

The ten trees of the Westgate Gardens tree trail

1

Oriental Plane

Platanus orientalis

Family: Platanaceae

Origin: Balkans to Iran



All the specimens of this tree in Canterbury have distinctive enlarged trunks. The Westgate Gardens specimen is the largest – and at over 200 years, it is also believed to be the oldest. The Oriental Plane is one of the parent species of the more common London Plane hybrid. They are all noted for shedding plates of bark, giving the trunk their mottled pattern. This helps fend off pollution, by shedding dirty, blocked pores to expose clean bark almost every year.

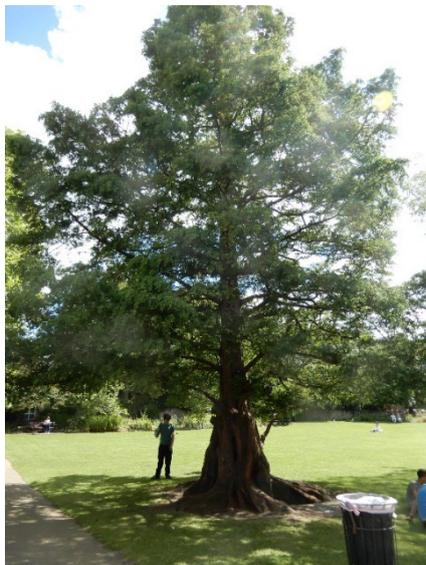
2

Dawn Redwood

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Family: Cupressaceae

Origin: China



Only known from Mesozoic fossils over 65 million years old until a living tree was discovered in China in 1941, the Dawn Redwood was introduced to Canterbury in 1947. Related to the Coast Redwoods and the Giant Sequoias of North America, this is a fast-growing species, but it requires space for the buttress roots above ground. A 'living fossil', it is considered endangered in its native habitat due to deforestation.

3

Common Ash

Fraxinus excelsior

Family: Oleaceae

Origin: native



Ash is found across Europe from the Arctic Circle to Turkey. They can live up to 400 years. In Viking mythology the ash was referred to as the 'Tree of Life'. In Britain it is regarded as a healing tree. Ash wood is one of the toughest hardwoods and absorbs shocks without splintering, so is used for sports handles, tools and oars.

4

Scots Pine

Pinus sylvestris

Family: Pinaceae

Origin: native



This common native evergreen conifer can reach 35 metres tall and live up to 700 years; the subspecies found in Great Britain, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *sylvestris*, has survived since the last Ice Age. The resin forms amber as it hardens and is used as rosin for violin bows and printing plates. It has many uses; as well as being one of the strongest softwoods, the resin is tapped for turpentine, the inner bark for rope-making, as well as for its pine fragrance. Voted the National Tree of Scotland in 2014.

5

Common Walnut

Juglans regia

Family: Juglandaceae

Origin: S. Europe to China



Walnut is one of the most valuable timber trees. Its dark, brownish-black timber fetches high prices in cabinet making and the root buttresses are valued for gun handles. The wood is known for its shock-absorbing properties and the leaves, bark, the green husks and the oil from the nut kernels have high value for their medicinal properties. Considered to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans.

6

Brewer's Spruce

Picea breweriana

Family: Pinaceae

Origin: western USA



This ornamental tree is restricted in its natural habitat to eight or nine locations on high mountain ridges in Northern California and South Oregon, where it is now considered an endangered species. It has declined in numbers in its native habitat due to climate change and fires. The drooping twigs of Brewer's Spruce are an adaptation to growing high up where the snowfalls are heavy and frequent. Up to six metres of snow falls in a season, but the drooping twigs shed the snow quickly and effectively.

7

Common Beech

Fagus sylvatica

Family: Fagaceae

Origin: Europe



This magnificent deciduous tree can grow up to 40m tall and live to 400 years. The silver-grey bark has a smooth texture. When the leaves first unfurl they are a delicate lime green, providing a dappled shade beneath them, and in autumn they turn to glowing yellow, then orange then a russet brown that rustles in the breeze. In the 19th century beech oil was used for cooking and oil lamps. Beech wood is used in furniture-making, and the pulp is used for manufacturing a textile fibre known as Modal. Considered native to southern England, there is evidence to suggest that this species may have first arrived in Britain about 4000 years ago.

8

Persian Ironwood

Parrotia persica

Family: Hamamelidaceae

Origin: Iran



This deciduous tree is native to the Alborz mountain range in Northern Iran. It is closely related to Witch-hazel and *Liquidambar*, and has stunning crimson autumn colour. The strength of the timber makes it difficult to work. The genus was named in honour of the German naturalist Friedrich Parrot, who visited the Alborz Mountains in the 1830s.

9

Maidenhair Tree

Ginkgo biloba

Family: Ginkgoaceae

Origin: China



Numerous species of ginkgo-like fossils are known from the Jurassic Period, 175–200 million years ago. The single surviving species of the group, *Ginkgo biloba*, is often considered the oldest living tree species on Earth, representing a lineage of seed-producing plants that probably predates the conifers, and certainly all trees belonging to flowering plant families. Now almost extinct in the wild, the oldest known individual trees are found in China, with some thought to be 2000 years old. *Ginkgo* is revered for its medicinal properties. The name refers to the leaves, resembling those of the maidenhair fern. Look closely at the shape of the leaves of this fine pair of trees, as they are formed of two lobes.

10

Tulip Tree

Liriodendron tulipifera

Family Magnoliaceae

Origin: North America



The tallest deciduous tree from North America, where it can get to nearly 60 metres tall and 6 m in girth, the Tulip Tree is one of only two species of the genus *Liriodendron* known world-wide (the other occurs in China and Vietnam). Very long-lived, its size and straight trunks provide good but easily-worked timber that made it a tree especially prized by Native Americans for building large canoes. The flowers are up to 60 mm across, mostly green, and can be difficult to spot – but they, as well as the leaves, are tulip-shaped, hence its scientific and common names.