



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bedford Park

A guide to trees in the park

About the park

In the late 1800s Bedford acquired the right to a 'peoples' park, when the St. John's Hospital Estate, founded by Robert de Parys, was wound up by an Act of Parliament. The selling of some surplus land provided the necessary funding for the park's development, and in 1883 Messrs Brown and Son of Derby began the landscaping. Two years later, at a cost of around £7000 it was completed. The park was officially opened in 1888, since then it has developed into a major local attraction bringing a great deal of enjoyment to the people of Bedford and beyond. The park has a large variety of conifers, which are often planted to provide interest in a winter landscape.

What 3 words (<https://what3words.com>) locations have been used in this trail to help locate the trees.

Start: At the west gate w3w: [///heat.crowd.itself](https://what3words.com) and head in a clockwise direction around the park.

This is a circular route of approx. 1.5 miles / 1.5 hrs



Start at west gate [///heat.crowd.itself](https://what3words.com)



1 Cut-leaved Lime

Tilia platyphyllos 'Laciniata'

[///skirt.wipes.bother](https://what3words.com)

An ornamental form of the Broad-leaved Lime, this tree has small variably lobed leaves and flowers profusely. The cultivar 'Laciniata' is derived from latin, meaning fringed or deeply cut. Identification of this tree is easiest when in full leaf.



2 Indian Bean Tree

Catalpa bignonioides

[///frock.push.swift](https://what3words.com)

Introduced from Southeast US in 1726, this tree has large heart-shaped leaves, large orchid-like flowers in July and August, and long pods of seeds in the autumn, which remain on the tree for most of the winter months. This tree grows to approx. 15m in height.



3 Dawn Redwood

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

[///valve.keen.volume](https://what3words.com)

Native to SW China this redwood is an endangered tree in the wild, and was discovered very recently in 1941. Easily grown from cuttings, this tree is now in many parks and gardens. It is the smallest but fastest growing of the 3 redwoods. One of the few deciduous conifers in Britain, it has orange foliage in autumn.



4 Swamp Cypress

Taxodium distichum

[///washed.watch.same](#)

Native to Southern USA, and particularly swampy habitats, e.g. the Florida Everglades, this tree is also a deciduous conifer, and is very similar in appearance to the Dawn Redwood. It has the potential to be a very large tree, up to 40m, and is very tolerant of prolonged waterlogging. It has the ability to grow 'knee-roots', which stick out above

the water to provide the roots with air, which is vital for roots to survive. This particular tree has an open, irregular form with fluffy sprays.

ID tips: The Dawn Redwood has orange-grey stringy bark, with leaflets that are in opposite pairs. The Swamp Cypress has darker red bark, and the leaflets are in alternate pairs along the twigs. Both lose their leaves in winter.



5 Algerian Oak

Quercus canariensis

[///cones.next.rush](#)

Despite the scientific name, it is not a native tree of the Canary Islands, but a native of North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula. Introduced to the UK in the late 1800's, this semi-evergreen oak retains a large proportion of its leaves throughout the winter, making it easily visible, where in the summer it is much harder to distinguish from the surrounding trees.



6 Scots Pine

Pinus sylvestris

[///escape.mash.baking](#)

A native to the northern regions of the UK, this tree is commonly planted for timber. In parks it, along with other evergreen conifers, is planted to provide a green landscape in the winter. A tall tree, which can grow up to 40m, this pine is fairly slow growing, particularly in cooler climates. The reddish-orange bark of the upper half of the tree makes it easy to

distinguish from other pines. This open grown tree has retained its lower branches, which die off on trees in woodland or closely grown plantations due to shade.



7 Weeping Ash

Fraxinus excelsior 'Pendula'

[///door.zips.quench](#)

An ornamental form of the Common Ash, this tree has an umbrella shaped crown where the branches arch towards the ground.



8 Cappadocian Maple

Acer cappadocium

[///youth.flight.studio](#)

Introduced in 1838, this species is native to North and West Asia. It is named after a region in Turkey, Cappadocia. The leaves have 5 lobes with whisker tips and turn yellow in the autumn. This particular tree has produced a large number of clones via root suckering.



