

Sydney Gardens Bath Tree Trail



The Maidenhair Tree *Ginkgo Biloba* in autumn leaf beside the Loggia

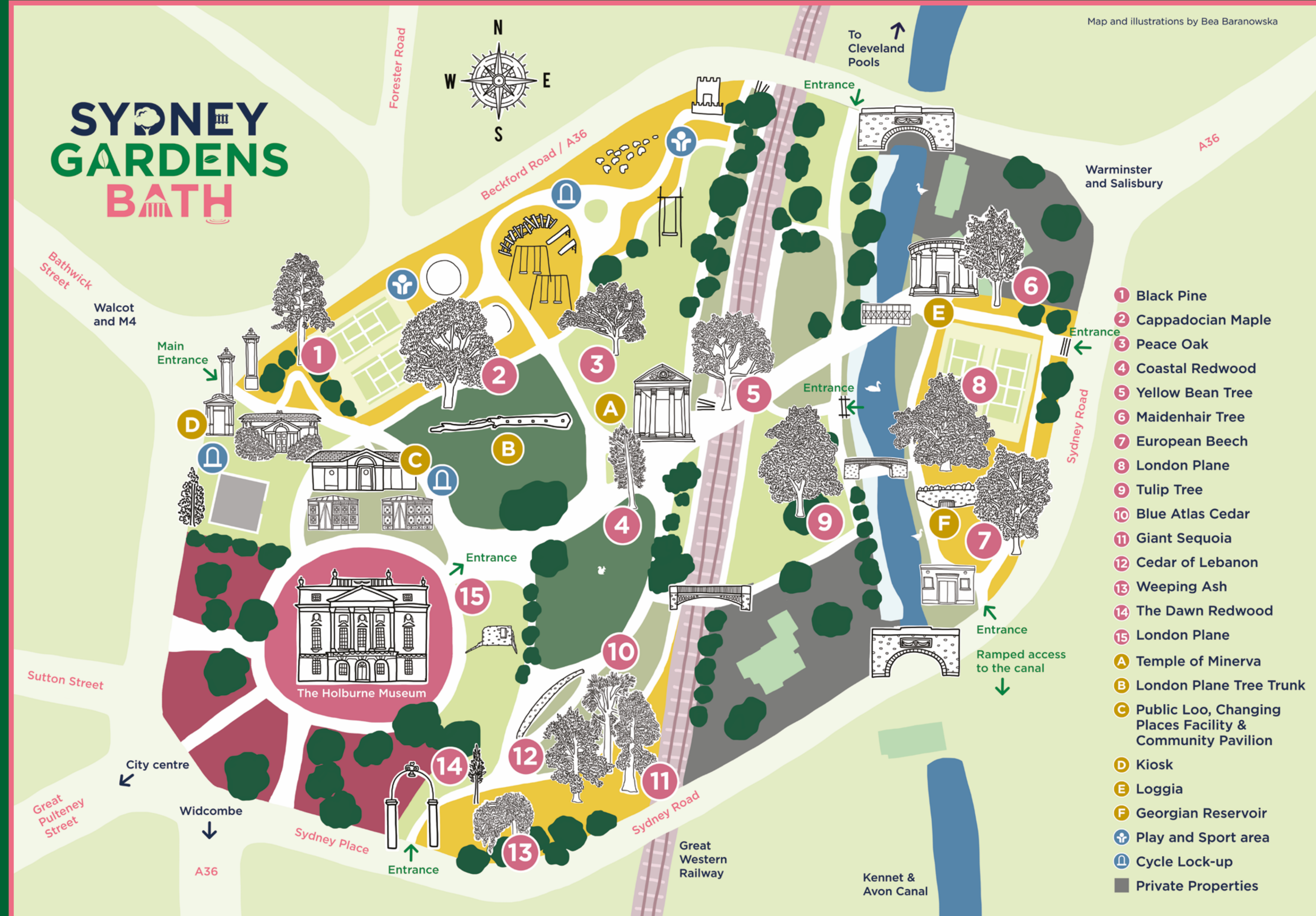
SYDNEY
GARDENS
BATH

The Friends of Sydney
Gardens and the Sydney
Gardens Project



SYDNEY GARDENS BATH

Map and illustrations by Bea Baranowska



- 1 Black Pine
- 2 Cappadocian Maple
- 3 Peace Oak
- 4 Coastal Redwood
- 5 Yellow Bean Tree
- 6 Maidenhair Tree
- 7 European Beech
- 8 London Plane
- 9 Tulip Tree
- 10 Blue Atlas Cedar
- 11 Giant Sequoia
- 12 Cedar of Lebanon
- 13 Weeping Ash
- 14 The Dawn Redwood
- 15 London Plane
- A Temple of Minerva
- B London Plane Tree Trunk
- C Public Loo, Changing Places Facility & Community Pavilion
- D Kiosk
- E Loggia
- F Georgian Reservoir
- Play and Sport area
- Cycle Lock-up
- Private Properties

The Sydney Gardens Tree Trail celebrates some of the outstanding trees in this historic Georgian Pleasure Garden, which opened on the 11 May 1795.

The 15 trees highlighted for the tree trail were chosen for varying reasons: some for their significance – Britain & Ireland Champion the Yellow Bean Tree and County Champion the Cappadocian Maple, others for their height and their heritage – the Cedar of Lebanon, 29m high and the Giant Sequoia, 28m high.

Additionally, others were chosen for their historical significance – the European Beech thought to be one of the oldest trees in the park, and the special First World War memorial tree, the Peace Oak. However, there are many other beautiful trees in this significant Georgian garden.



Yellow Bean Tree flowers

The Tree Trail begins at the main entrance into the park which is opposite Bathwick Street. The entrance is flanked by two large Bath Stone pillars which originally supported two large iron gates.

Look out for the name labels on the trees that you can get close to – the QR code on each label links through to further information on the trees on the Friends of Sydney Gardens website.



1



The first tree on the Tree Trail is the 1 Black Pine *Pinus nigra*, Height (m): 19, Girth (m): 2.26, Origin: Europe.

This Black Pine is the tallest, in a group of three pines just inside the main entrance into Sydney Gardens. It is thought the pines were planted in the early 18th century because of their position across the route of the original 'Ride'. The Ride was a surfaced path laid around the garden, inside of the perimeter wall, for carriages and horse riders. The Ride was part of the original design for the Georgian Pleasure Garden. Over time it has been replaced with tennis courts, bowl pitches and other developments in the park.

The Black Pine is a large coniferous evergreen tree, native of southern European coastal areas, and is also called European Black Pine or Austrian Black Pine. The Black Pine is moderately fast growing, about 30-70cm per year and can reach heights of 20-55m tall with a spread up to around 13m wide. The Black Pine can also be long lived with some trees over 1000 years old.

Black Pines are well suited to urban parks due to their tolerance of air pollution. However, they are intolerant

of shade and require full sun to grow to their full potential. The bark of the Black Pine is yellow/brown to grey in colour and has many splits and fissures. The fissures increase with age and become scaly plates and flaking fissures.

The Black Pine is monoecious: producing both yellow male female, and red female flowers on the same tree. The seed cones appear from May to June and become mature around September to November. The ripening cone changes from green to pale grey and is around 5-10cm long. The cones open from December to April to release winged seeds; 20-25mm long, which are dispersed by the wind. The Black Pine will reach maturity at 15-40 years and produce large seed crops at intervals of 2-5 years.



