

## Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)

The tree is an evergreen, native to the Mediterranean. The botanical name *Quercus ilex*, literally translates as holly oak. This is because the young leaves have spiny pointed lobes, like holly and holm was an old word for holly. The spiny leaves tend to appear on the lower branches of the tree, and again it is thought that they evolved this way to protect the foliage from grazing animals, similar to the holly tree.

Its wood is hard and tough and has a long history of practical uses, although in Britain the wood of the English Oak would have been more utilised.

The fruit or acorns are smaller than those of our native oaks and mature in a single summer. They are green when young and can turn reddish-brown before falling in the autumn.



## Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)

A fast growing deciduous conifer tree that is one of three species known as redwoods. The Dawn Redwood is the only living metasequoia and until the 1940s when it was discovered in China, was thought to have been extinct. It remains critically endangered in its native habitat.

Despite being the shortest of the redwoods, it grows to 60m tall and is broad at the base for stability, which gives it a pyramidal shape.

It has beautiful fearny foliage that is a bright light green in spring, turning to russet-brown with tints of coppery pink in Autumn.

The leaves are short, broad needles like the yew in the summer. Buds appear on the underside, rather than the top of the branch like other conifers.

## Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

The Holly is a native evergreen that is most commonly thought of as a Christmas decoration. It was considered bad luck to cut down Holly as evergreen trees were associated with eternal life and supernatural powers.

The leaves have a glossy dark-green top and matt pale-green underside and with its spine-tipped lobes are easily recognisable.

The Holly also has distinctive red berries that whilst mildly toxic to humans, provide a winter feast for birds and other wildlife.

Most hollies have separate male and female plants (dioecious). The pink-white flowers appear in May and the berries emerge in November on the female plant.



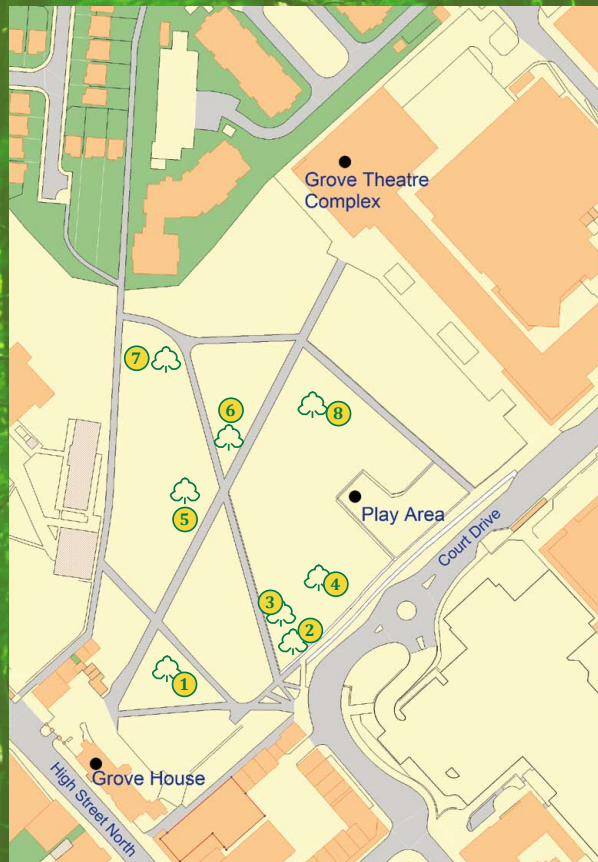
## Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

The name of this tree comes from the beautiful flowers which resemble tulips. It is a large deciduous tree that was previously also known as canoe wood due to extensive use in boatbuilding by Native American people. Whilst it can be up to 20 years for the first flowers to bloom, the tree also has distinctive bright green, four-lobed leaves.

## Cherry Tree (*Prunus*)

The ornamental flowering cherry are a group of cherry species that are grown as ornamental plants, for their profusion of flowers, ornamental foliage and shape.

To help you identify some of the trees in Grove House Gardens, follow the tree trail around some of the most notable examples:



### Map Key

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|--|---|
| 1. <b>European Beech</b><br>( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> ) | 5. <b>Dawn Redwood</b><br>( <i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i> ) |
| 2. <b>Tree of Heaven</b><br>( <i>Allanhus</i> )        | 6. <b>Tulip Tree</b><br>( <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> )        |
| 3. <b>Holm Oak</b><br>( <i>Quercus ilex</i> )          | 7. <b>Sycamore</b><br>( <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> )              |
| 4. <b>Yew</b><br>( <i>Taxus baccata</i> )              | 8. <b>Cedar</b><br>( <i>Cedrus</i> )                              |



Welcome to  
**THE TREES**  
OF GROVE  
HOUSE GARDENS  
DUNSTABLE



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# Trees, Wonderful Trees!

Grove House Gardens are 2.37 hectares of important green space, located in the heart of Dunstable town centre. The gardens are home to around 80 mature and semi mature trees, with an additional 20 new trees, which were planted during the extensive 2007 renovations.

Many of the trees are a legacy of the 19th and 20th century uses of the house and gardens as privately owned property. The list of tree species is impressive and includes some less common tree species such as Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Metasequoia (Dawn Redwood), Quercus ilex (Holm Oak) and Liriodendron (Tulip Tree).

The treescape forms an integral part of the backbone of the gardens and along with the adjacent listed buildings the trees help to create a mature and aesthetically pleasing open space with a sense of history and belonging.