9 Hungarian Oak

Quercus frainetto
 ///noted.corn.field

A native of southern Italy and the Balkans, this tree was introduced to Britain in 1837. The species name is a corruption of the Italian word for tree 'farnetto'. Thriving at altitudes of up to a 1,000m, this tree has deeply lobed, dark green leaves, and good autumn colour.



10 Cypress Oak

Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'
 ///incomes.skinny.zips

A tall columnar form of the English Oak, commonly reaching 20m tall. Cypress Oak are so called as their shape is similar to that of the classic Italian Cypress, painted by Van Gogh, most famously in 'Wheatfield with Cypresses'.



11 Cork Oak

Quercus suber
 ///steer.landed.flame

This evergreen oak, native to the Western Mediterranean, is known for producing wine bottle corks, which comes from the thick bark harvested every 9 years. However, the use of cork extends far back into antiquity, well before the introduction of the glass wine bottle! Some uses include shoe liners, floating buoys, and insulation.



12 Pin Oak

Quercus palustris
 ///rigid.sparks.guess

A North American native, this species was introduced to the UK in 1800. The pin oak has arguably the best autumnal colour of all oaks, turning a rich red-brown in good years. It prefers warm areas of the UK and has been planted in many parks and gardens where the climate suits it.



13 Crimpleaf Norway Maple

Acer platanoides 'Cucullatum'
 ///lance.bond.camps

An unusual cultivar of the Norway Maple, sometimes referred to as the 'Eagle Claw Maple' due to its unusual leaves, it is believed to have been introduced in the UK in the late 1800s.

