



Strawberry Tree



Judas Tree



Deodar Cedar



Caucasian Wingnut



South Park Gardens Tree Trail Walk

A Victorian Pleasure Gardens

South Park Gardens is a beautifully restored Victorian decorative model residential park, designed in 1899, constructed in 1900 and opened in September 1901. It was restored in 2008/9 with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks & Gardens and is situated within the South Park Conservation Area in Wimbledon.

Managed and maintained by the London Borough of Merton in partnership with the Friends of South Park Gardens; it provides a much needed and well used green space in the heart of the South Park community.

There are over 150 trees in the Gardens, including over 40 different species. Around 20 trees were either transplanted or removed as part of the restoration project. Some of the trees, which were removed, (mostly conifers, which were later additions to the Gardens) were diseased or dying. This has had the effect of opening up the Gardens and has improved the sight lines throughout.

Several new trees were planted including four, which were planted by four local primary schools - The Priory, Holy Trinity, St Mary's and Pelham - to commemorate the restoration. The four trees - Silver Maple - *Acer saccharinum* (Holy Trinity); Purple Leaf Flowering Plum - *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' (St Mary's); Japanese Crab Apple - *Malus floribunda* (The Priory) and Hupeh Crab Apple - *Malus hupehensis* (Pelham) have plaques to identify them.

Rare Specimens and Trees of note

- Strawberry tree to the right of the ladies' toilets. Rare in England, more plentiful in Ireland. It has dark green glossy leaves with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn.
- Judas tree to the right of the outer path between ladies' toilets and Kings Road gate. The bark is purplish and ridged with fine brown fissures. Leaves are small and alternate and vary from yellowish to dark green.
- Deodar Cedar in the circle at Kings Road/Trinity Road junction - the largest tree in the Gardens. Unlike the Cedar of Lebanon, which has level branches, these sweep down to the ground. The spiral set leaves are dark green and curved.
- Tortured Willow in opposite corner of the Gardens; beautiful shaped tree with interesting, twisted leaves and branches. A cultivar of a once very rare species, from China, now more common and sometimes called 'contorted', which describes it very well.
- Caucasian Wingnut tree close to horse trough. Rare specimen, has fabulous bright gold/yellow foliage in October. It has large pinnate leaves and catkins. Most of the 8 species originate in China.
- Sweet gum tree on the right of the path between the ladies' toilets and Kings Road gate. Leaves generally unfold in May and are similar to a maple and provide good colour in the autumn.

Welcome to South Park Gardens

We hope that you enjoy your visit to the Gardens. Please help us to look after the trees and wildlife by keeping your dog on a lead, picking up after it and using the dog waste bins. Please also take your litter home with you or use the bins provided. Thank you.



Trail Leaflets

This is one of a series of trail leaflets that have been produced for South Park Gardens as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund restoration project. These leaflets will help visitors to the Gardens explore a wide range of flora and fauna and will also help to interpret the history of the local area.

The others include:

- Local History of South Park Gardens
- Birds in South Park Gardens
- Wildlife in South Park Gardens

To order more copies of this leaflet or others in the series, go to the website and download the order form. Schools may also order work sheets and book visits to the mini-beast sanctuary.

Details of our next guided tours of the Gardens will also be posted on the website.

Alternatively contact Jil Hall (Community Park Warden) on 07742 633760.



Why not join the Friends of South Park Gardens?

The Friends group was set up to help to restore, maintain and improve the Gardens for the benefit of the community. If you have enjoyed your visit to the Gardens, why not join us?

If you would like to find out more about the Friends of South Park Gardens, or volunteer to help with events, please visit the website www.southparkgardens.org or write to Friends of South Park Gardens c/o YMCA, The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1RY.

Membership costs just £10 per household, £5 for a single person, per year. Please complete the form below or download one (plus a standing order form if you prefer) from the website: www.southparkgardens.org

Friends of South Park Gardens Membership Form

I/We should like to join the Friends of South Park Gardens (subscriptions last until May next year). Enclosed is the £10 per household/family subscription (cheque or postal order).

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

If you would like to receive your newsletters via email (this is helpful as it saves us money) please fill in the next line:-

Email address:

Send to: Friends of South Park Gardens
c/o YMCA, The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1RY.

If you are joining by post please pay by cheque or postal order and remember to put a stamp on the envelope.

Please make cheques payable to:
FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK GARDENS.