Black Pine cone



2



After leaving the Black Pine trees take the path which forks to the left and runs beside the lower tennis courts. The Cappadocian Maple, also called the Golden Maple, can be found on the right side of the path. This **2** **Cappadocian Maple *Acer cappadocicum* 'Aureum'**, **Height (m): 15.5, Girth (m): 2.9, Origin: Asia**, is a County Champion tree, meaning it is the largest of its species of Maple in the county of Somerset.



Cappadocium Maple in summer

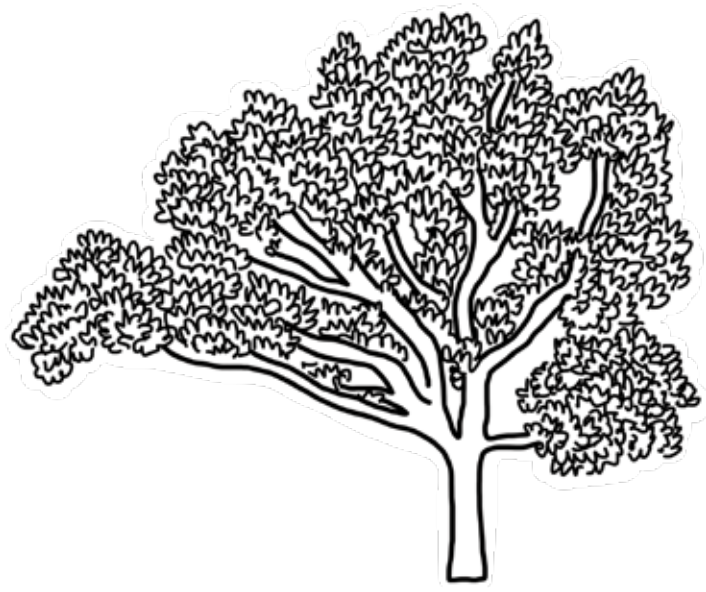
This species of Maple was first introduced into Great Britain in Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1838. Over time it has become naturalised throughout the whole of the UK, seeding in the wild since 1977. The Maple tree is deciduous, meaning it loses leaves in the autumn. The Cappadocian Maple is of medium stature, growing to 20-30 meters tall and can live to over 300 years of age.

The leaves of the Maple are palm shaped with 5-7 lobes; they are yellow in spring, become green during the summer before changing to a rich golden yellow in the autumn.

The bark of the Maple tree is relatively smooth in the early years of growth but with age the bark develops shallow fissures, providing a good surface for moss growth.



Cappadocium Maple in autumn



3



3 Peace Oak *Quercus robur* 'Concordia', Height (m): 14, Girth (m): 2.23, Origin: Europe.

The Peace Oak in Sydney Gardens can be found on the same path as the Cappadocian Maple, just a little further along on the right, beside the play area on the upper lawn.

The Peace Oak is a cultivar of the English Oak *Quercus robur*, also known as the Common Oak or the Golden Oak and is native of Europe and the Caucasus.

This Peace Oak was planted in July 1919 as part of the Peace Day celebrations in Bath to mark the end of the First World War. The cultivar originated in a nursery in the Flanders town of Ghent, Belgium in 1843. Perhaps the Concordia variety was chosen as the Peace Oak due to its connection to Belgium, which became hallowed ground to so many British families following the Great War, many of whom made pilgrimages to Flanders battlefields such as Ypres.

The 100th anniversary of the planting of the Peace Oak was celebrated in July 2019, which was attended by the granddaughter and family of Mayor, Cllr Wills who planted the original tree. The stone plaque commemorating this event was donated by Bath

Freemasons; Alderman Willis was a past Master of Royal Albert Edward Lodge no. 906 in Bath. You can find the plaque on the playground side of the tree.

Additionally, for the 100th Anniversary event, Bathwick St Marys year 4 school children took part in art lessons inspired by the original event and created plaques and artwork which were on display at the anniversary event. Further, a donation of the famous Sally Lunn Buns was made to the event by Jonathan Overton, echoing the activity at the opening event of the Georgian Pleasure Gardens on 11th May 1795, where Sally Lunn Buns were served hot from portable baking ovens.



Peace Oak with poppies

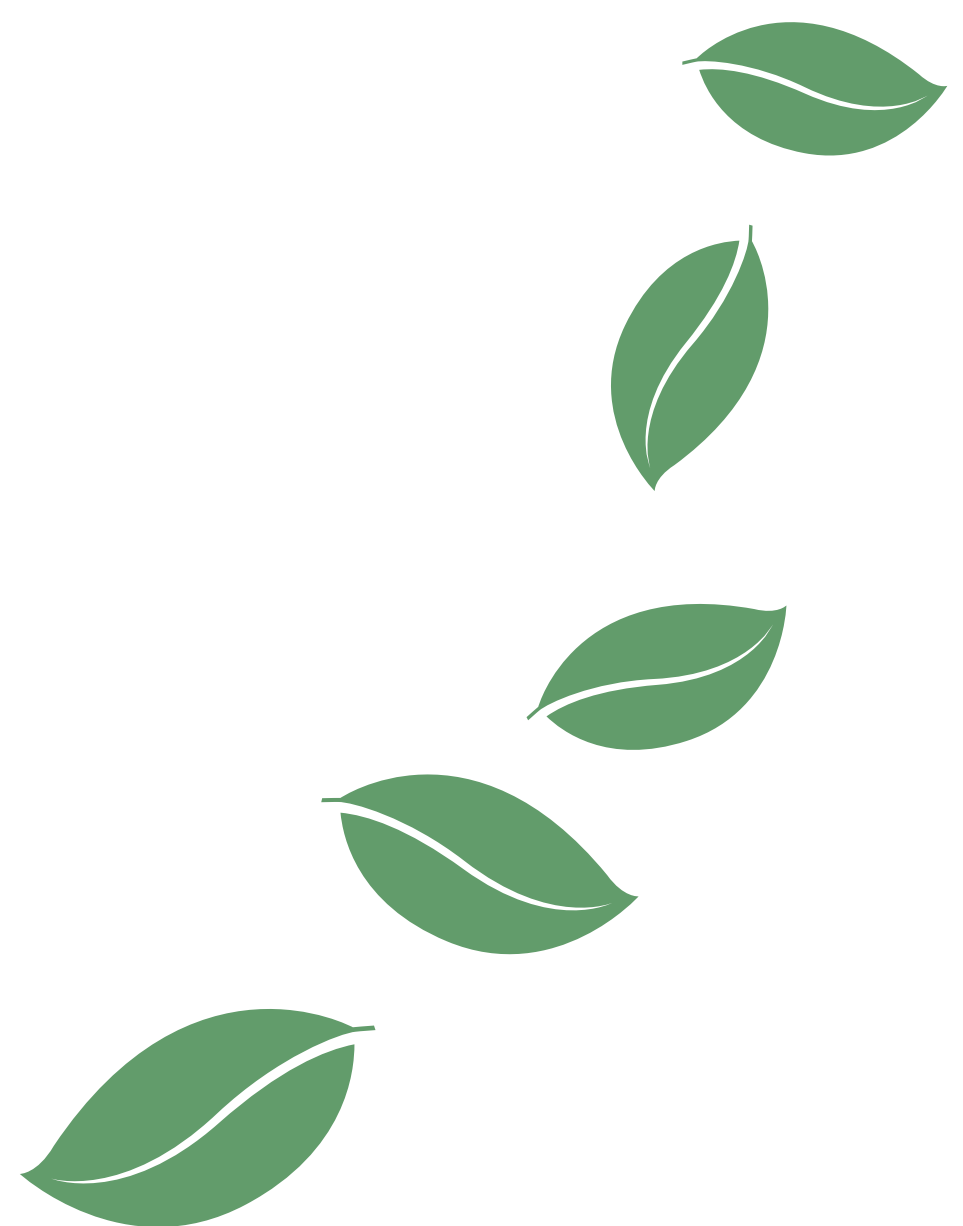
The Concordia cultivar is deciduous, slow growing and generally only achieves a modest stature; 7-10 meters but can live to over 300 years of age. The Oak is characterised by its golden hued spring foliage, which matures to dark green during the summer months before becoming golden brown in the