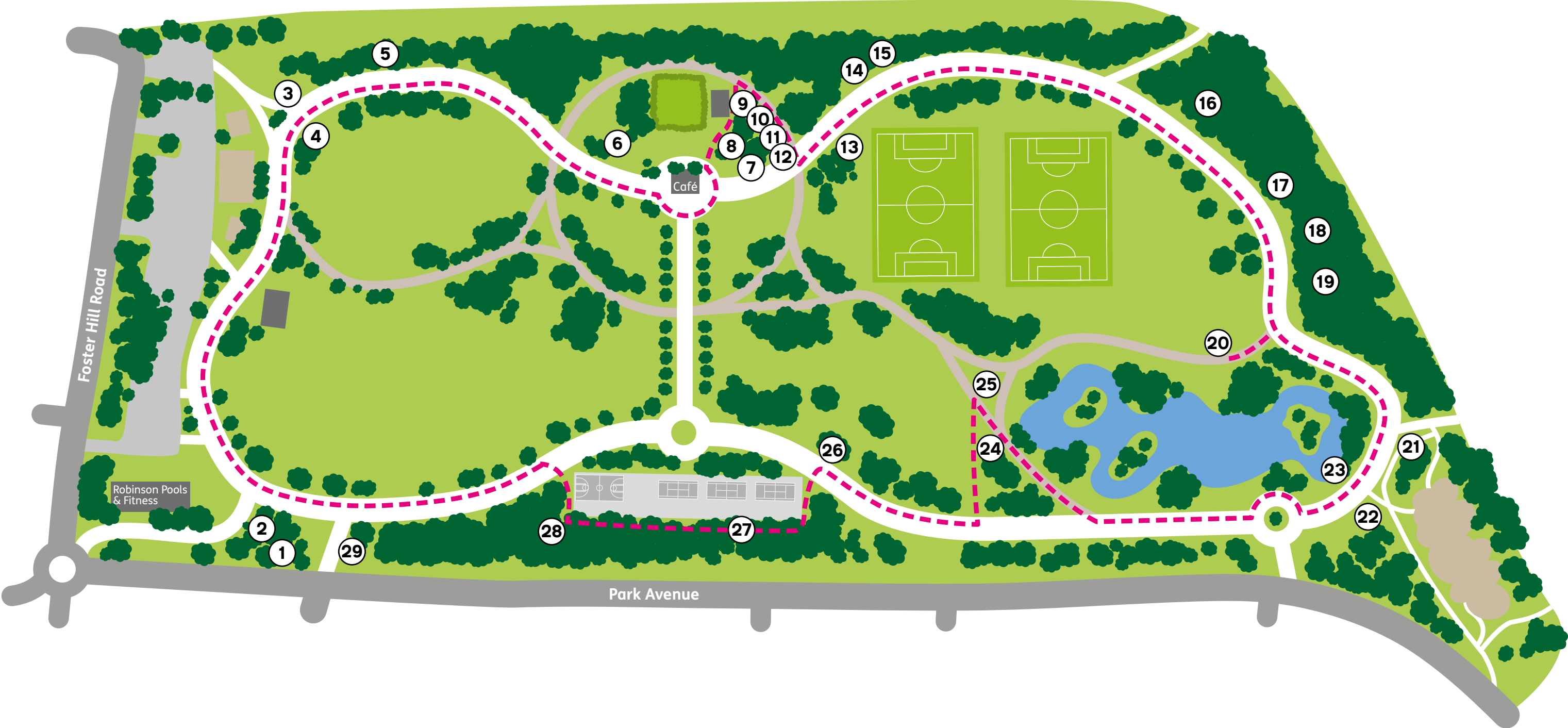


14 Wellingtonia

Sequoiadendron giganteum
 ///skins.giant.wicked

The Wellingtonia was introduced to Britain by William Lobb in 1853, and widely planted by the Victorians. Native to California, they are very long lived, and can grow to be very large on their native soil. 'General Sherman' thought to be the world's largest tree, (but not the tallest), is 84m high and has a circumference of 31m, and is estimated to be over 3000 years old. They do not reach those sizes in the UK but can easily reach 50-60m in height here. It has a soft spongy reddish-brown bark which protects the tree from forest fires.

Tree locations map





15 Cut Leaf Oak

Quercus robur 'Filicifolia'

///asserts.critic.reply

A slow growing tree, this variety has been in cultivation since approx. 1854. The leaves are deeply lobed, giving a fern-like appearance.



16 Nordmann Fir

Abies nordmanniana

///likely.speech.feel

Recognizable as the species used for many Christmas trees, this species ultimately grows to be very large, over 50m in height in the right conditions, so is only suitable for large spaces.



17 Stone Pine

Pinus pinea

///curry.soon.rock

Native to the Mediterranean and the Black sea coasts of Turkey, this species has an umbrella shaped crown when grown in the right space. The bark develops large flat orange-purple plates. The seeds are edible and are an important ingredient of Pesto sauce.



18 Coast Redwood

Sequoia sempervirens

///rooms.cloth.dart

Native to the California and Oregon coast, this tree was introduced to Britain in 1843. It has thick spongy outer bark, which like the Wellingtonia, protects it from fire. It is the world's tallest tree species, and the tallest tree, Hyperion is over 115m tall. The oldest trees are about 2000 yrs old.



19 Japanese White Pine

Pinus parviflora

///play.effort.rams

A medium sized tree, with fairly long (5-7cm) curved needles, in bundles of 5, this tree is a common species for bonsai in Japan. It is also the species used in the blue willow pattern decoration for china porcelain. This tree is one of the many varieties that produce blue-green foliage.

Turn right to follow the path around the north edge of the pond to see:



20 Tulip Tree

Liriodendron tulipifera

///feed.mostly.left

A member of the Magnolia family, this is a large tree, capable of reaching over 50m, named because its flowers resemble the shape of a tulip, this tree has distinctively shaped green foliage which turns yellow in the autumn, with yellow flowers in June/July. A native of N. America, East of the Rocky Mountains, there are records of this tree being in the UK since the 1680s.

