Kneller Gardens Tree Trail

This trail is a celebration of the diversity of the trees that can be found in Kneller Gardens. The trail highlights the importance of urban trees in the landscape for people and wildlife. We hope you enjoy your time on the trail and discover something new along the way.

We have tried to make the trail as accessible as possible. At the location shown on the map you will find some information about each tree and a tactile plaque which includes braille and English text.

For information about the Friendly Parks For All project please use the QR code. Explore other themed walks in the park and linked green spaces by using the Go Jauntly App.

Indicative location of trees

For more information or comments please contact parks@richmond.gov.uk

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

1.

London Plane
Family: Platanaceae
Species: Platanus x hispanica

The London plane is a hybrid of American sycamore and Oriental plane. The tree is valued for its long life, resistance to pollution and tolerance for poor air quality. As a result, the tree was mass planted in London in the industrial revolution. The bark is olive green/grey and has scaly plates that peel off to reveal cream coloured bark beneath. The shed bark includes captured pollutants. In winter, the fruit looks like Christmas tree decorations. This tree pre-dates the park which was set out in 1932.


London Plane

4.

English Oak
Family: Fagaceae
Species: Quercus robur

A native tree which is host to hundreds of insect species and supplies birds with an important food source. Bats roost under bark and mammals feed on acorns. These two trees pre-date the park and may have marked a safe place to cross the river.


Golden Weeping Willow

2.

Golden Weeping Willow
Family: Salicaceae
Species: Salix x sepulcralis 'Chrysocoma'

This tree is a hybrid of the Golden Willow and Weeping Willow and dates from when the park was first laid out in 1932. The deciduous willow trees are often associated with rivers and ponds. The catkins are an important source of early nectar and pollen for bees and other insects. Aspirin is derived from the bark of willow trees.


English Oak


Black Poplar

3.

Dawn redwood
Family: Cupressaceae
Species: Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Dawn redwoods are fast-growing deciduous trees that like wet sites, such as rivers. They were known as a fossil species until discovered in China in the 1940's. They have bright green, feathery leaves arranged on branches. (Swamp cypress has a similar appearance to dawn redwood but have alternate leaf pattern). As the tree gets older the bark colour deepens and the lower trunk forms buttresses.


Dawn Redwood

5.

Black poplar
Family: Salicaceae
Species: Populus nigra ssp. betulifolia

A native tree, now rare with only 7000 in the UK. These three trees are part of a conservation programme with a Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan in place. BAP Leaflet for Black Poplar. They have been identified as part of a unique genetic collection and will provide important clone material to diversity the species pool in the UK and provide resistance to disease such as poplar scab. Mature trees grow to 30m and can be long lived. They grow best in damp conditions along rivers. The timber was once in high demand for building as it is pliable and shock resistant. Traditionally it was used to make cartwheels and floorboards. The tree can be coppiced to provide material for thatching and baskets.

6.

Manna Ash
Family: Oleaceae
Species: Fraxinus ornus

The Manna Ash is native to southern Europe and southwestern Asia. It is an attractive tree that is smothered in delicate creamy-white flowers in early May. The fruit is a slender winged fruit that ripens to brown. Historically the bark sap was compared with the biblical manna, giving rise to the English name of the tree.

7.

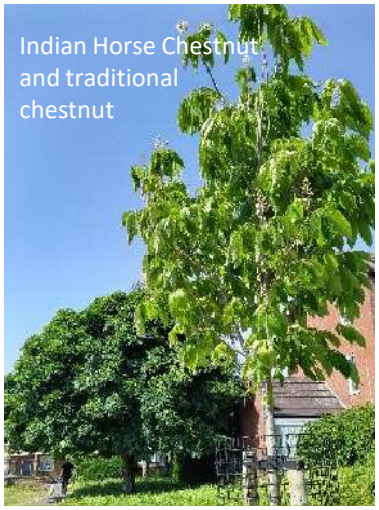
Mixed native hedge

A hedge is a line of woody vegetation, managed so that trees don't take their natural shape. There is a borough wide Habitat Action Plan for Hedges. This hedge was planted by schoolchildren and supports a diversity of flora and fauna. It offers shelter, connectivity and food for invertebrates, birds and small mammals and refuge for wild plants.