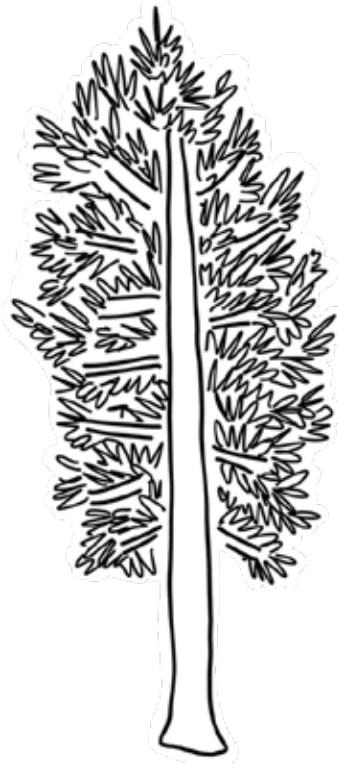
autumn. The tree has a broad spread and a rounded crown. The leaves, 7-12cm long, have 3-7 blunt deep lobes on each side of the leaf. The trunk is typically short, and the bark is dark grey to black in colour with a furrowed and ridge surface.

The Peace Oak is monoecious; bearing both male and female flowers/catkins on the same tree, which are yellow greenish in colour. The catkins appear in April (at the same time as the new leaves) and distribute pollen into the air. The fruit/seeds of the oak are the oval shaped acorn; 2-2.5cm in length with the cap covering about 1/3 of the acorn. The green seed ripens to brown in the autumn and loosens from the cup, falling to the ground ready to sprout in the spring. The Oak is usually 25-30 years old before acorns are produced.

Oak trees are one of our best loved trees. They are important as a habitat for species of insect, lichen and birds and of course produce acorns from which other oak grow.

Having left the Golden Oak it is a short walk to the main promenade, which travels up through the centre of Sydney Gardens. On arriving at the promenade, the Temple of Minerva will be found on your left and across this promenade you will find the Coastal Redwood.





4



4 Coastal Redwood *Sequoia sempervirens*, Height (m): 19, Girth (m): 2.95, Origin: North America.

The Coastal Redwood is part of the same family of trees as the Giant Sequoia, which can be found in a group of 'exotics' towards the railway line.

Some noticeable differences between the Coastal Redwood and Giant Sequoia are the Redwood grows taller - up to 120 m and is recognised as the tallest tree in the world. The Giant Sequoia generally grows around 91 m tall. Further differences include the base of the Coastal Redwood is the same thickness as the trunk. Whereas the trunk of the Giant Sequoia is more cone like; thicker at the bottom and tapering upwards. Additionally, the bark of the Giant Sequoia is spongier and thicker around; 75 cm compared to the Redwood at 30 cm thick. Additionally, the cones of the Sequoia are 3 times the size of the Coastal Redwood.

In the USA the Coastal Redwoods grow prolifically on the west coast, California, and can take up to 400-500 years to reach maturity. Some of the oldest Coastal Redwoods have been recorded as over 2,000 years old. The fibrous bark of the Coastal Redwood is chocolate brown in colour.

The needle like leaf of the Coastal Redwood is relatively fine and flattened. They are symmetrically arranged on the branches with opposing leaves connected to the same spot of the stem. The cones appear on the Coastal Redwood in the autumn and considering the size of the tree are small, at around 2cm; the scales form a spiral pattern around the cone. The cones bear few seeds.

Leaving the Coastal Redwood behind, head towards the Temple. The Temple of Minerva is a replica of the Temple to Sulis Minerva found in Bath's Roman Baths. The replica temple was originally erected at the Empire Exhibition in Crystal Palace, London, built by A. J. Taylor to promote Bath Stone. In 1911 the Temple was moved to Bath and re-erected in Sydney Gardens.



The Temple of Minerva with the Yellow Bean Tree



5



Standing in front of the temple is the next tree on the trail **5 The Yellow Bean Tree *Catalpa ovata*, Height (m): 21, Girth (m): 2.75, Origin: China.** The Yellow Bean Tree is a Country Champion Tree, which means it is the tallest specimen of its kind in the UK and Ireland, recorded on the Tree Register of the British Isles.

The Latin name, *Catalpa ovata*, is given to what is now commonly called the Yellow Bean Tree. Artist and writer Richard White researched this tree and found: 'The name *Catalpa* derives from the Muscogee nation's name for the tree. Fossil seeds of the ancestors of this tree in Sydney Gardens have been found in fossils in rocks on the west coast of the USA. Over more than forty-nine million years those trees migrated, and the earth's tectonic plates moved to distribute the *Catalpa* family to what is now Eastern Asia and North America'.

'Some local knowledge of the *Catalpa ovata*, from its origins in China, is that the wood from this tree has been used for thousands of years as the soundboard for the Guqin. The Guqin is a stringed instrument which produces a gentle sound evocative to Western ears of the far east. Guqin music is recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible World Cultural Heritage.

The ancient sound has even been sent into outer space as an ambassadorial sample of what humanity can do. Unlike the lost knowledge of the Muscogee nation concerning the tree it named, this heritage of the use of its wood survives in sound’.



Guqin instrument made from the wood of the Yellow Bean Tree

The tree grows tall with an irregular open rounded crown and can live over 150 years of age. The trunk of the Bean tree is brown to grey in colour, the bark smooth when young, matures into hard plates or ridges.

The leaves appear in late spring and have 3 lobes, all slightly pointed at the head with the centre lobe larger than the two side lobes; the leaf can grow up to 30cm long and 20cm broad. In July and August, the tree produces large panicles of up to 40 trumpet-shaped creamy white flowers with yellow tinging; each floret is around 25mm wide.