## Have you ever really thought about trees?

Trees are an important part of our landscape, helping to prevent erosion and providing a weather-sheltered ecosystem in and under their foliage, for other plants and wildlife. They play a vital role in producing oxygen and reducing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, as well as moderating ground temperature.

Wood from trees is an essential building material and the source of so many every day items such as furniture, pencils, paper, boats, tools and houses. Other products include clothing, energy, medication, detergents and cosmetics. As well as fruit and nuts, some trees also produce edible sap and leaves, therefore providing food for ourselves and our wildlife.

## What do you know about trees?

Trees can be divided into two main groups: those with flattened and wide leaves (broadleaves) and those with needle-like leaves (conifers).

Most broadleaved trees lose their leaves in winter and are known as deciduous. Most conifers however keep their leaves in winter and are called evergreen.

Flowers, cones and fruit also provide some of the means by which to identify different species of tree.

# Can you identify the trees in Grove House Gardens?

Things to look for in Grove House Gardens:

## European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)



The beech is beautiful year round, the foliage turning from shimmering green to dark green in summer before becoming a lustrous rich russet brown and golden bronze in winter.

The bark is smooth and light grey in colour. The fruit is a small (10-15mm long) three angled nut, borne singly or in pairs and encased in soft spined husks or capsules. The nuts are edible, though bitter and are called beechnut.

Flowers are single sexed (monoecious), the female flowers borne in pairs, the male flowers wind-pollinating catkins, produced in spring shortly after the new leaves appear.

## Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)

A medium sized deciduous tree, typically 15-25m tall with a slender trunk. It has a crown of arched branches with drooping branchlets and a distinctive white peeling bark with black cracks or fissures.

The leaves are triangular, 3-7cm long with a broad base, pointed tip and coarsely double toothed serrated margins.

Flowers are wind pollinated catkins produced before the leaves in early spring, the small (1-2mm) winged seeds ripening in late summer on pendulous, cylindrical catkins 2-4cm long and 7mm broad.



## Lime / Linden (*Tilia*)

A large deciduous tree reaching typically 20-40m. The trunk is sturdy and the twigs are fine and thick and in summer, densely covered with abundant foliage.

The large leaves (6-20cm) are heart shaped and mostly asymmetrical. They have tiny pea-like fruit which hang attached to a specialised ribbon-like leaf or bract, that launches the ripened seed clusters from the parent tree.

## Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Another large deciduous tree that can grow up to 36m tall.

The tree flowers any time from the beginning of April and retains its abundant candle-like white blooms until mid May. It has a distinctive compound, palmate leaf that has 5-7 stalk-less leaflets. The leaf scars left on twigs after the leaves have fallen have a recognisable horseshoe shape.

The 'conker' of the horse chestnut is a glossy brown nut, used in the popular children's game. The conker is encased in a green, spikey, mine-like capsule that falls from the tree in September.



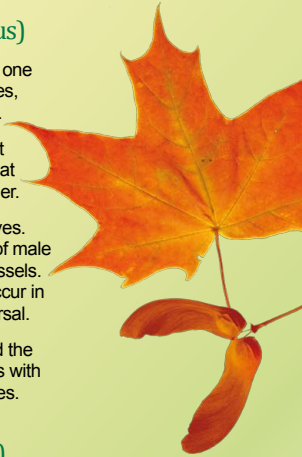
## Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Also known as the Great Maple, the sycamore is one of Britain's most widespread and adaptable trees, being resilient to harsh weather and pollution.

Young trees have a smooth and grey bark but this becomes rough, breaking up into scales that reveal a pale brown to pink inner bark when older.

The flowers appear at the same time as the leaves, and are yellow/green. There are separate clusters of male and female flowers carried on drooping 'tails' or tassels. When fertilised, they form winged seeds. These occur in pairs and form a helicopter structure to aid dispersal.

The leaves are arranged in opposite pairs around the twigs/stem. There are 5 distinct lobes to the leaves with 5 veins radiating from the leaf base into the lobes.



## Cedar (*Cedrus*)

Cedars are a group of coniferous trees that grow up to 30/40m tall. They have a spicy, resinous scented wood, thick ridged or square cracked bark and broad, level branches.

The leaves are evergreen and needle-like and vary in colour from bright to dark green to a blue-green, depending on the thickness of the white wax layer which protects the leaves from desiccation. The seed cones are barrel shaped and disintegrate at maturity to release winged seeds.

There are several types of cedar in Grove House Gardens.



## Thuja

Coniferous, evergreen trees from the cypress family that grow between 3-18m tall. They have a stringy textured bark and whilst leaves in young seedlings are needle-like, become scale-like in older trees.

Male cones are small and located at the tips of twigs. Female cones start out similarly inconspicuous but by maturity (6-8 months) have grown to 1-2cm in length. They have 6-12 overlapping scales, each bearing 1-2 small seeds that have a pair of narrow lateral wings.

## Yew Tree (*Taxus baccata*)

The Yew Tree is associated with England and Wales, being the wood from which the longbow was made. It is a relatively slow growing tree but can be long lived.

It is a densely branching evergreen conifer and Taxus derives from the poisonous taxines (or taxanes) found in the tree.

The leaves are dark green, linear and up to 3 cm long, with a pointed tip, and appear to spread in two rows on either side of the shoot. Each seed grows alone at the tip of a dwarf shoot, enclosed in a fleshy, usually red, aril (berry-like structure) which is open at the tip and up to 1 cm in length.

