Modern uses of English oak include flooring, furniture and wine barrels.

66 **Purple Sycamore** *Acer psuedoplatanus atropurpureum*

See 64. This is an ornamental variety.