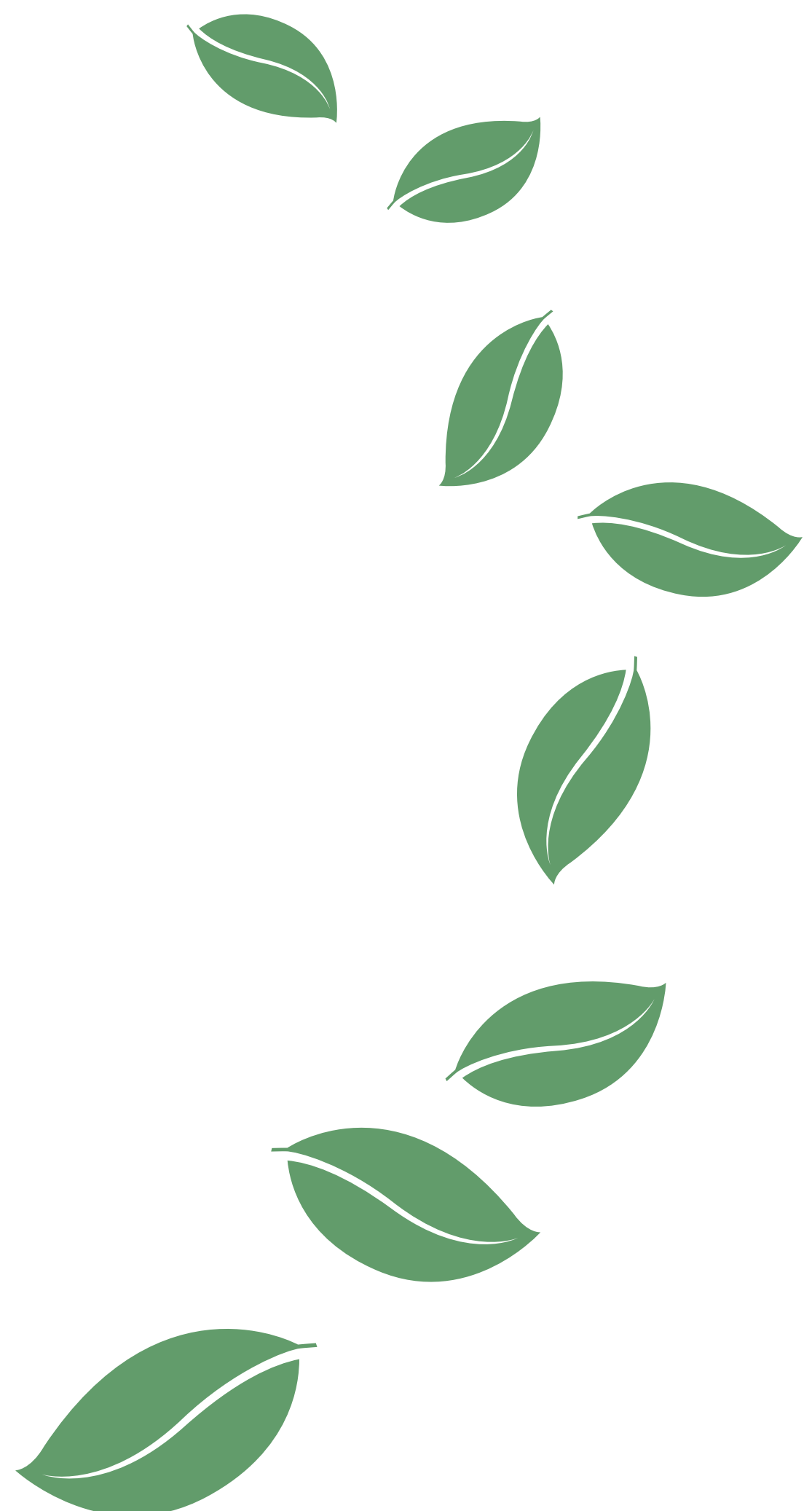
The leaves fall early in the Autumn after the flowers/fruits of the tree have developed into slender seedpods; 25-30cm long. The seed pods slowly turn dark brown and the following spring they open and fall to the ground.

After leaving the Temple travel up the main promenade to the Loggia (old pavilion) at top of the gardens. The Loggia was designed with ‘dinner boxes’; sheltered areas which extended to both

sides of the central bowed columned structure, each column topped with a stone carved cherub. Over time the Loggia fell into dis-repair, then in 1938 Bath council refurbished the structure and removed both 'wings' leaving the structure in its reduced form seen today.

Now enjoy the view of the gardens looking down the promenade with the Loggia behind you. This main promenade follows the alignment with Twerton Roundhill's bronze age burial mound on the horizon, the view of which is obscured by the trees from the top of the gardens, but in winter, you can sometimes see straight through the windows in the Holburne to the hill!

Beside you on your left, is the Ginkgo tree, standing proudly in its own flower bed.





6



6 Maidenhair Tree *Ginkgo biloba*, Height (m): 14, Girth (m): 1.9, Origin: China.

Maidenhair Tree is the English name given to this Chinese tree, but its official name, *Ginkgo biloba* is commonly used. The name *Ginkgo* is thought to derive from a Chinese word 'yinxing' meaning 'silver apricot', the seed of the *Ginkgo* used to be regarded as a precious fruit in China.

The *Ginkgo* is the only surviving member of a family of trees which were common in Jurassic times 350 million years ago; it is a living fossil and is not closely related to any other tree species. The *Ginkgo* tree is highly respected in China, where trees are recorded over 3,000 years old; six *Ginkgo* trees that survived the Hiroshima nuclear bomb blast are still alive today.

Leaves of the *Ginkgo* have been found in the fossil record on every continent. Although it is listed as endangered in the wild, the *Ginkgo* tree is still cultivated in China to supply



Ginkgo yellow leaves

leaves for herbal medicine. The first Ginkgo seeds cultivated in Europe were at the Utrecht Botanical Gardens in the 1730s, the tree arrived in England around the 1750s.

The bark of the Ginkgo with age develops fissures and scales, which are sometimes snake like in appearance. The Ginkgo is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers are borne on separate trees. The flowers are yellow and pendulous in form; female up to 4cm and male up to 8cm in length.

The Ginkgo can reach heights of 25-50m and is common in parks and gardens in the UK. The Ginkgo is also deciduous meaning it loses its leaves in the autumn. The leaf is a distinctive fan shape which is divided into two lobes. On average the leaves are 5-10cm but can grow up to 15cm across. In the spring the leaves open pale green in colour and in the autumn, they turn a brilliant saffron yellow.

The female tree begins to produce fruit, which is a fleshy, brownish orange in colour and about the size of a cherry, from around the age of 20 years. In the autumn, as the fallen fruit, which contains butyric acid, begins to decompose it gives off a strong smell of rancid butter, even vomit!. Because of this unpleasant smell parks often choose a male specimen tree for ornamental display. But we have a female Ginkgo in Sydney Gardens! It can be found in the border at the bottom of the central walkway, on the right hand side as you look down to the Holburne; find the smell in late autumn!

The next tree is the Beech - take the path up and along the top of the tennis courts and walk to the huge tree on the right of the path near the entrance off Sydney Road.



7



7 European Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Height (m): 30, Girth (m): 4.5, Origin: Europe.

This 'native' Beech tree is large enough to place it as part of original planting in Sydney Gardens and may have been part of a beech hedge surrounding the Ride.

Although this Beech measuring 30m is impressively tall, it has some way to go to reach the height of the tallest Beech recorded in the United Kingdom and Ireland which was measured at 45m in 2018; this can be found at Willsersley Castle, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire. Beech trees have been recorded living for over 1000 years.