8.

Himalayan cedar
Family: Pinaceae
Species: Cedrus deodara

A fast growing and large cedar native to upland areas of Afghanistan, India Kashmir, Nepal and Pakistan. The leading shoots are distinctly drooping or pendulous. The trees have extraordinary cultural significance and symbolism in the mountains, where they have long been held sacred. Their indigenous name is devadāru, a Sanskrit word meaning 'wood of the gods'. In its native habitat it has been used for thousands of years as an important timber tree. It is in demand as building material because of its durability, rot-resistant character and fine, close grain, which can take a high polish. The inner wood is aromatic and used to make incense.



9.

Indian Horse Chestnut
Family: Sapindaceae
Species: Aesculus indica

The tree from the Himalayas, is used in traditional Indian medicine to treat some skin diseases, rheumatism and headaches. The tree produces flowers in spring and conkers in autumn.

It was introduced in the mid-19th century for use in parks and gardens. It has been planted here close to a horse chestnut which is prone to the horse chestnut leaf miner that can occur on trees in huge numbers, causing the foliage to turn brown and fall early. It is also unaffected by bleeding canker which can also kill common horse chestnut.

The plaques can be used to take rubbings using paper and a crayon or soft pencil.

10.

Group of trees

To diversify the tree population in the park a new group of trees has been planted.

Contorted willow

Family: Salicaceae

Species: Salix matsudana ‘Tortuosa’

A fast-growing medium-sized deciduous willow tree with narrow, twisted leaves and strongly contorted branches.

Yoshino cherry

Family: Rosaceae

Species: Prunus x yedoensis

There are 4 of these flowering cherries which are a hybrid of the Edo Higan cherry and Oshima Cherry. They have fragrant blush white blossom that attract early emerging bees.

Chinese cedar (‘Beef and onion plant’)

Family: Meliaceae

Species: Toona sinensis x 2

These trees which are native to Asia. The young leaves are reddish and are a cooking ingredient in China and said to have a smell of onions.

12.

Pissard’s Plum

Family: Rosaceae

Species: Prunus cerasifera pissardii

This row of cherry plums has been grown for its highly coloured purple leaves and very early flowers which are attractive to bees and other insects. The short-lived white flowers appear in early spring and differs from Prunus cerasifera ‘Nigra’ which has pink flowers. The edible fruit is the ancestor of the domestic plum. The species was introduced to Europe in the 1880’s by Monsieur Pissard, gardener to the Shah of Persia.

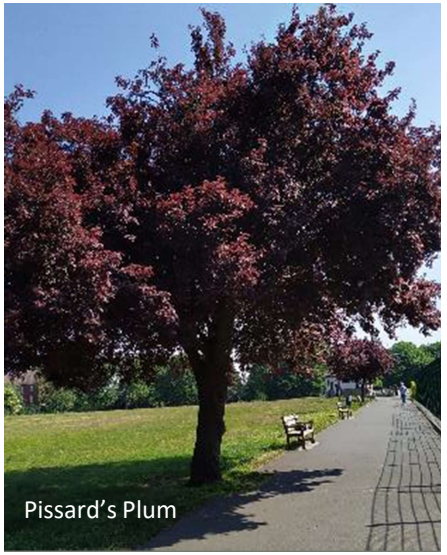
11.

Common Ash

Family: Oleaceae

Species: Fraxinus excelsior

A common tree in British woodlands now threatened by ash dieback which poses a serious threat to trees across the UK. Common Ash and American Ash are growing here, the younger American ash is being monitored to understand its tolerance to the disease. Ash is a tough hardwood that absorbs shocks, bends and does not splinter so traditionally used for lobster pots, tools and sport equipment. Ash keys, the winged seeds, often last through the winter. The decaying wood on this corner of the park is a common ash that failed and has been left to provide habitat for wood boring insects.



Pissard’s Plum

Common Ash and decaying ash

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