Return back the way you came and continue along the path to the right



21 Corsican Pine

Pinus nigra 'Maritima'

///field.alive.wage

Introduced to the UK in 1759, this tree is native to southern Italy. It can grow to be a large tree, up to 45m in height. It has grey-mauve bark, with big scaly plates and greyish-green leaves. This particular tree is unusual because of its looped trunk. The reasons for its contorted growth are unknown, but it is likely it was caused by damage as a young tree.



22 Foxglove Tree

Paulownia tomentosa

///cloth.modest.flies

A medium sized tree native to North China, which is known for its large leaves, lilac flowers, and large seeds. The flower buds are very vulnerable to winter temperatures and frosts, but if they survive the flowers will open before the leaves in late spring.



23 Corkscrew Willow

Salix babylonica var. *pekinensis* 'Tortuosa'

///dull.melt.crash

A form of weeping willow with contorted branches, introduced to the UK in the 18th Century, twigs of this species are often used in flower arrangements as a structural element.

Follow the path to just west of the pond and then turn right heading north towards:



24 European Larch

Larix decidua

///hugs.soap.solved

A deciduous conifer, the Larch is native to the mountains of central Europe, and was introduced to the UK in the 1600s. It can grow to 40m, and has grey-brown bark. The timber is widely used in the construction industry as it is resistant to decay.



25 Oriental Plane

Platanus orientalis

///tile.couches.rewarding

A native tree of the Balkans, this tree has a large spreading crown. Easily mistaken for the London Plane *Platanus x acerifolia*, which is a hybrid of the Oriental Plane and the American Plane *Platanus occidentalis*, the Oriental Plane seeds have smaller and 'spikier' spheres, and can grow a very wide bole or trunk, in some specimens up to 3m diameter.

The flaky bark is very attractive and shows colours that resemble that of army camouflage. Because of the potential to have a wide bole, the Oriental Plane is a tree for large spaces. This particular tree is young and hasn't yet developed the wide girth.

Return back to the path and continue in a clockwise direction:





26 Caucasian Wingnut

Pterocarya fraxinifolia

///snail.folds.metro

Native to Iran, this tree was introduced to the UK in 1782 and has become a popular parkland tree. It has the potential to become a large tree, up to 30m in height. It is particularly attractive in summer when its crown is adorned with yellow pendulous catkins that droop down to 50cm in length. Sadly, human activity is a serious threat to this tree in its native range.

Turn left off the path and go to the south of the tennis courts:



27 Sweet Chestnut

Castanea sativa

///once.forced.reveal

A native of North Africa, South Europe and West Asia, this tree is naturalised in the UK, although precisely when it was introduced is unknown. The tree has long toothed leaves and in the autumn spiky green fruits which contain edible nuts. The nuts are used in a variety of recipes, including roasting them with butter and honey.



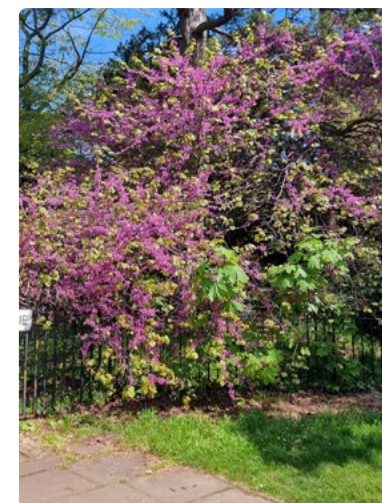
28 Bhutan Pine

Pinus wallichiana

///nodded.bottom.bride

A native of the Himalayas, where it grows in mountain valleys at altitudes of 1800-4300m, this tree was introduced to the UK in 1823. A large pine, it can grow to 30m. It has purple-grey or orange-grey scaly ridged bark and long cones (10-30cm), as well as attractive blue-green foliage.

Rejoin the path and head to the west gate, where you will see on the left:



29 Judas Tree

Cercis siliquastrum

///item.guilty.crate

A member of the Pea family, this tree is a native of the eastern Mediterranean, and was introduced in the 16th century. It has magenta-pink, pea like flowers in the spring. A popular myth is that this was the tree that Judas Iscariot hung himself from after betraying Jesus, hence the name.