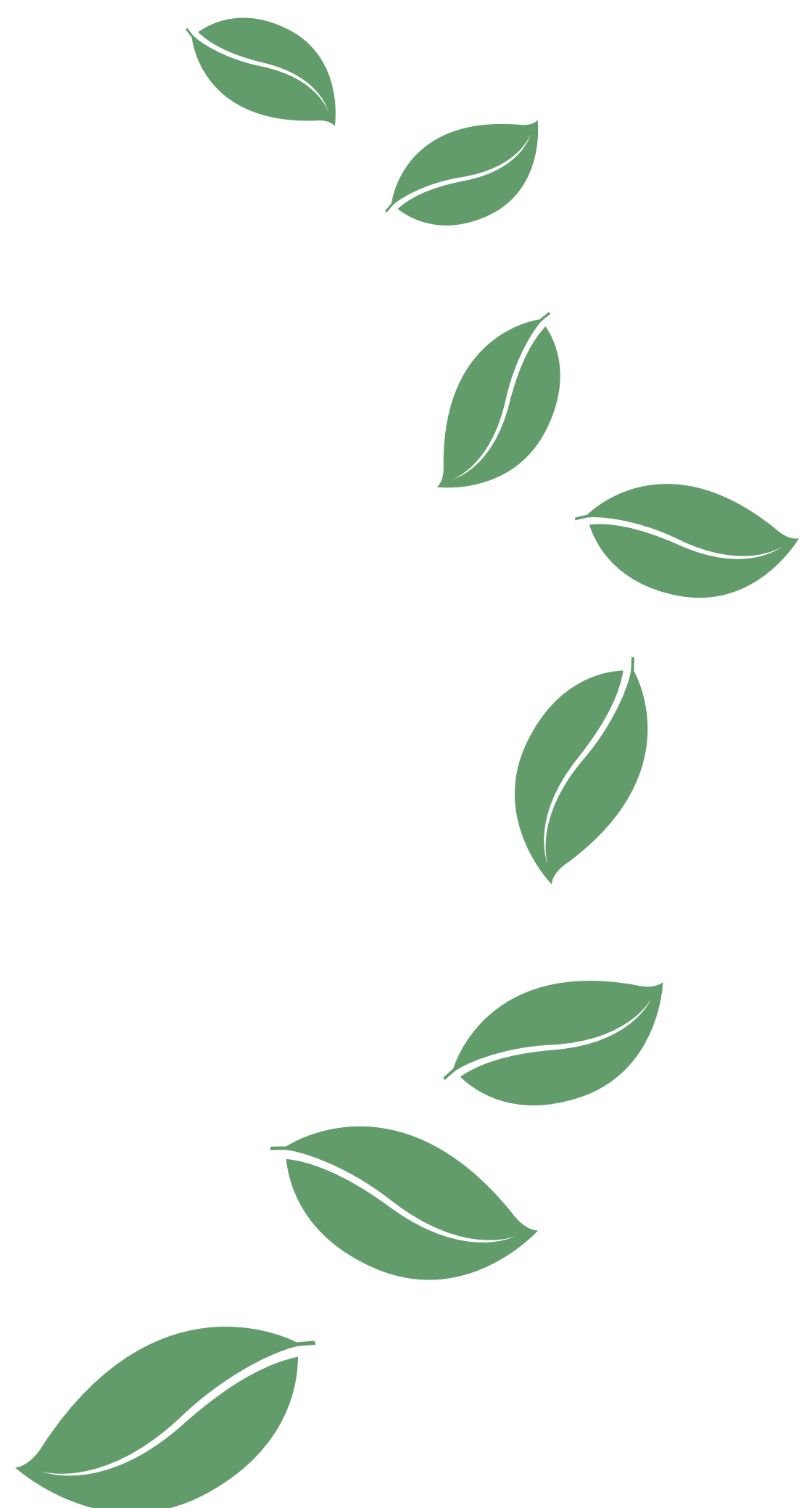
Beech trees have distinctive smooth, light grey bark. They are monoecious, bearing both female and male flowers on the same tree. The small flowers appear in the spring just after the new leaves; the leaf bud is very pointed in appearance. The female flowers are produced in pairs and the male flowers are wind pollinating catkins.

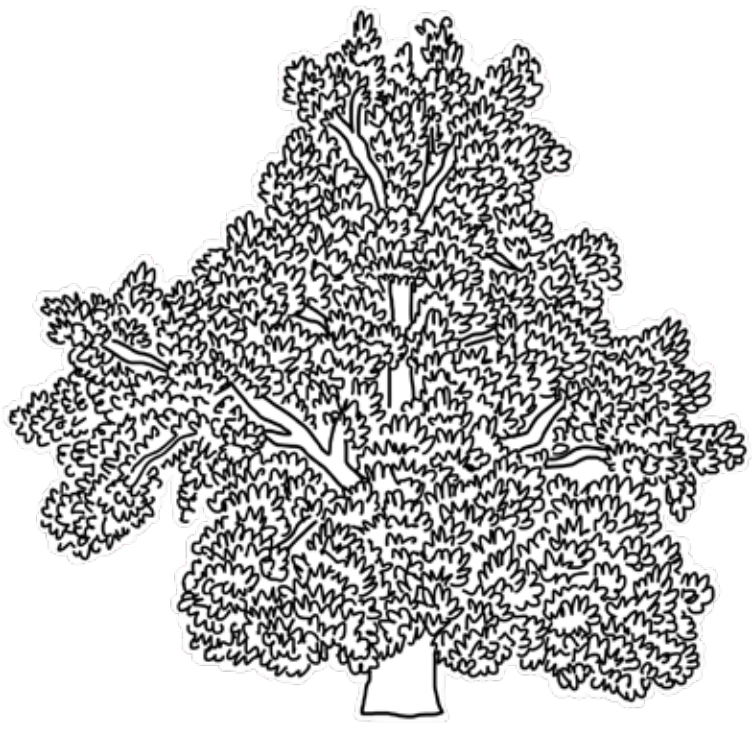
The fruit of the beech is the beechnut, which develops inside a spikey casing burr, which falls to the ground in the autumn. The beechnuts are triangular, have a high

fat content; in the 19th century the nuts were pressed to produce an edible oil, which was also used in lamps. The nuts can be eaten by humans and animals but are slightly toxic if eaten in large quantities due to the tannins and alkaloids they contain.

After leaving the Beech tree follow the gradually sloping path back down into the park, where you will find a Plane tree on the left before the canal bridge. The ornate bridge over the Kennet and Avon Canal dated 1800 was built by Stothert and Pitt, a well-known engineering company in Bath.

There are also two stone bridges over the canal, both of which are adorned with stone carvings which represent the two main rivers of the south of England; one is Sabrina, Goddess of the River Severn and the other a carving of Old Father Thames.