Tree Trail Walk

Follow the instructions below to explore the trees in the Gardens, walk clockwise around the outside path, starting at the horse trough.

- Starting at the gate opposite 3 Dudley Road, bear left at the horse trough and take the outer path, past the ladies' and disabled toilets. In the grass circle on your right there are 4 silver pendant lime trees and 2 new lime saplings. These have leaves which are dark green above and white underneath. You can see from the lichen on the trunks that the air is clear. In the border just past the ladies' toilets there is a laurel and some yew trees and a large horse chestnut tree. Behind the horse chestnut is a strawberry tree (a) – *Arbutus unedo* – this has three trunks, dark green glossy leaves with a serrated edge and has panicles of white bell-shaped flowers in the autumn. It appears on the flag of Madrid (with a she-bear).
- On the right can be found a Judas tree (b) – named after Judea from where it comes (although some believe Judas Iscariot hanged himself from one). Then in a bed on the right there are a few pine trees and another horse chestnut on the left, followed by a group of holm oaks. Opposite them is a yew, cedar and a sweet gum tree - *Liquidambar styraciflua*, then on each side of the path two evergreen (holm) oaks – *Quercus ilex* 1976.



Strawberry Tree



Judas Tree



Holm Oak



Deodar Cedar



Salix matsudana
'Torturosa'

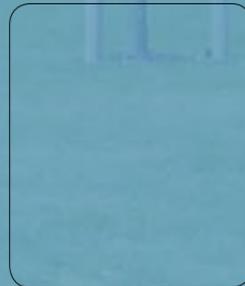


Acer platanoides
'Crimson King'

- To the right of the Kings Road gate is another holm oak (c) used as a climbing tree by local children. The lower branches have been trimmed to facilitate this. Then there are further oaks and yews followed by a nice silver birch just before the wild flower circle. In the circle with logs around it is the largest tree in the Gardens – a Deodar Cedar (d). It is nearly 30 metres tall and has a spread of 12 metres. The lower branches sweep majestically right down to the ground, providing excellent shade. Around it are several witch hazel saplings.
- As you come around that circle, there are mostly oaks, limes and yews on the border. Near the path is another popular climbing tree; a Lawson cypress - *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, which younger children like to clamber over. Going past the Trinity Road gate there is a small cedar, holly, cherry and pyracantha. In the small circle and just past the electricity substation several new pine trees have been planted. In the big circle is a magnificent tortured willow – *Salix matsudana* 'Torturosa' (e), with another smaller one just beyond it.
- In the border alongside Dudley Road are more oaks, maples, a laurel, holly and a silver birch. Opposite the willow is a leaning Box Elder tree (a type of maple). Next to the smaller tortured willow on your right is a Norway maple - *Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King' - (f), which has lovely autumn colour. There is also a Ginkgo tree with distinctive fan shaped leaves. After a small gap on the left is a Chinese privet - *Ligustrum lucidum* 'Exelsom', followed by an oak and a yew.

- At the Dudley Road gate a large lime tree – *Tilia petiolaris* (g) – has been given a circular bed of its own. Just beyond it on the right are a yew (which has been vigorously pruned), a silver maple, red oak – *Quercus Rubra*. On the right is a silver maple. It is worth remembering this tree when you see the new silver maple sapling in the centre planted by Holy Trinity School, to see how it will develop. On the left are a beech and another silver birch.
- At the next junction turn right towards the flowerbeds in the middle of the Gardens. On that corner on the right is a Caucasian Wingnut tree (h), which has beautiful golden yellow foliage in October. On the left you will see a tree with purple foliage. This is a purple leaf flowering plum, which was planted by the pupils of St Mary's Primary School.
- Walking towards the fountain on the left is a common pear tree. Just past the fountain on the left is a splendid hornbeam – *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastiata' (i). Walking clockwise around the bandstand area you will see on your left the Japanese crab apple tree planted by The Priory Primary School, then the silver maple planted by Holy Trinity pupils and the hupeh crab apple planted by the pupils at Pelham Primary School.
- This central circular area would have had a circle of trees when the Gardens were first opened and these new saplings have been planted to recreate that circle of trees. Other existing trees in the circle include hornbeams, crab apples and London Planes.

This concludes the tree trail walk.



Tilia petiolaris



Caucasian Wingnut



Carpinus betulus
'Fastiata'