8

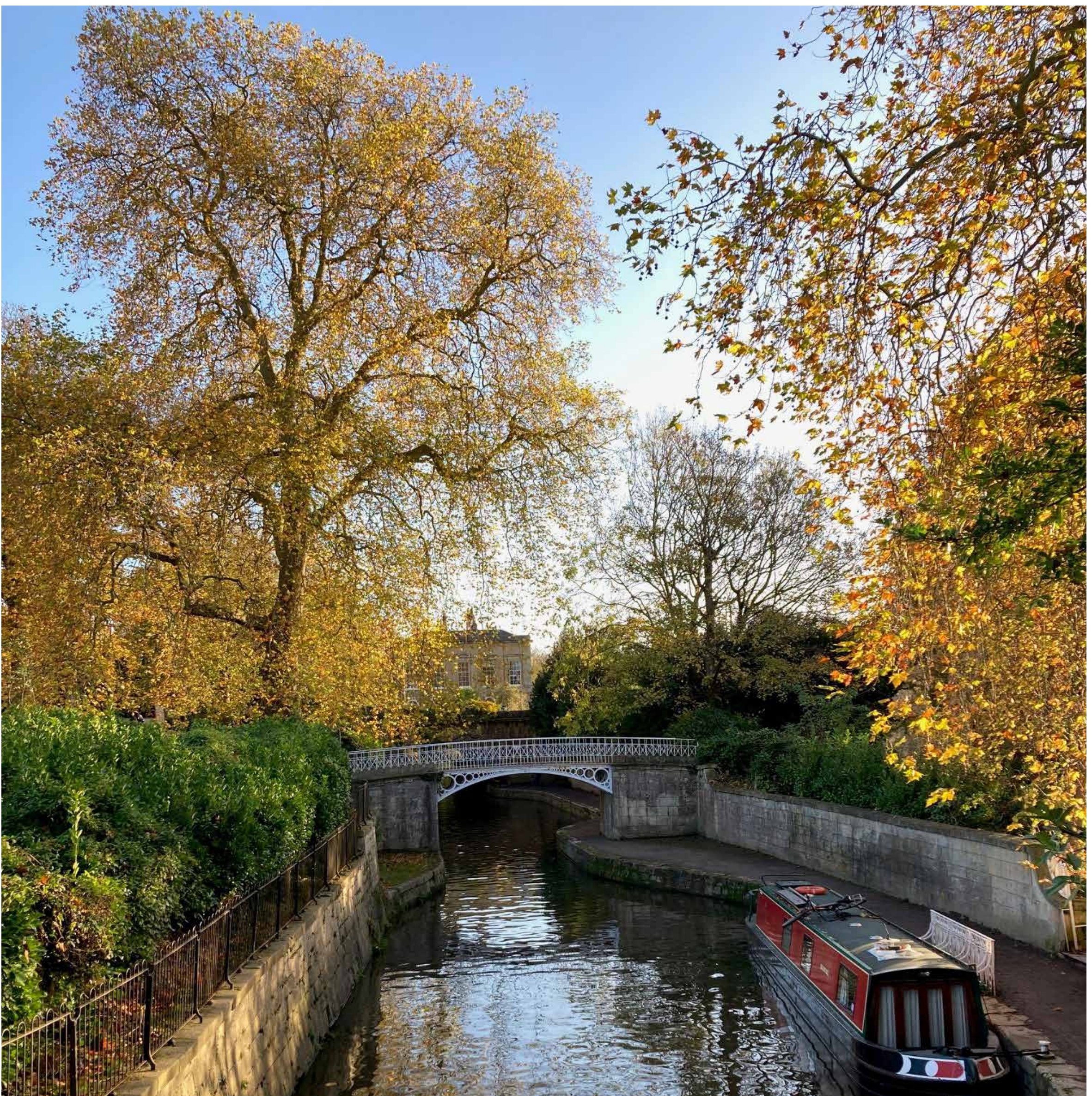


8 London Plane *Platanus x hispanica*, Height (m): 28, Girth (m): 6.6, Origin: Hybrid 17th century.

This Plane, standing a magnificent 28m tall, is thought to have been planted in 1777, before Sydney Gardens was established in 1795. Sydney Gardens are custodian of some very impressive Plane trees, of which this is the largest. However, there are some years of growth to go for the tree to achieve the height some Plane trees have achieved. The tallest London Plane in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland stands at 49.67m high: measured in May 2015 and can be found in Bryanston School grounds in Blandford Forum, Dorset.

The London Plane is a large deciduous tree, a hybrid of the American sycamore and the Oriental Plane tree. The Plane arrived in England between 1660 - 1680, is fast growing when young; some trees recorded growing 20m in 50 years, with a life span over 330 years. The tree is well suited to towns and cities due to its resistance to pollution; dirt easily washing off its shiny thick and leathery leaves. The leaf shape is formed of five triangular lobes, they are green throughout the spring and summer then turn a rich yellow/orange in autumn before falling.

The bark of the Plane is olive green to grey in colour which is shed in large thin plates in mid-summer to reveal a creamy colour bark beneath. The young twigs are green, brown in colour before they mature. The London Plane is monoecious; with both male and female flowers on the same tree but not found growing on the same stems. After pollination the wind-pollinated female flowers develop into spiky fruit with stiff hairs which are retained over the winter gradually breaking up to release their numerous 2-3mm long seeds.



Giant Plane and canal

After crossing the ornate canal bridge the Tulip Tree in Sydney Garden can be found in the grass area between the canal and the railway line.



9



9 Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*, Height (m): 16, Girth (m): 1.7, Origin: North America.

The Tulip Tree is a member of the magnolia family and is native of North America; the species was introduced into Britain around 1650.

The Tulip Tree is deciduous, tolerant of pollution and thrives in parks and gardens in the UK. The tree grows vigorously and can reach heights over 58m high, with a life span over 500 years. It is a 'hardwood' tree, and its limbs often begin high up the column trunk, which makes it a valuable timber tree. The mature bark is brown, furrowed like a woven basket and aromatic. The new branchlets begin smooth and reddish in colour maturing to dark grey and eventually brown.

The leaves have four lobes growing up to 12-15cm wide and long: heart shaped. The colour of the leaf begins as light green and matures to a bright green, shining and smooth on top and paler green underneath. In the autumn the leaves become a clear bright yellow.

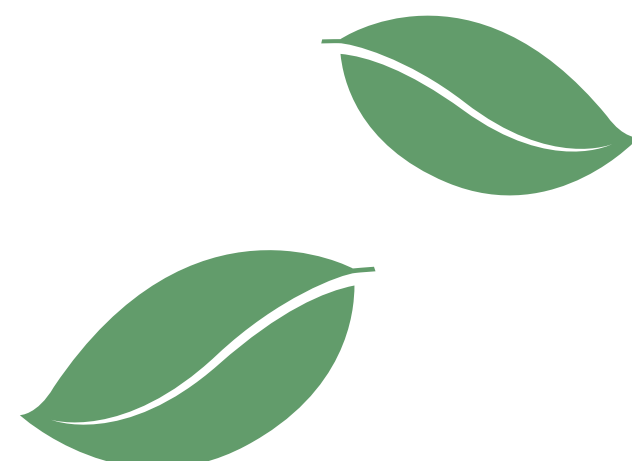
In Britain the flowers are produced on mature trees, over 15 years of age, in May, this varies in warmer or cooler climates. They are shade tolerant but

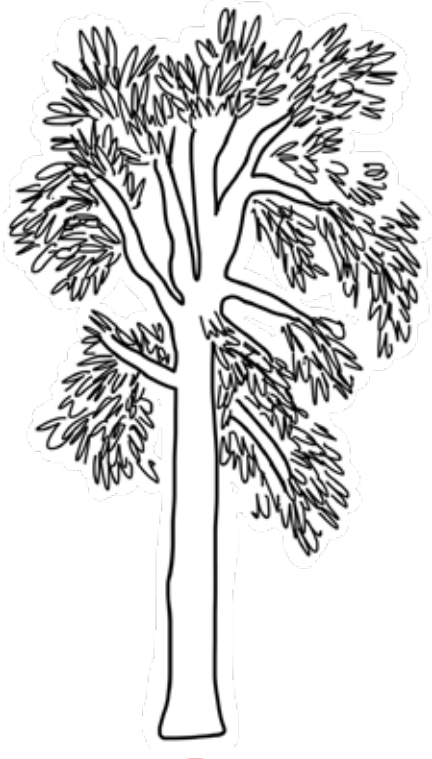
intolerant of drought. The flowers are cupped shaped like a tulip, perfumed, yellow and green with orange markings around the base. Each flower is formed of 6 petals which stand vertically from the branch: about 4-5cm in height. The fruit develops in a cone shaped upright cluster of single winged seeds, which are dispersed by the wind.



Tulip Tree in autumn (*left*), Tulip Tree flower and cones (*right*)

Leave the Tulip Tree and walk back to the path running beside the hedge down to the ornate bridge over the rail line. Walk over the bridge and follow the path to the left, after a few yards turn left down towards the railway line. Ahead of you is the Blue Atlas Cedar which is the first in the group of 3 exotics which can be found down by the railway line: the two other trees being the Giant Sequoia and the Cedar of Lebanon.





10



10 Blue Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica* Glauca Group, Height (m): 24, Girth (m): 3.4, Origin: North Africa.

Native to the Atlas Mountains of Algeria and Morocco, some sources believe the Blue Atlas Cedar to be a subspecies of the Cedar of Lebanon, but most modern sources regarded it as a distinct species *Cedrus atlantica*.



Blue Atlas Cedar

The Blue Atlas Cedar is a slow growing evergreen tree which can reach up to 25m high at maturity, with a spread of 15m. It has a low canopy with an average clearance 1.5m off the ground. If the tree is sited in an appropriate position it can live to 80 years and more. The 'Glauca Group' of cedars are one of the most striking in appearance of all the blue conifers. They can be identified by their short 2cm long, silvery-blue needles which spiral around the stem to form the leaf.

The male blossom of the Blue Atlas is pale yellow in colour, cylindrical in shape and up to 5cm in length. The female blossom is reddish/green in colour, around 1cm long and egg shaped. The fruit/cones which are barrel-shaped, can grow up to 7cm in length and take up to 2 years to mature. The bark develops from a smooth green/grey in colour when young, into a brown/grey rough textured surface of flakes and fissures.



Blue Atlas needles (*left*) and cones (*right*)

The next in this trio of exotics is the Giant Sequoia which stands slightly to the left of the Blue Cedar and a few meters further along the pathway.



11



**11 Giant Sequoia *Sequoiadendron giganteum*,
Height (m): 28, Girth (m): 4.98, Origin: North
America.**

The Giant Sequoia was brought to Britain from the USA around 1853, in the Victorian era, when traders were traveling the world to bring back exotic species and seeds to supply the developing and expanding garden nurseries in Britain and Europe. Botanic gardens were also founded across the Empire with Kew Gardens established at its centre.

The work to lay the new railway line through Sydney Gardens began in 1839. When the work was complete, landscaping of the surrounding area of the railway line took place and new species were planted. The planting of the Giant Sequoia in Sydney Gardens is thought to have taken place around this time which would place the tree at over 170 years old.

The Giant Sequoia is the only living species of *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. Sequoia is native to the Pacific Northwest of America, California, recorded at heights of over 91 m and ages over 3500 years, in its natural habitat. The tree carries the generic name of *Sequoiadendron* after Sequoyah, an educator and significant person in the Cherokee Nation. Sequoyah

invented a way of writing his own language which was officially taken up by the Cherokee Nation in 1825. Thousands of Cherokees became literate in their own language and the first Native American newspaper in the United States was established using this system. Sequoyah died on the Mexican/US border in 1843.

The Sequoia characteristic fibrous, spongy bark is bright reddish brown in colour and can be up to 75cm thick. In its natural habitat, in the USA this fibrous bark protects the tree against the frequent forest fires. The Giant Sequoia regenerates by seed. The seed cones are 4-7cm long and mature in 18-20 months, but the seeds can remain inside the green closed cone for up to 20 years. A cone can produce around 230 seeds, which are dark brown in colour, 4-5mm long with side wings. Young trees start to bear cones at around the age of 12 years.



Giant Sequoia (*left*) and cone (*right*)





12



12 Cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani*; Height (m): 29, Girth (m): 3.6, Origin: Asia.

The third tree in this trio of exotics beside the railway line is the Cedar of Lebanon. The *C. libani* is Native of Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon, and Turkey, where it has great religious and historic significance; it is the national emblem of Lebanon. The tree is a coniferous evergreen, which can reach 40m in height; it has a distinctive shape with several trunks and clear horizontal lines in its structure. *Cedrus libani* grows rapidly until the age of 45-50 years, then growth slows; after the age of 70 years growth is extremely slow; the oldest is recorded at 2022 years old.

The tree bark of the Cedar is rough with clearly defined close ridges and cracks, with a colour range from grey to blackish brown. The leaves, dark green/grey needles, are 10-15mm long and organised in spiral formation around side shoots in clusters or rosettes.

The *Cedrus libani* is monoecious; male and female flowers/cones produced on the same tree. The production of cones usually begins when the tree is around 40 years old. The female cones are barrel shaped; 6-9cm long and grow singulary at the end of a short shoot. The cones begin as green in colour

and change to grey/purple before turning brown on maturity, which can be up to 12 months after pollination. The male cones are much smaller, they begin greenish/grey in colour but by maturity are longer and brown in colour; releasing their pollen into the air for wind pollination to take place.

Continue along the path towards the lower entrance into Sydney Gardens from Sydney Road, and the Weeping Ash will be found on the left side of the path.



Cedar of Lebanon tree (*left*) and cone (*right*)





13



13 Weeping Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula', Height (m): 5, Girth (m): 1.24, Origin: Europe.

The Ash, native throughout Europe, is a medium sized deciduous tree growing 12-18m tall with a life span of 200-250 years.

The weeping Ash has an umbrella-shaped crown, with pendulous branches arching to the ground. The trunk is smooth and pale greenish/grey in early years of growth and with age it becomes thicker, brown in colour and develops shallow fissures.

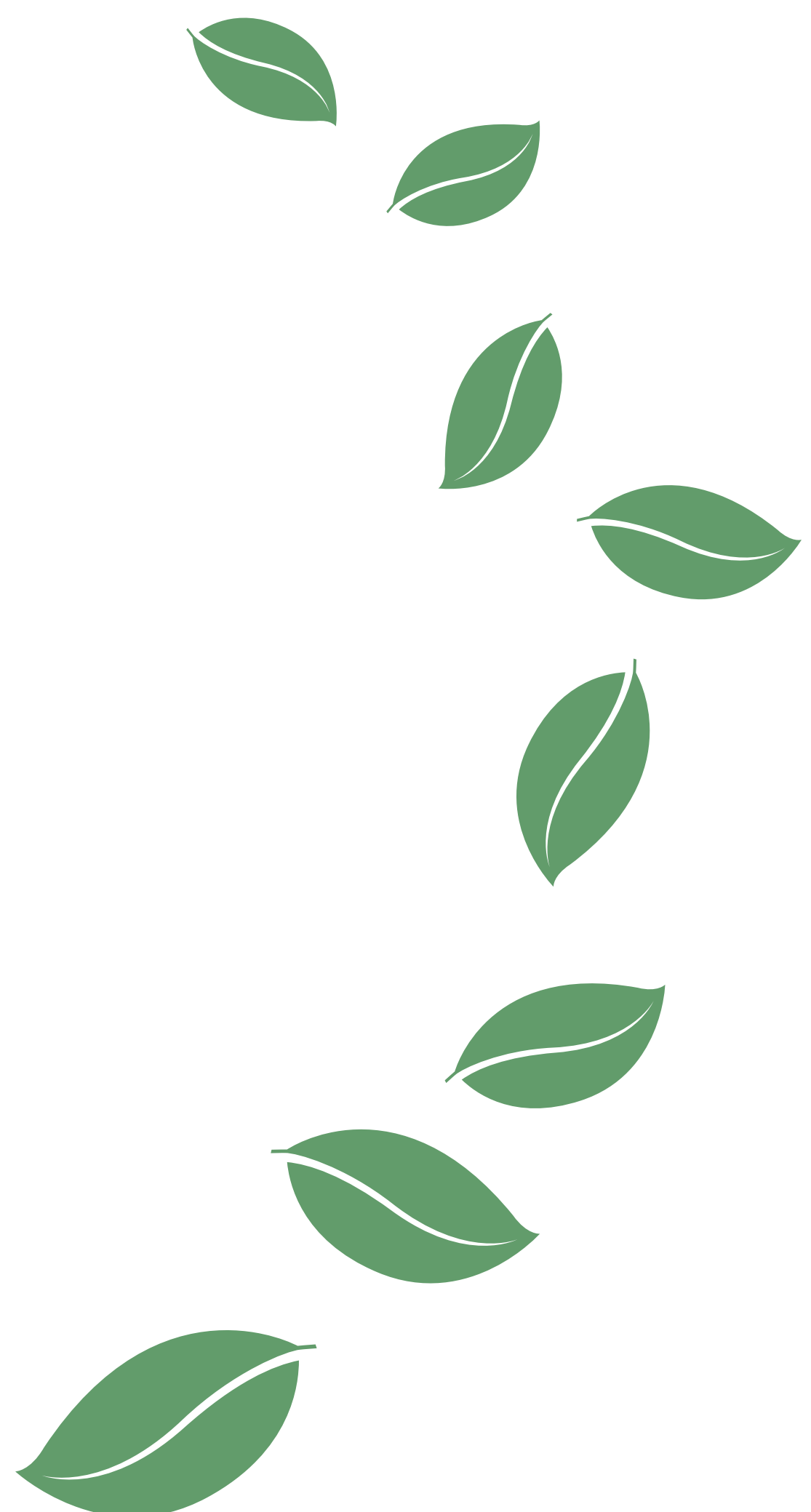
In spring the weeping ash produces small dark purple flowers, which are wind pollinated, before the leaves appear. The ash tree can produce male and female flowers on the same tree, or just male or female flowers. Additionally, if the tree has produced male flowers one year the following year it can produce female flowers. The fruit/seeds of the ash are commonly known as keys or helicopters; the wings aiding dispersal by the wind.

The buds of the weeping ash are jet-black, one of its distinguishing features; most of the other ash species have brown or grey buds. The leaves are 20-35cm long with 7-13 small leaflets attached to the central

stem, in opposite formation. The leaflets are 3-12cm long and have an attractive pinnate form. The green leaves are often late to open in the spring and early to fall in the autumn; having become bright yellow.

Sadly, Weeping Ash are extremely susceptible to 'Ash Die Back', which is caused by an Ascomycete fungus. This fungus has caused the loss of a high percentage of the woodland ash tree, so it is probable this tree will succumb.

Head further along this lower path to find the next special tree, the Metasequoia.





14



14 The Dawn Redwood *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*; 12 years old, Height (m) 5.5, girth (cm) 32, is a living fossil originating from central/south China.

The tree is a fast-growing deciduous conifer that grows in a conical shape. It has been recorded at 50m high but more commonly reaches heights of 30-40m; it is the shortest of the redwoods.

The leaves of the *Metasequoia* are 1-3cm long and sited opposite, they are bright green in spring and turn a reddish brown before they fall, in autumn. The cones: ovoid in shape, form at the end of long spikes, are 5-6mm in length and 1.5-2.5mm in diameter.

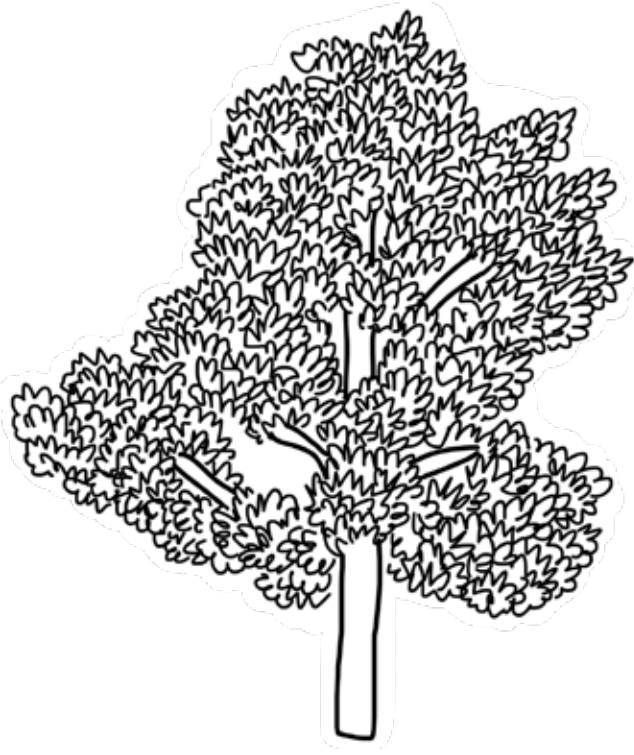
The bark, dark red/brown in colour, is thick and spongy with deep vertical fissures, similar to the bark of closely related genus, Coastal Redwood and Giant Sequoia; the name *Metasequoia*, meaning 'like a Sequoia'. However, the bark of the *Metasequoia* behaves differently to other redwoods in its tendencies to exfoliate in ribbon like strips. Additionally, the *Metasequoia* displays feathery, fern-like foliage in 'armpits' below the tree branches, which are soft to the touch.

In the early part of the 20th century, the Metasequoia was thought to be extinct with only fossilized information available. Then in 1946 a small population was found alive in central China. The Metasequoia is at considerable risk of extinction in the wild due to deforestation, however, it has now been extensively planted worldwide in arboreta and has become a popular ornamental plant.

This Metasequoia was planted in Sydney Gardens Bath, in November 2021. The tree was chosen to commemorate the National Lottery Heritage funded restoration project of Sydney Gardens, a special Grade II listed Georgian Pleasure Garden.

Now take the path back into the gardens and along to the main promenade. When there, look at the entrance to the Holburne Museum; this building was the original entrance into the gardens when opened in 1795. To the left of the entrance stands a magnificent London Plane Tree.





15



15 London Plane *Platanus x hispanica*; Height (m): 14, Girth (m): 5.21, Origin: Hybrid 17th century.

Although only half the size at 14 meters of the tallest Plane in the park, this is an impressive tree situated in a significant position; from which there is an excellent vista of this Historic Georgian Garden.

You might like to visit the **London Plane Tree Trunk *Platanus x hispanica*** **B** on the lower lawn. This tree sadly had to be felled in 2018 due to fungus. Now you can climb on this giant!



London Plane leaf

This Tree Trail was developed by the Friends of Sydney Gardens and written by Gill Gazzard from personal research with additional data from an Arboreal Assessment by Bosky Trees for the Sydney Gardens Project in 2020, B&NES Tree Team, and by Richard S White.

The tree labels on the 15 trees are placed to inform the visitor and to highlight some noteworthy trees in Sydney Gardens. The labelling of the trees was funded by the Friends of Sydney Gardens, with support received from B&NES Parks Service.

For further information about the trees and the park go to:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/sydneygardens

www.friendsofsydneygardens.org

Share your favourite trees with us:

[@fosydneygardens](#) and [@bathnesparks](#) on Twitter and Instagram.

Botany, empire and deep time - find out about how our trees connect across time and place through Richard S. White's research:

medium.com/sydney-gardens-bath/trees/home

To follow more trails around Sydney Gardens:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/sydneygardenstrails

And for a special Tree Activity Trail for Children (downloadable PDF) go to:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/sydneygardenslearning

